

# YOUR EVERYDAY GESTURES CAN HELP A CHILD HEAL.

Research continues to show that witnessing or experiencing traumatic events in childhood can impact the physical development of a child's brain. You can help reverse the effects. In fact, as a caring adult, you could be the most important factor in helping children heal. Here's what you can do:



## CELEBRATE

Use "put-ups," not "put-downs."



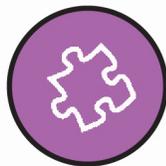
## COMFORT

Stay calm and patient.



## LISTEN

Show an interest in their passions.



## COLLABORATE

Ask for their opinions.



## INSPIRE

Expose them to new ideas.

Childhood trauma  
**Changing minds.**

DEFENDING CHILDHOOD  FUTURES WITHOUT VIOLENCE

Washtenaw  
**SUCCESS BY 6**



[www.WashtenawSuccessBy6.org](http://www.WashtenawSuccessBy6.org)

Find more information and helpful tips at [ChangingMindsNOW.org](http://ChangingMindsNOW.org)

## CELEBRATE

- Greet children by name and ask them questions about what they like to do.
- Tell them what you like about them and what value they bring to the world.
- Take children's concerns seriously and offer validating statements.
- Make them feel important and include older children in any treatment planning.
- Praise them for being brave after a difficult procedure.

## COMFORT

- Take children's concerns seriously and offer validating statements. Refer to further assessments or services as needed.
- Explain what you are going to do, in detail, to help children know what to expect.
- When appropriate, allow parents or caregivers to offer emotional and physical support during visits. Prompt parents or caregivers to prepare children ahead of time.
- Respect children's privacy and, when appropriate, talk to them without their caregivers present.
- Answer children's questions honestly, but age appropriately.
- Allow a child to participate in some choices, as appropriate.
- If a procedure will be painful or scary, offer coping or relaxation strategies such as deep breathing, blowing bubbles, or singing together.
- Talk to children about strategies to calm themselves down when they're feeling upset, angry, or afraid. Discuss what they notice about their bodies when they have these feelings (heart beating faster, stomach feeling funny.) Guide adolescents to appropriate brief meditation or deep-breathing videos or smartphone apps.

## LISTEN

- Make eye contact and show children that you're interested in what they have to say about what's bothering them. Remove physical barriers such as computers or medical equipment.
- Ask normalizing questions to elicit responses. For example, "A lot of kids I see are experiencing XYZ. Might that be going on for you?" or "Given how common XYZ is, we have begun to ask all our patients about it. Is this something that's going on for you?"

## COLLABORATE

- Encourage children to describe what's bothering them in their own words, and ask them what solutions they've tried in the past.
- Collaborate on treatment or referral options. Involve children in the process.

## INSPIRE

- Ask all children about their dreams and aspirations.
- Expose them to what you do. Talk to kids about what you like about being a healthcare provider.