

Emotionally Supporting a Child with Skin Problems: Questions to Ask

Children may feel insecure about a visible skin condition, so it is important that parents help by building up their confidence and provide ways to respond to questions or comments from others. This document includes questions you can ask your child to encourage authentic and helpful conversations.

- **Listen to them and validate their experiences**

- Talk with them about what they are experiencing
- Give your child a safe, nonjudgmental space to say how they feel
- Listen with curiosity and empathize with them
- Have conversations about emotions, thoughts, and behaviors that are a part of your child's condition from the time it begins and continue to check-in regularly
- **Questions to ask:**
 - What made you smile or made you sad today?
 - What is something that might make you feel better when you are feeling down?

- **Be sure they know this is not their fault**

- Emphasize their strengths so they don't see their skin condition as the most important part of who they are
- Gently make sure your child understands that seeing a doctor and needing to do treatment is an important part of their overall health
- **Questions to ask:**
 - How do you feel?
 - How can I help you?

- **Give them advice when they're feeling insecure**

- Inform your child that having a skin condition is a very common occurrence and that they are not alone in their concerns
- Remind your child of their unique gifts and strengths
- Encourage your child to surround themselves with supportive family and friends
- Role play appropriate responses for when others ask them about their skin condition so they are prepared and confident
- **Questions to ask:**
 - What is something that makes you special?
 - What's your superhero name and what powers do you have?
 - What makes you feel brave?
 - Has anyone ever asked about your condition? If so, what did you say?
 - Would you like me to share how I might handle that situation?



- **Let them ask you questions**

- Children will have many questions about their symptoms and treatment, so reassure them with information and let them know that they can ask you any questions at any time
- It's okay to say you don't know the answer to a question and then work together to find an answer or explanation
- **Questions to ask:**
 - How do you feel about our daily routine?
 - Is there anything you're unsure of?
 - Why do you think it is important to do your treatments?
 - Is there anything that would make your treatments better for you?

