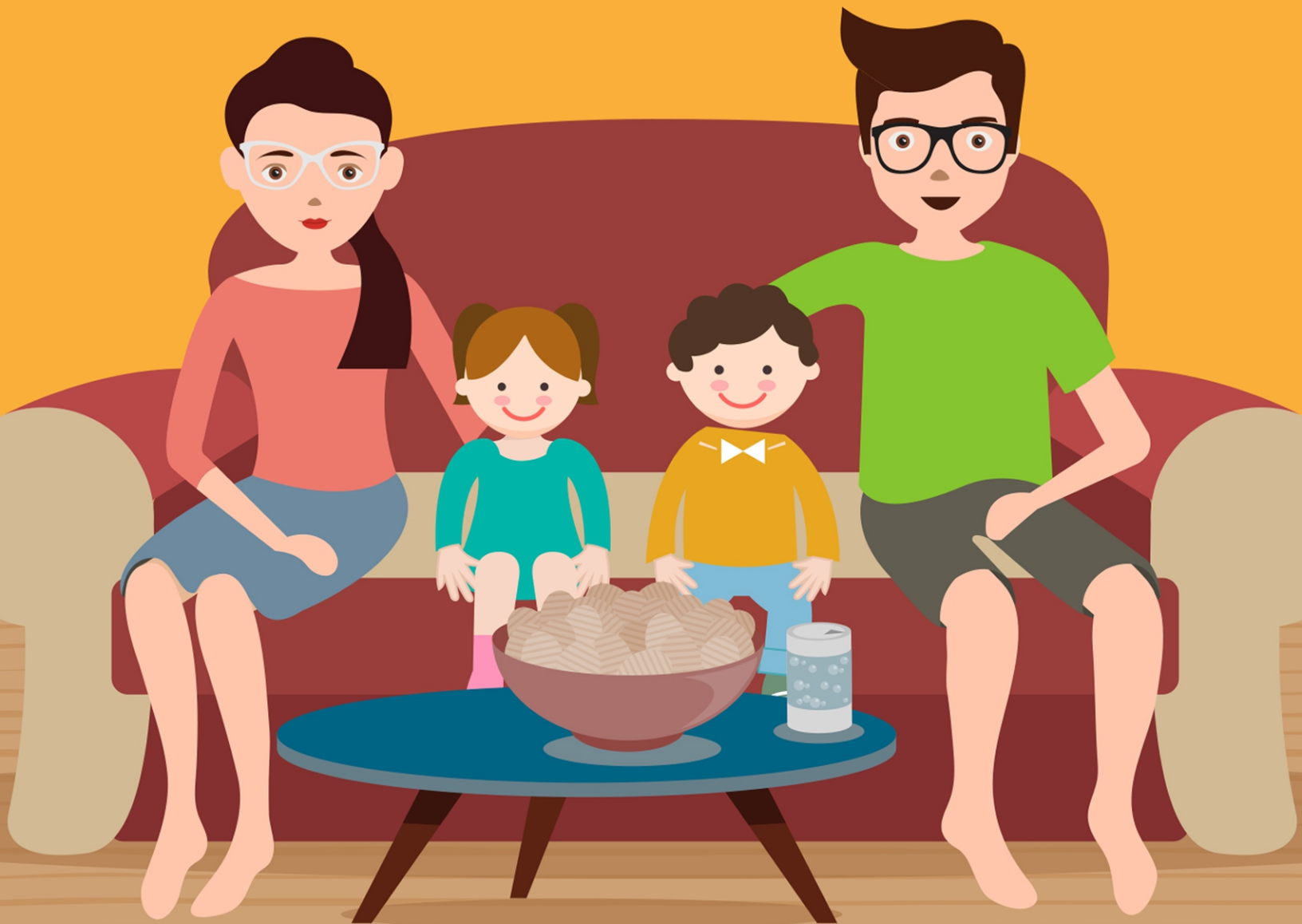


COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR CHILD

Start Effectively Talking Safety With Your Kid From The Very Beginning





Talking Safety With Your Children



When polled, most parents list their top concerns for child safety into the categories of bullying, struggling with depression, kidnapping, fighting, drugs and alcohol, or even getting shot.

The things we worry about as parents take hold in our darkest nightmares, the ones that wake you in the night, and you have to jump out of bed and peek in the kid's room, just to make sure they are safe.

And it's true. These things are a threat.

It seems that with every passing year, life is getting crazier, and the stakes continue to go up, putting ourselves and our kids in danger from things we never would have considered twenty years ago, like dying in a terrorist attack at a public venue, or a school shooting.

The media of course has done nothing to make us feel better, they seem to only care about pushing products on us sensationalizing everything to up their ad revenues, and perhaps one day they will have our kids convinced that the best way to protect our future grandchildren is to have them tagged with GPS implants.

But probably the best thing that we can do as parents to ensure our kids safety doesn't cost a dime. It's 100% free.



Talking Safety With Your Children

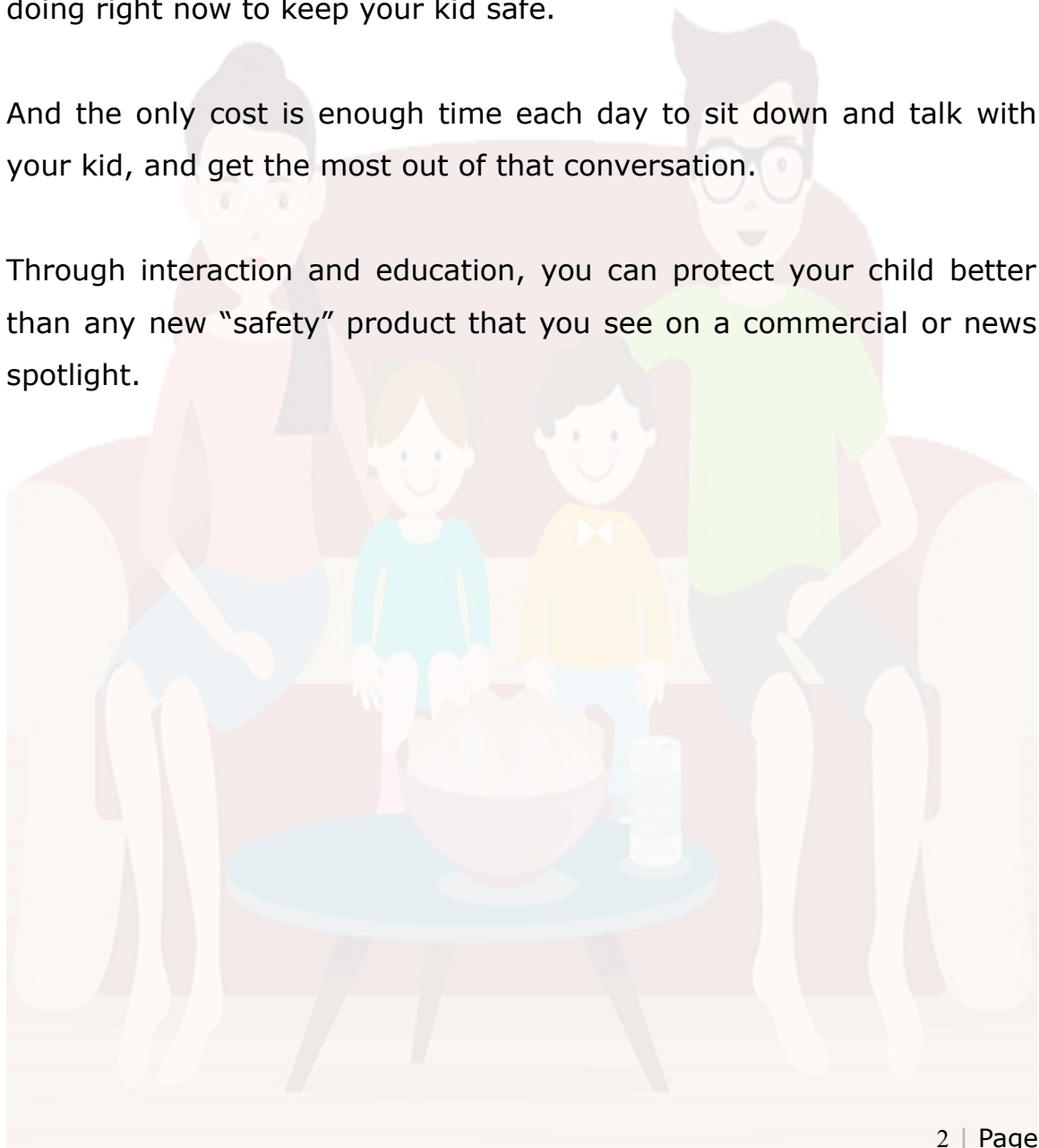


Just on the off chance that you thought this report was a ploy to try and sell you something, you can rest assured.

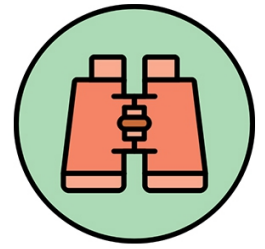
The only thing I want is ten or twenty minutes of your time, and the ability to discuss the single most effective thing that you could be doing right now to keep your kid safe.

And the only cost is enough time each day to sit down and talk with your kid, and get the most out of that conversation.

Through interaction and education, you can protect your child better than any new “safety” product that you see on a commercial or news spotlight.



You Can't Watch Them All The Time



As much as we would like to sometimes, it's impossible to keep an eye on your kids at all times.

You have to go to work, so you're able to feed and clothe them. Bills have to be paid. The car is going to break. Water mains are going to pop.


Life is going to try it's hardest to take your focus off the kids, and it will disrupt your time, and continue to crave it unmercifully.

While all of this is going on, where are the kids? Under the care of a teacher, or babysitter, or day-care worker?

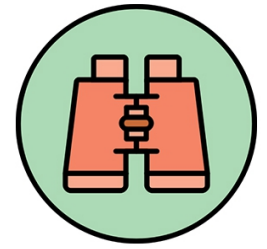
Are they watching your children close enough? Are your kids learning life lessons from these people?

It's a scary thought train to jump on, wondering what's happening to them when they aren't under our watchful eye.

All sorts of possibilities can run rampant, so much that tagging them yourself with a cellphone might seem like the only way to make them safer, and even then, safety might feel like a wish rather than a comfort.



You Can't Watch Them All The Time



If you had the option to stick them in a cave and watch their every move, the freedom to do whatever you feel necessary to protect them from the world, would you?

Some day they will grow up, and they'll learn how hard life is.

The lessons will be taught one way or another.

So, as an experiment, perhaps another mentality is needed.

How about letting them make mistakes, and then guiding them through the ups and downs while discussing bigger issues with them, perhaps even issues that are a little beyond their age?

But if you aren't watching every move, how can you know what problems they bump into?



Every parent knows that once you get a kid started talking, they aren't going to shut up for a while, so start them talking on something that's important to both of you.

Open the discussion up. You don't have to observe every minute to ask them about their day, and the sooner you establish that daily dialogue with them, the sooner you can become interactive in their lives without needing constant updates or reassurances.

I'm a big believer in family dinner time. It doesn't even matter what we're eating.

Could be a lazy macaroni and hot dogs day. The food isn't important.

I mean, it's important to make sure that they are eating something with at least some kind of health benefit, but the time with them far outweighs the actual platters.

I visited a friend's house the other day. They cooked a very nice stuffed chicken... it was delicious, but that isn't really my point.

The whole meal was spent talking about the food. About the chicken being cooked to a certain level of perfection, holding the juices in.

How the potatoes were actually mashed organic potatoes and not flakes from a box, etc.



The whole family was engaged, kids and all, and an hour was spent discussing food.

They had an hour with their kids, who were engaged and talkative that day, the perfect opportunity to infuse all that wisdom they'd spend a lifetime accumulating, to pass it on, and the only thing that got passed on was that mom can "chicken" like no other, but maybe some of the side dishes could use a little work.

For most of us, finding an hour to sit with our kids at all is a challenge, so it struck me odd that they would choose to squander that time talking about food, when they could be asking what was going on at school, if the kids had any new "friends" that hadn't been previously discussed, if they were having trouble in any of their classes, if someone around them has offered drugs.

This stuff happens, and with marijuana becoming more legal every day, no matter which side of that fence your opinion lies, kids are doing drugs at younger and younger ages.

I actually heard a study on the radio indicating that things like social media have actually worked to reduce smoking and alcohol use among teenagers, but the stuff is out there.

It's a billion dollar business, and your kids are exposed every time they leave the house.



Just ASK

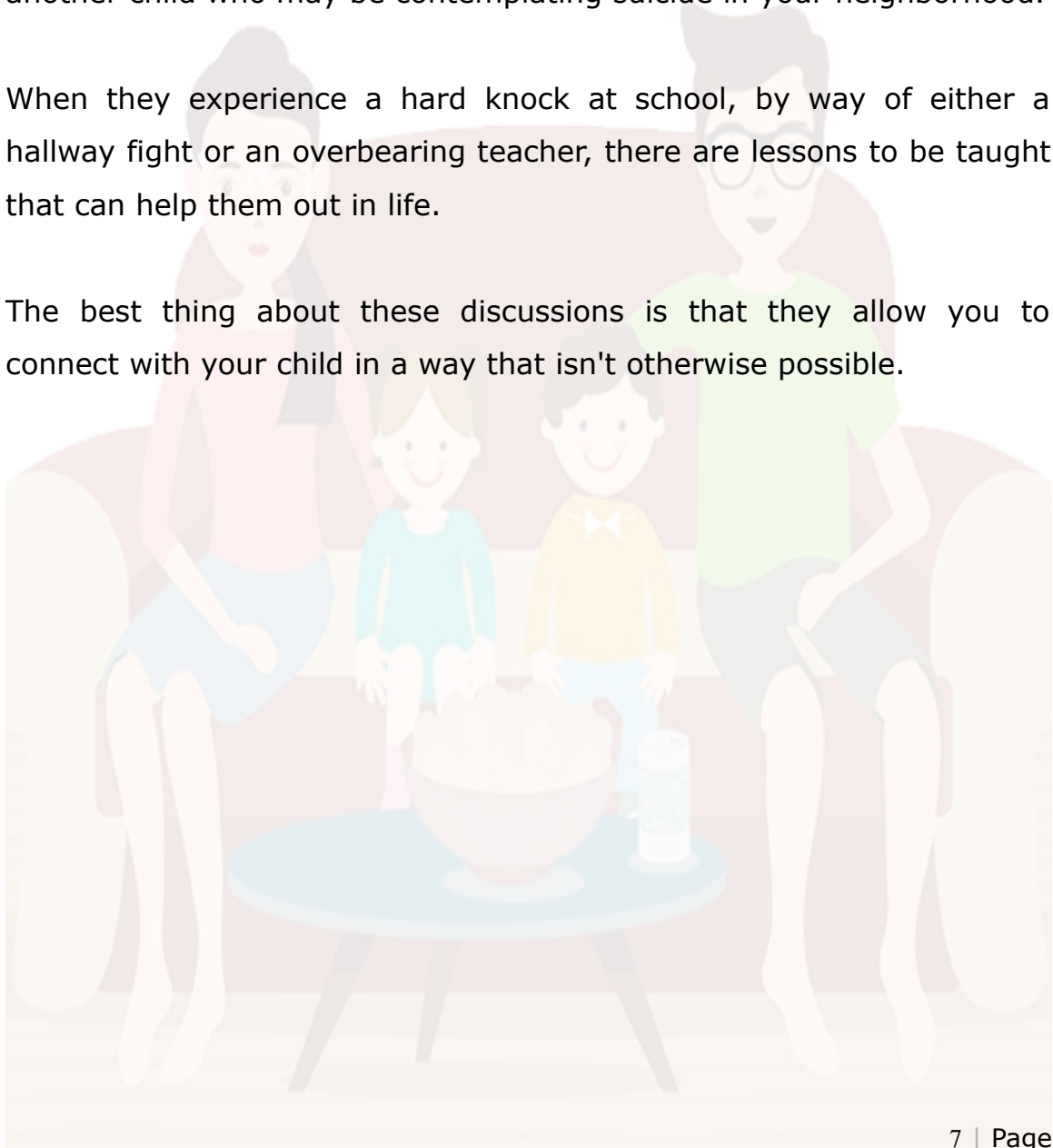


Asking about new friends can lead to a potential molester or kidnapper being found out while they are still in the phase of earning the child's trust.

Trouble with friends could indicate a potential threat, or possibly another child who may be contemplating suicide in your neighborhood.

When they experience a hard knock at school, by way of either a hallway fight or an overbearing teacher, there are lessons to be taught that can help them out in life.

The best thing about these discussions is that they allow you to connect with your child in a way that isn't otherwise possible.





You Should Start Now



Make it a habit to spend some time talking, every day if possible. Set aside an hour.

Dinner makes a good excuse, but let's be real, family dinners aren't a reality for some of us.

If you are a single parent with joint custody, then perhaps a daily phone call would be okay.

Board games used to be a great idea, but perhaps some iPad variant that doesn't require a lot of thinking would allow time for discussing life issues.

I have a friend that's a huge fan of teaching kids chess, and will champion that idea until the day he passes away.

He's just a fan of teaching everyone chess, come to think of it.

I don't recommend the television for this particular family time, as it's distracting and doesn't provide an open forum for talking.

Games, a shopping trip, a drive out to the country, a hobby that you can work on together, all of these things provide a setting for communication about things other than the task at hand.



You Should Start Now



Don't wait. Every day you don't discuss the day's events with your child, they fall farther into seclusion.

Things they are nervous about become secrets from you, when they are exactly the things that you might want to hear.

Likewise, talking starts simply. If your child is a little older, it might be harder to get them into a daily discussion about their life.

Don't force it. Start simply, and find some time that the family can share together.

The more normal the daily talks become, the more your child will open up, the more they will trust you, and the more insight both of you can gain.

You'll be learning about things in their life that could be dangerous for them, and they will be soaking up your wisdom.



Talk About What They Want To Discuss



I know, the guild on their video game isn't that exciting.

Their latest Facebook post isn't always something you can engage in. But think about it.

- Who do you go to when you need to talk about stuff?
- What makes you gravitate to that person?
- Is it because they listen, and let you ramble a bit?

Not everything that comes out of a kids mouth is going to be relevant or even entertaining, but do yourself a favor.

You've done all the work to secure a slot of their time where you can chat together, let them do most of the talking.

- Grit your teeth through the social updates and the insane wish list items.
- Engage yourself in their life as much as possible for one hour every day, and let them ramble.
- Steer the discussion gently.
- Watch them play their game while they talk.

Who knows? You might learn something about them that you didn't know before.



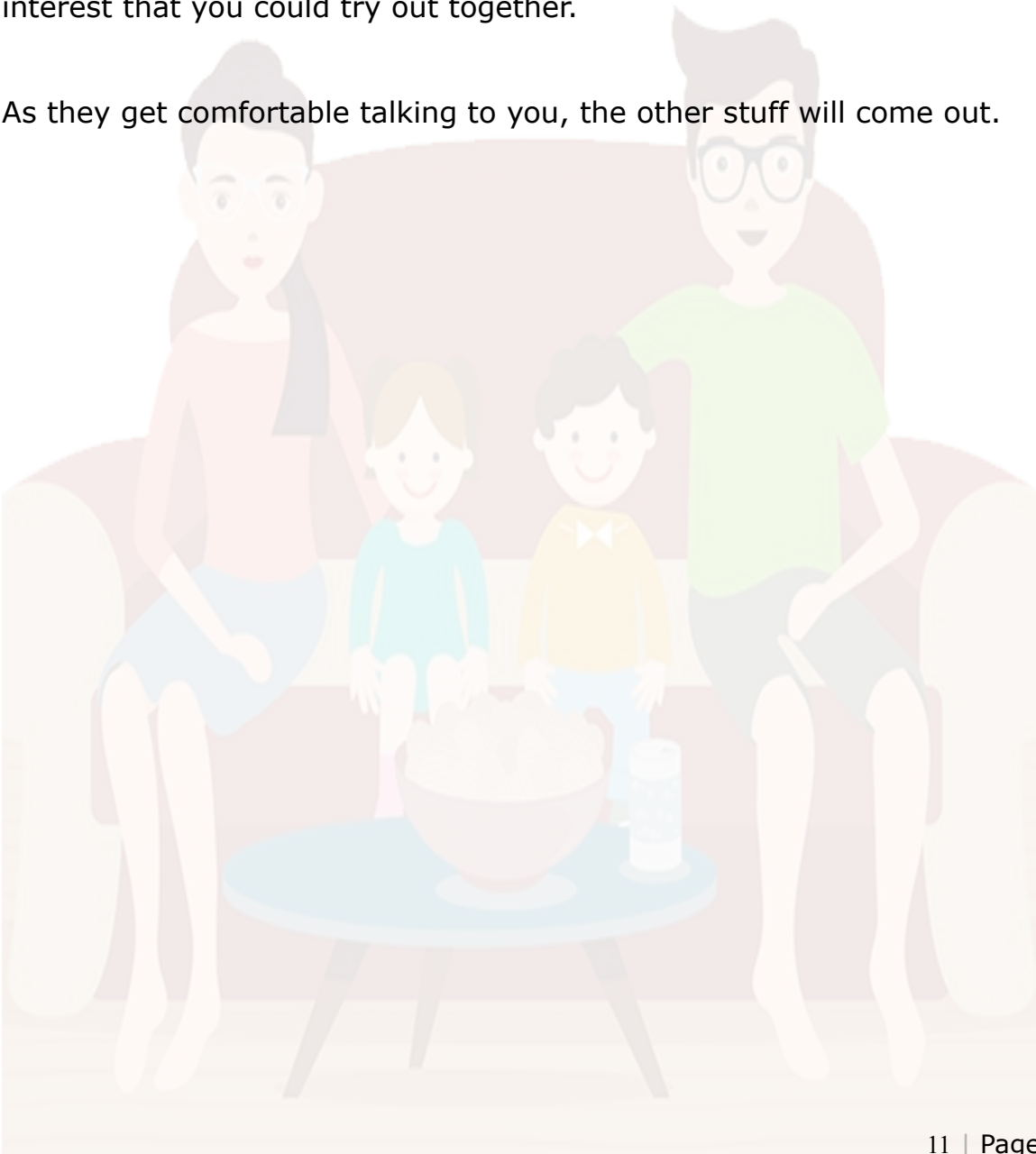
Talk About What They Want To Discuss



You might figure out that next Christmas gift among the slush pile of “I wants.”

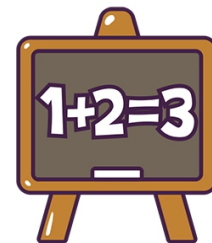
You don't have to buy them a finger monkey, or the latest x-box, you might discover something simple that they really want, or a hobby interest that you could try out together.

As they get comfortable talking to you, the other stuff will come out.





Watch for Life Lesson Opportunities



If you are looking for them, the chance to share some insight comes up often. It might be frustration with part of a video game that cues you to say something inspirational about dedication and persistence.

You might share a tip about how to cope when things aren't going your way.

Heck, you might figure out how to beat a level they are struggling with. Talk about a winning chance to gain their trust!

Myself, I still to this day find life lessons in every fleeting moment. I'm an introspective person by nature, but it's not a talent of any kind; it's not something I was born with.

Stick a camera in my paws and I get shutter shock, and can't find anything worth photographing, but I persist and try to see the beauty in every little detail.

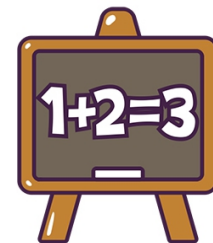
Get me started on how I motivate myself and I won't shut up for two hours.

We all have strengths and weaknesses, and when put in perspective, there's something to be learned and shared in every strength.

Look for those in your own life, and the life of your child. That way you can be there when they need you.



Watch for Life Lesson Opportunities



The actual monitoring is outsourced and you can discuss the Cliff Notes of the day's events instead of micromanaging through phone calls, status updates, and text messages.

Be alert for warning signals. If something is really bothering them, it could lead to depression, but if you've opened a proper line of communication, then you can nip it in the bud.

When close friends are turning to substance abuse, you can discuss their feelings about drugs or alcohol, or smoking.

The best part is, those topics we're so afraid of discussing become easier, because you have established and maintained common ground.

You will feel more comfortable talking about anything, whether it's sex, or boos, or your concerns about the party next Friday night.

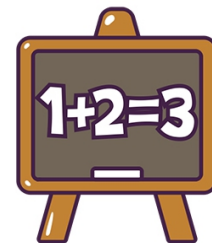
All that listening you've been doing will pay off, and they will begin to discuss things with you like an adult: making their case, and listening to your concerns.

In the process you will be teaching them how to negotiate and compromise.

You will be making them aware of dangers that their young mind has trouble seeing.



Watch for Life Lesson Opportunities



You will be giving safety tips, advice, and emergency strategies to prepare them, and at the end of the day, that's the best protection of all.

Just like growing a business means depending on your employees to know what they are doing and manage their own assignments, teaching a child how to avoid danger and what to do when it shows up empowers them to take responsibility for their own safety.

It gives them the power to make safe decisions. It lets them take over the assignment, so you can manage their safety from a distance.

I mean, you still don't want to leave a small child at the beach without keeping an eye out to make sure they don't drown, but they'll be more cooperative if they understand the principle of under-currents, and watching them will be easier, both today, and in the future.

Open a line of communication, discuss risk factors, and get them comfortable talking and thinking through life decisions before they make them.

You won't always agree, but through your guidance, they will become not only better adjusted, but better prepared to keep themselves safe when you can't supervise every minute of their life.