

Talking to your kids about the war in Ukraine

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If Russia's invasion of Ukraine has left your children confused and

frightened, there are several ways to help them feel more secure, a psychologist says.

First and foremost: [Talk to your kids](#), and be honest, said Christopher Lynch, director of Pediatric Behavioral Medicine for Goryeb Children's Hospital in Morristown, N.J.

Kids can often tell when parents are withholding information. If you don't provide the full picture, they may get wrong ideas about the situation and think they're in danger.

"Children benefit from honest explanations about what is happening, but those explanations must be tailored to the age and developmental level of the child," Lynch said in a hospital news release.

Here's how to talk with your children about the war and [allay their anxiety](#):

- Use age-appropriate words and concepts that your children can understand. Asking them to repeat back what they heard you say can help identify any need for clarification.
- Reassure your children they are safe. Kids need to know that the adults around them are in control and know what to do to keep them safe. In this case, kids may need to understand that the war is far away and that they are well protected from it, Lynch said.
- Kids often feel more control over a situation if they can help in some way, such as donating items or part of their allowance, or making up a card or banner for Ukrainian children. Any of these acts teach compassion and help your children feel they are making a positive difference.
- Monitor your [children's](#) media exposure and limit it when necessary. Find out where they are getting their information about the war so you can clarify or restrict it if needed, Lynch

advised.

Even if [kids](#) appear fine, parents should talk to them to assess their thoughts and feelings.

"[Talking to your children](#) about the [invasion](#) will show them that it is OK to talk about difficult feelings and that we are there to help them," Lynch said.

More information: Save the Children has more on [talking with children about the Ukraine conflict](#).

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