

Talking With Your Child About their Medication

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Sarah here. We're continuing our mini-series on challenging conversations. Last week, Lisa focused on talking with your kids about their medical, mental health and/or learning diagnoses. I'm focusing on a related topic that parents often struggle with- talking with their kids about taking their routine medication.



To be clear, parents *often* talk with their kids about taking their medicine. They prompt them to take it. They remind them to take it. They hand them their medication. They may even get into arguments with their kids over medication. So, the issue here isn't that parents avoid talking with their kids about their medicine altogether. It's that in the midst of these everyday communications about medication, parents often don't have more meaningful *conversations* about medication with their kids. And sometimes *those* are the conversations that are most needed, especially if your child is struggling with their medication adherence.

So, what should you talk about when it comes to medication? Here are some questions you may want to touch on:

- What's your child's understanding of why they take their medication?
- What does your child think their medication does?
- How do they think their medication helps them?

- How does your child feel when they take their medication?
- Does your child feel there any drawbacks to them taking their medication?
- Does your child think they need to take this medication?

Having calm and open conversations with your child about their understanding and experience of their medication can help clarify misunderstandings so you can make sure your child has accurate information. It will also give you valuable information about your child's perspective, which may shed light on any medication adherence struggles that they're having.

Providing a safe space for your child to talk about their feelings about taking medication is important for helping them feel more empowered in their own treatment. Remember to share key information with your child's medical provider and encourage your child to participate in that conversation as well. Encourage your child to share information or concerns and to ask questions when meeting with their providers. Doing so will help your child learn self-advocacy skills and will encourage them to be actively engaged in their own healthcare! And those skills will serve them well long after you're no longer overseeing their medication.

