

# **Communication with sick children**

# *Objectives*

To know **Communication with sick children.** •

To know how we can **Helping a Child Who Has a Serious** •  
**Illness .**

Communicating with kids who have everyday illnesses and common injuries can be challenging. Parents often feel unsure of what to do or say. Sometimes, you just want to scream, "HELP!" yourself - but you're the one who's supposed to be in charge. •

Experts recommend that you start by slowing down and taking a deep breath. "The healthiest way to communicate with a kid who is sick is to stay calm and be very aware of your own feelings," . "Caring for a sick child doesn't require a parent to come up with a solution." •

Kids tend to become less verbal, crankier, and •  
louder when they are hurting. This can make  
talking difficult. Fortunately, understanding why  
children react this way helps parents  
communicate. "Children who are sick or injured  
may feel scared by what's happening. Sometimes  
this fear is expressed as anger. When a child is  
upset, stay calm and be empathetic. Help him talk  
about all his feelings and provide a realistic  
perspective of how he will feel better."

# Helping a Child Who Has a Serious Illness

- Don't Underestimate the Child's Capacity to understand
- Encourage Open Communication, But Do Not force it
- Understand That the Child's Communication Will Not Always Be Direct
- What the Seriously Ill Child May be Feeling
- Learn About the Child's Illness
- Support Parents and Other Important Adults in the Child's Life
- Don't Forget Siblings
- Actively Involve Children in Treatment Plans
- Be Prepared for the Child to Ask About Death
- Allow Children to be Children
- Embrace Your Spirituality

# A Final Word

All children, seriously ill or not, have the right •  
to be nurtured, to be children and to make  
choices that impact their lives. There is  
nothing more difficult for families than  
confronting the serious illness and potential  
death of a child. As caring adults, we have  
responsibility to maximize the quality of life  
for the child, the family and friends .

# *Questions*

How we can **Helping a Child Who Has a Serious Illness?** •