



Talking To Your Children About What's Happening In Israel

A RESOURCE GUIDE (AS OF OCTOBER 11, 2023)

The news of Hamas' terror attacks and the subsequent military actions in Israel may be having a direct impact on our children. Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York has prepared the following thoughts and links to resources/articles which may be useful as you have discussions with your children. We will continue to update this guide as we become aware of useful resources for our community.



OVERALL

Obviously, you know what is most appropriate for your children. Some of what you say to your child will be age and developmentally appropriate. The world has, however, changed since the terror attacks and you can help your child understand that. No one expects children – or adults – to be able to comprehend the hatred and brutality of terrorists.

A good resource for beginning this discussion can be [found in this column](#) from eJewishPhilanthropy.

THEMES

Be Proud of Your Jewishness

Make sure your children understand that – no matter what – we are all proud of being Jewish and that bad acts from bad people should never make us ashamed to be Jewish or afraid to exhibit our “Jewishness” to our friends, classmates, or neighbors.

There Are Good People Everywhere

Television's Fred Rogers (Mr. Rogers) once said, “When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people that are helping.’” Even during this war, there is goodness everywhere. People are helping the wounded and the soldiers. Firefighters and police are working extra hard to protect Israelis and American Jews. Americans are raising money and donating supplies to help those who need it in Israel. People all over the world are showing their support for Israel by hanging Israeli flags or lighting up their buildings blue and white. Here, in Albany, the

Israeli flag is flying above the state capitol building. Taking a trip and showing that to your children might give them an idea that there are thousands and thousands of people who are supportive. We are not alone. We have a lot of friends and supporters who will help us.

War and Violence Are Never Good But Sometimes They Are Just

Over the coming days and weeks, as the war in Gaza begins, your children will almost certainly see or hear something about it. As parents/teachers/guardians, we try to teach our children that violence doesn't solve anything. How, then, do we rationalize a war, especially with young children? Israel – and Jewish people – have tried to negotiate...or talk...this problem away but some people simply don't want to talk. Explain to your children that after trying to talk and trying to come to an agreement, some bad people have done bad things. And, now, Israel is going to do what it has to do to make sure that

they can't do bad things again. A good resource for helping to guide a discussion about war (originally for discussing the Russian invasion of Ukraine) was developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and [is available here](#).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Since the initial terrorist attacks, social media has been filled with posts with both credible and unsubstantiated (or just completely untruthful) information about what is happening in Israel. Additionally, and more troubling, is that very graphic, violent and disturbing images and videos are being shared.

Parents should consider more closely monitoring social media usage for the next several months. We know that social media can make teens lonelier, and some may see their friends posting messages that they feel ostracizes them.

Keeping the lines of communication with your child will be critical during this crisis and showing them that there are a lot of people who support their viewpoint will be helpful.

OTHER RESOURCES

There are a lot of difficult and nuanced questions which might come up over the next several months. No one has all of the answers about how to respond to the questions and issues we are sure to confront and there is certainly no "one way" to discuss these difficult issues with children. Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York has a partnership with Unpacked, a video content provider which develops media designed for young people about subjects such as "Understanding the Israeli – Palestinian Conflict" and other relevant issues. [You can access those videos here](#).

Jewish Family Services of Northeastern New York has trained clinicians available for in-person or virtual support and offers a variety of other resources and support.

To contact JFS for assistance, call 518.482.8856, extension 0 or email them: info@jfsneny.org.



Jewish Federation
of Northeastern New York

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