

NSPCC

uncomfortable conversations

Supporting Muslim families to help keep children safe
by making uncomfortable conversations feel comfortable

This guide is also available in
Arabic, Bengali and Urdu.



In partnership
with



Approachable
Parenting

EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

For children, it's their parents and carers who are there to nurture and guide them. They look to you to have the answers and to give them advice when they need it.

Whether it's talking about puberty, relationships, boundaries or something else, there can be some topics that might feel hard to talk about with your child. It's OK to feel uncomfortable at first about having these conversations.

By using the support and advice in this leaflet, you'll feel more prepared, confident and comfortable speaking to your child about a range of topics.

Talking regularly with your child about their feelings and experiences can really help keep them safe. You'll be able to build trust so they can come to you for support if they have a problem or if they want to share something.

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It's natural to feel unsure at first about having some conversations

These are some of the challenges Muslim parents have told us they have sometimes experienced when talking with their children:

-  a difference in parenting styles over multiple generations
-  a topic which wasn't discussed in their own childhood
-  parents who grew up in different countries with different cultures and have different expectations.

It's OK to have concerns or feel worried. Knowing how you feel and why you feel that way can break down any barriers and help you prepare to have the important conversations to help keep your children safe.

“Do not raise your children the way [your] parents raised you, they were born for a different time.”

Ali ibn Abi Talib



What’s worked well when having these conversations with your children?

“Being patient and open minded.”

.....

“Reassuring them that I am there for them whenever they need to talk.”

.....

“I tried to listen non-judgementally.”

.....

“He was educating me, making me aware of what teen life involves in today’s age.”

.....

“Keeping our child as the focus when dealing with different generations in the household.”



Whatever the subject or the age of your child, there are lots of ways to make it easier for you both. We have advice to help you decide how to talk to your child in a way that’s age-appropriate, culturally sensitive and supportive.

Remember, you know your child best so trust your judgement about what will work for your family.

“And know that your possessions and your children are a trial and that with Allah is a mighty reward.”

Quran 8:28



An Islamic narration gives the guidance that raising a child is divided into three stages

.....

First seven years (0-7 years old)

Play with them

In Islam, this is seen as the time to let your child play and to build a strong connection with them.

Good interactions in the early years build strong foundations for your child's brain development.

.....

Next seven years (7-14 years old)

Teach them

These years are when children are like sponges, ready to soak up anything and everything you show, teach, and tell them.

Boundaries help guide their behaviour. By letting your child ask questions and letting them know what's acceptable and what isn't in a caring and compassionate way, you give them the freedom to act and behave.

.....

The final seven years (14-21 years old)

Advise them

As children continue to create their own identities in their teenage years, they might be more likely to disagree with their parents, or choose different views. Sometimes they might make mistakes and it's important they know you're there to support them.

This stage of a young person's development could focus on you building a trusting relationship with them, befriending them and becoming their go-to person when they need help or advice.

“Play with them for 7, teach them for 7, and become friends for 7.”

Ali ibn Abi Talib



Supporting you to feel comfortable in your conversations

In Islam, parenting is seen as both a trust and a form of worship. Children are, at one and the same time, a blessing and trust from Allah (swt).

Knowing how to adapt your conversations as your child grows up will help you develop a strong bond.

Approachable Parenting's Five Pillars of Parenting helps you build bonds and nurture communication with your child appropriate to their age.

With babies, establishing a good relationship centres on bonding, attachment and attunement.

Bonding: The relationship we have with our child – the loving and warm feeling.

Attachment: The child/parent relationship feels safe and secure.

Attunement: Understanding how our child communicates and responding to this.



Research shows our brains continue to develop until our early 20s. These changes can have an impact on the way young people think, feel and behave – particularly in their teenage years.

By communicating often with your child, you'll build trust and a stronger bond that'll continue to grow throughout their lives.

Find out more about
The Five Pillars of Parenting courses on page 16.

Find the right moment to talk with your child

Islam encourages open conversations, there is no shame in asking questions. When and where you have conversations will depend on your child's age or how grown up they are.

Thinking about your child's age and stage of development can help you prepare and feel confident for any conversations you may need to have. And every family's different – it's all about finding what feels comfortable for you and your child.



Turn to
page 18 for
some more tips on
how to have these
conversations.

Looking for a good time to start a conversation? You could try one of these times:

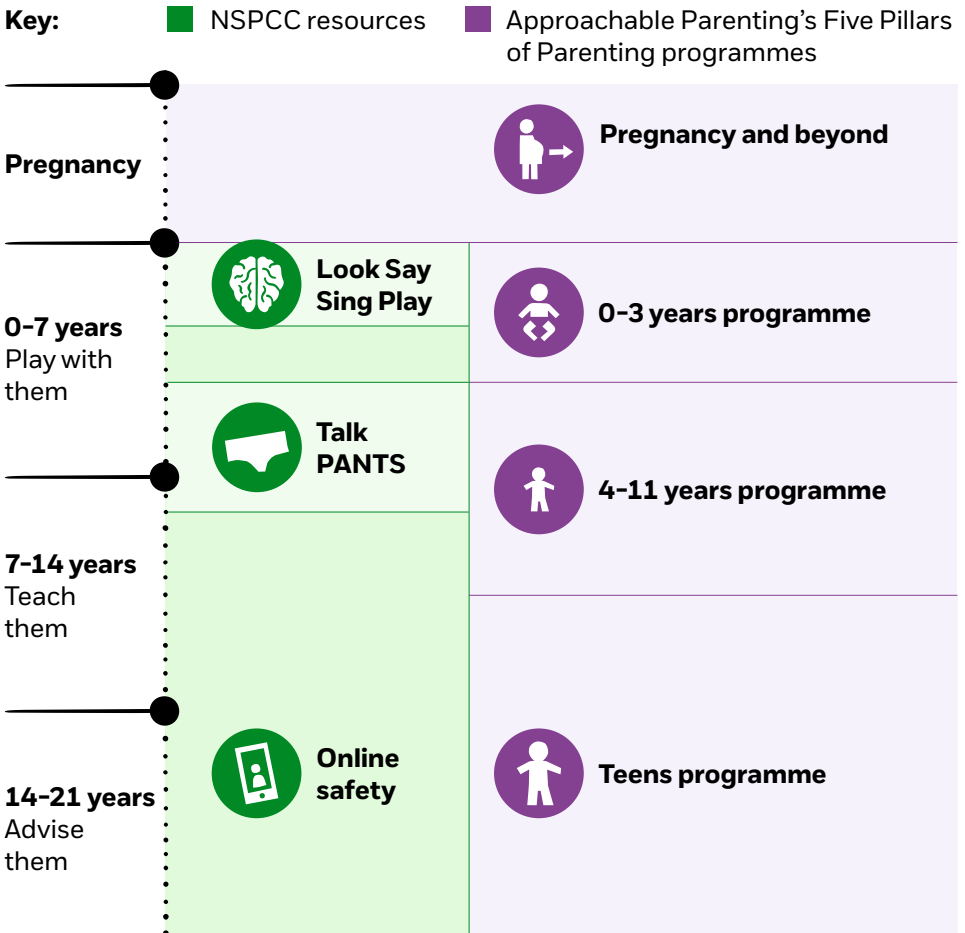
- 🕒 car journeys
- 🕒 when you're both feeling calm, such as after prayers
- 🕒 when walking home from school
- 🕒 if they've had a particular lesson at school, for example about personal relationships, ask them what they remember
- 🕒 if their favourite TV programme is handling a sensitive storyline
- 🕒 reading some verses of the Quran together can be a great way to start a conversation
- 🕒 when there is a quiet space with the focus on your child and no distractions.

Family is the bedrock of society, ‘Silat al Rahim’

You can create stronger bonds with your child from when they are first born, all the way through to adulthood, by finding ways to build trust and communication. Whatever the conversation, there is lots of information, support and advice available to help you.

Over the next few pages you will find some resources that can help you prepare for specific conversations.

Some resources will be useful for specific age ranges, while others could provide support for children at any age. Below you can see which resources can help at different ages.



Look, Say, Sing, Play

Right from birth, you can use our brain-building tips to create supportive experiences with your child and bring more Look, Say, Sing, Play into your days.

look
say
sing
play

You've got the power to change everyday moments into brain-building ones. By taking a cue from your child and reacting to what they're doing, you can also make your bond even stronger.

Look at what your baby's focusing on and how they react.

Say what you're doing and copy the sounds baby makes.

Sing along to your favourite tunes or nasheeds or make up your own songs.

Play simple games and see what your baby enjoys.

Why not try listening to the Quran or singing Islamic nursery rhymes to help you develop a stronger bond?

You don't have to change your routine – just use our tips for a little more **Look, Say, Sing, Play**.

On the
next page is
a tip to try.



powered by
vrom™



Look, Say, Sing, Play continued

Try this: homemade sounds

Explore sounds by giving your child safe everyday items that make noise.



Try different objects, like pieces of cereal in a coffee can with the lid taped closed, or pots to bang with a spoon.

Talk about what they're doing, like, "Shake that can fast!" Join in and move to the beat together!

The science bit

Your child is making new connections using everyday objects. They build focus and self-control skills as they move to the rhythm and pay attention to your words. This is the beginning of them learning to get creative and problem solve.

You can find out more about our Look, Say, Sing, Play resources at nspcc.org.uk/brain-building



"The heart of a baby is pure and empty. It has a natural inclination for the retention of everything and is attracted by everything."

Imam Al-Ghazali



Talk PANTS

You've probably already talked to your child about things like crossing the road safely. But have you had a simple, but important, conversation that could help keep them safe from sexual abuse?

We know it's a conversation that could feel difficult or uncomfortable, but it doesn't have to be. And it's important to teach children about protecting the Awrah (private parts) from a young age for both boys and girls.



Talk PANTS helps make these conversations as easy and appropriate as possible for children as young as three. And the friendly dinosaur, Pantosaurus, helps children engage with the messages in a fun, comfortable way.

From P through to S, each letter gives an important message that's easy to remember and helps keep children safe.





Talk PANTS continued

We have a wide range of PANTS guides, videos and resources to help you talk PANTS. You can download PANTS guides in different languages on the NSPCC website, as well as finding out more about all the resources on offer.

Order, watch or download all these PANTS materials at nspcc.org.uk/PANTS



Pantosaurus storybook

Pantosaurus and the Power of PANTS – perfect for reading with children and introducing the PANTS rules.



Order a PANTS activity pack

Fun ways to help children learn about PANTS without using any scary words.



Sing along with Pantosaurus

Our video introduces PANTS to children and helps them learn the key messages.

“Good effort is like a good tree, with stable roots and high branches. It produces fruit all the time.”

Quran 14:24



Keeping children safe online

For children growing up with technology and the internet there isn't a difference between their online and offline lives; online life and offline life is just life for them.

It can be difficult to know how to start talking to your child about what they do online, who they speak to or the potential risks and issues.

Talking with your child often is the best way to help keep them safe online. Making it part of daily conversation, like you would about their day at school, will help your child feel relaxed. It also means if they do have any worries, they're more likely to come and speak to you.



When talking to younger children it can help to use toys to support conversations.

The LEGO® Group Build & Talk activities is a series of fun, free guides to help you start talking about online safety at home.

Find more information about how to talk about staying safe online at nspcc.org.uk/talkonlinesafety

You can access guides to help you build LEGO® characters while talking about cyberbullying, false information online, online security, safe sharing and more through lego.com/buildandtalk

“Oh Lord, give us joy in our spouses and children and make us a good example for those that have taqwa.”
Quran 25:74



Support your child's online wellbeing

For children, the internet can sometimes be a difficult place to navigate. It can be hard to know the real from the fake, how to avoid seeing negative content, or what to do if a mistake is made.

Going online should be a positive experience for all children, and we want to help you support your child in feeling informed, confident, and happy during their time online.

You can find out more about supporting your child's online wellbeing at:
nspcc.org.uk/online wellbeing

Try some of our top tips to help your child feel good online:

Get chatting

Chat often with your child about what they do online and how it makes them feel.

Navigate the negative

Ask your child to tell you if they're upset or feel bad by things they see online, and let them know they can block or mute certain accounts.

Seeing isn't believing

Remind your child not everything they see or hear online is true and to question what they view.

Mistakes happen

If your child makes a mistake online, be understanding and help them learn from this.

Take the lead

Your children look to you as an example, show them you follow your own advice.

"Allah does not lay a responsibility on anyone beyond his capacity."
Quran 2:286




The Five Pillars of Parenting


Children and young people learn from their parents. What you teach them, how you lead by example, the affection you show them, and the ways you nurture them as they grow will all impact who they become.


Approachable Parenting's Five Pillars of Parenting Programme for Muslim families helps you support your child through every stage of development – from pregnancy through to their teenage years and beyond.


You can find out more about The Five Pillars of Parenting courses by going to approachableparenting.org/courses

The courses:

 **Pregnancy and Beyond**
A 4-week course exploring brain development, bonding during pregnancy and building a secure attachment.

 **0-3 years**
A 4-week course exploring the importance of adjusting to parenting, developing self-care and building a good relationship with your child from the beginning.

 **4-11 years**
An 8-week course to develop listening, communication, and behaviour management techniques.

 **Teens**
An 8-week course developed with Protective Behaviour's Consortium, aiming to support a better understanding of teenagers and to improve communication and relationships.

“...then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly Allah loves those who put their trust in him.”
Quran 3:159



Phrases to help you speak with your child

Sometimes it's tricky to think of the words to use during a conversation with your child. Below are some phrases which could help when talking about difficult topics:

🌀 How does that make you feel?

🌀 Thank you for telling me how you're feeling.

🌀 What would you like to happen next?

🌀 Do you remember when...?

🌀 Did you see ... on TV?

🌀 How would you feel if...?

🌀 I wasn't expecting you to say that, but thank you for sharing. Give me a minute to think through what you've said.

🌀 I'm not sure about that, I'll do some thinking and can we talk about it again tomorrow?

🌀 You can always talk to us.

🌀 I'm here for you.

“An extraordinary husband, a perfect father, and a unique grandfather... I have never seen a man who was more compassionate to his family members than Muhammed [pbuh].”
Saheeh Muslim



Are you ready to have a conversation with your child?

You've seen some tips for how to prepare for conversations and read some resources that can help support specific conversations. Now, here's a checklist to help you prepare and feel comfortable having any conversation:

.....

Are you feeling calm and prepared?

It might help to speak to family members, friends or look online for information about the topic you want to talk about.

Have you chosen a good time and place?

Sometimes it can feel more comfortable if you're talking side by side rather than face to face. At times it might be important to show your child they have your full attention and there won't be any distractions.

Have you practised?

It can help to practise some phrases you'd like to use to help your child know you're there for them. You can see some useful phrases on page 17.

Have you made Dua?

Making Dua with sincerity and intention can be an important and spiritual time for you to talk to Allah and ask for support, guidance and a way to communicate your thoughts and concerns.

Have you planned what you'd like to say?

There might be some specific questions you'd like to ask or some important information you want to get across to your child.

Are you ready to listen?

The conversation might not go as you'd planned and that's OK. Listen without judgement or solutions to what your child tells you and be ready to adapt.

“When He (Prophet Mohammed, pbuh) addressed a person he turned his whole body towards that person.”

Hadith 6 in Shamaail of Tirmidhi



Are you ready to have a conversation with your child? continued

Are you clear on the purpose?

Going back to the initial reason for the conversation can help you renew your intentions. Are you in control over your thoughts, focused on what you want to come out of the conversation and mindful of your child's needs?



Further support from the NSPCC and Approachable Parenting

The NSPCC

At the NSPCC, we want every child to grow up safe and happy. There's lots more advice and support for parents and carers on our webpages.

For lots more information visit nspcc.org.uk/parents

If you ever need to talk, we're here to support you. You can call the NSPCC Helpline on **0808 800 5000** or email us at help@nspcc.org.uk

And if your child is ever sad, worried or scared, they can talk to a friendly counsellor on **0800 1111**, or at childline.org.uk


Approachable Parenting

Approachable Parenting supports the needs of Muslim families living in the UK.

With an understanding of Muslim culture and faith, we offer a variety of services and courses, which link modern psychological theory and coaching techniques to Islamic principles.

Our work has a direct influence in developing the characteristics of the family, empowering parents and improving the confidence, emotional wellbeing and behaviour of the next generation.

If you would like additional support, you can contact us on **0121 773 8643**.

For more information, visit approachableparenting.org
 [@approachable.parenting](https://www.instagram.com/approachable.parenting)

“Your Lord says, ‘Call on Me and I will answer you’.”

Quran 40:60



Further info and support

Whether you're looking for more advice on how to talk to your child and keep them safe, or you or your child need more support, these resources could help.

For more information about starting conversations, visit:

Action for Children

How to talk to your child about difficult topics

[parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/
behaviour/challenging-behaviour/
how-to-talk-to-your-child](https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/behaviour/challenging-behaviour/how-to-talk-to-your-child)

Barnardo's

Five tips for talking to children about feelings

[barnardos.org.uk/blog/having-
healthy-conversations-about-
feelings](https://barnardos.org.uk/blog/having-healthy-conversations-about-feelings)

Save the Children

How to talk to kids about hard things

[savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-
do/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-
hard-things](https://savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-hard-things)



Further info and support continued

For further support:

Beat

Providing support for young people and families suffering with eating disorders

beateatingdisorders.org.uk

0808 801 0677

Family Lives

Offering early intervention and crisis support to families

familylives.org.uk

0808 800 2222

LEGO® Build and Talk

Helping parents talk to children about online safety

lego.com/buildandtalk

Mind

Providing advice and support around mental health

mind.org.uk

0300 123 3393

Muslim Community Helpline

A confidential, non-judgemental listening and emotional support service

muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk

0208 908 6715 or

0208 904 8193

Muslim Women's Network Helpline

A faith and culturally sensitive helpline and counselling service

mwnhelpline.co.uk

0800 999 5786

Muslim Youth Helpline

A free and confidential faith and culturally sensitive support service for young people

myh.org.uk

0808 808 2008

Protective Behaviours Consortium

Providing services and resources in the field of Protective Behaviours

protectivebehavioursconsortium.co.uk

co.uk

Samaritans

A charity providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope or at risk of suicide

samaritans.org

116 123

Victim Support

Charity dedicated to supporting victims of crime and traumatic incidents

victimsupport.org.uk

0808 1689 111

YoungMinds

A mental health charity for children, young people and their parents

youngminds.org.uk

Text YM to 85258

By talking with your child, you're taking really important steps to help keep them safe. You should feel proud for doing something amazing.

Remember this isn't a one-off conversation. It's better to have these chats little and often and keep responding to your child's needs, emotions and experiences as they get older.

Checking in regularly helps show you're there and ready to listen if your child ever feels sad, worried or concerned.

NSPCC

Together, we can stop child abuse and neglect – by working with people and communities to prevent it, transforming the online world to make it safer for children, and making sure every child has a place to turn for support when they need it.

Everyone has a part to play in keeping children safe. Every pound you raise, every petition you sign, every minute of your time, will make a difference.

Together, we can change children's lives.

nspcc.org.uk

EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

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