

After the Trauma: Talking to Your Child

- Provide children with opportunities to talk about what they are seeing on television
- and to ask questions.
- Do not be afraid to admit that you cannot answer all of their questions.
- Answer questions at a level the child can understand.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for children to talk. They probably will have more
- questions as time goes on.
- Use this as an opportunity to establish a family emergency plan. Feeling that there is something you can do may be very comforting to both children and adults.
- Allow children to discuss other fears and concerns about unrelated issues. This is a
- good opportunity to explore these issues also.
Monitor children's television watching. Some parents may wish to limit their child's exposure to graphic or troubling scenes. To the extent possible, be present when your child is watching news coverage of the event. It is at these times that questions might arise.
- Help children understand that there are no bad emotions and that a wide range of reactions is normal.
- Encourage children to express their feelings to adults (including teachers and parents) who can help them understand their sometimes strong and troubling emotions.
- Be careful not to scapegoat or generalize about any particular cultural or ethnic group. Try not to focus on blame.
- In addition to the tragic things they see, help children identify good things, such as heroic actions, families who unite and share support, and the assistance offered by people throughout the community.