



The bombing that occurred in Boston may cause strong feelings in children: fear, anger, anxiety and sadness are all likely reactions. Children need to know that they can talk about these feelings and that the adults who care for them will provide comfort and keep them safe.

If you are the parent or caregiver some guidelines to follow are:

- Even if your child doesn't bring up the events in Boston, ask if they've heard about what happened and what they are feeling. Given access to media, all but the youngest children are likely to know something about the bombing. Not talking may imply that you are too scared to talk, making what happened seem even more frightening.
- Listen to what your child says about his or her feelings. Watch for signs of feelings they don't express. Don't tell them the feelings are wrong. Do tell them that even though a bad thing happened, you are there to keep them safe. Let them know that things will be okay.
- Reassure your child about the safety of families and friends (if, in fact, all are safe). You may want to name the people a child could worry about, so they know that even if they don't see grandma or a cousin or a neighbor at the moment, those people have not been harmed.
- Gently correct incorrect information they may have picked up. No need for long talks about what happened or why, but don't let the child hold on to wrong information that may make things seem worse than they really are. As an adult, you can sort out which media reports overplay events or draw conclusions when the facts are not yet clear. A child may not be able to tell fact from opinion. When there are unanswered questions, it is fine to say there are some things no one knows yet.
- **TURN OFF THE TV AND RADIO.** In the course of a day, TV stations show the same footage of events like the bombings dozens of times. A child may experience each replay as a fresh source of terror. Even if the child seems busy with play or other activities, the background repetition has an effect. When your child does watch or listen to a media report, turn it off at the end and ask what they saw or heard. Make it a chance to bring out and address their concerns.

And finally, be aware of your own feelings of stress and fear. Children are listening to the adult conversations around them as well as the media. Find a chance to talk to other adults and take time away from young ears to discuss your feelings.

