COPA
CENTRAL OREGON
PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES

A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Supporting your child after something scary

Simple ways to support your kids, and yourself, in the days and weeks ahead.

1 How to talk with your kids after something scary

2 Common reactions in kids and teens

3 Supporting your child in the weeks ahead

4 Helping your child go back to school

5 Helping kids through grief

6 Trusted guides for families

Our pediatricians and Behavioral Health Consultants are here for your family.
In a crisis, call or text 988.

541-389-6313

COPA
CENTRAL OREGON
PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES

How to talk with your kids after something scary

1 Ask what they know

Start with what they've heard or seen, then gently correct anything that isn't true.

2 Keep it simple and honest

It's better they hear it from you. Give simple, accurate facts that fit their age.

3 Listen to their feelings

Fear, sadness, and anger are all normal. Let them know their feelings make sense.

4 Reassure them about safety

Explain where it happened and that grown-ups and helpers are working to keep people safe.

5 Limit graphic news

Shield young kids from repeated images. Watch with older kids so you can pause and talk.

6 Keep checking in

Kids often hide worry. Keep the conversation going in the days and weeks ahead.

When to reach out

Trouble sleeping, headaches or stomachaches, clinginess, irritability, or fears that won't fade can mean your child needs more support. Call us at 541-389-6313. Our pediatricians and Behavioral Health Consultants are here to help.

Adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics, HealthyChildren.org

We're in this together.

copakids.com

COPA
CENTRAL OREGON
PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES

WHAT TO EXPECT

Common reactions in kids and teens after a shooting

Feelings

Fear, worry about safety, or fear it could happen again. Sadness and anger are common too.

Behavior

More irritable, restless, or withdrawn. Trouble focusing or less interest in friends and activities.

Sleep and appetite

Sleeping or eating much more or much less than usual.

Body

Headaches, stomachaches, and other aches and pains.

School and family

Changes in schoolwork and in how they get along with friends and family.

Reminders

Loud noises, sirens, news images, or memorials can bring back strong feelings.

These reactions are normal.

Most fade over time with love and support. If you're worried about your child, our pediatricians and Behavioral Health Consultants are here to help.

Adapted from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)

copakids.com

COPA
CENTRAL OREGON
PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES

HOW YOU CAN HELP

8 ways to support your child in the weeks ahead

1 Keep the door open
Welcome questions and feelings. It's okay not to have every answer, and don't force a talk.

2 Pick good moments
Talk during meals or calm time together. Avoid heavy talks right before bed.

3 Talk about safety
Share what adults and the community are doing to keep kids safe.

4 Keep routines
Regular meals, sleep, homework, and chores help kids feel steady.

5 Limit news and social media
Images and rumors can renew fear. Offer a walk, a game, or a talk instead.

6 Ease guilt
Kids may blame themselves. Remind them gently that it was not their fault.

7 Help with reminders
When a sound or image brings back fear, help them notice it and remember they are safe now.

8 Offer healthy outlets
Exercise, journaling, and time with friends. Talk with teens about risky ways of coping.

We're in this together.

Adapted from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)

copakids.com

COPA
CENTRAL OREGON
PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES

BACK TO SCHOOL

Helping your child go back to school

Going back can bring up a lot, for kids and for parents. These ideas can help.

1 Expect big feelings

Nervous, excited, quiet, or all at once. Every one of these is normal.

Try: Ask, "What are you thinking about going back?" Then listen.

2 Walk through the day

Knowing what to expect helps kids feel more in control.

Try: Picture it out loud: breakfast, drop-off, and "I'll be right here at 3:00."

3 Answer safety questions honestly

Stay calm, keep it simple, and name the grown-ups keeping them safe.

Try: Ask, "Who is a grown-up at school you can go to if you feel scared?"

4 Make goodbyes predictable

Familiar routines, good sleep, and a plan for reaching each other help.

Try: Try a goodbye ritual: a special handshake or a note in the lunchbox.

5 Keep checking in

Some reactions show up weeks later. Respond with patience, not punishment.

Try: At calm times, ask, "How did today feel? Was anything hard?"

Safe grown-ups to name

- Teachers and the principal
- School counselors
- Office staff
- Bus drivers
- Local police and first responders
- And you, at home, every day

Our **pediatricians and Behavioral Health Consultants** are here to help: **541-389-6313**

Guidance from NCTSN and the AAP

COPA · copakids.com

COPA
CENTRAL OREGON
PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES

SUPPORTING GRIEVING KIDS

Helping kids through grief

Grief is a natural response to loss. With love and support, kids can heal at their own pace.

1 There's no right way to grieve

Some kids cry, some go quiet, some keep playing. All of these can be grief.

Try: Instead of "Are you okay?", try "I'm here whenever you want to talk."

2 Use the real words

Phrases like "lost" or "went to sleep" can confuse or frighten kids.

Try: "When someone dies, their body stops working. They can't come back."

3 Grief isn't a straight line

Feelings come and go, and often return at reminders, like a favorite park.

Try: Name the reminder, and let your child know it's okay to miss the person.

4 Say their name

Talking about the person who died shows kids their memories are welcome.

Try: Make a memory jar of favorite moments and read them together.

5 Kids grieve through play

Drawing, music, building and running around help say what words can't.

Try: Offer a choice: "Draw, take a walk, or just sit together?"

6 Grown-ups need support, too

Kids do better when the adults caring for them are supported.

Try: Choose one small thing that helps you recharge, and ask for help.

Free "My Grief Book" activity packet for kids at **copakids.com** · **541-389-6313**

Adapted from the Dougy Center · dougy.org

COPA · copakids.com

COPA
CENTRAL OREGON
PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES

LEARN MORE

Trusted guides for families and educators

FOR PARENTS · AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS
Talking to Children About Tragedies & Other News Events
Age-by-age tips, limiting news, and signs your child needs more help. **healthychildren.org**

FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS · NCTSN
Talking to Children About the Shooting
Starting the conversation, finding out what your child knows, and easing fears. **nctsn.org**

FOR PARENTS · NCTSN · ALSO IN SPANISH
Talking to Youth When Scary Things Happen
Going slowly, naming feelings, and limiting upsetting media. Updated January 2026. **nctsn.org**

FOR PARENTS · NCTSN
Parent Guidelines for Helping Youth After the Recent Shooting
Common reactions and how to help in the weeks ahead. **nctsn.org**

FOR KIDS WITH AUTISM OR LEARNING DIFFERENCES · AUTISM SPEAKS
Visual Supports
Pictures, emotion cards, communication boards and visual schedules. **autismspeaks.org**

FOR YOUNG CHILDREN · SESAME WORKSHOP · ALSO IN SPANISH
Traumatic Experiences
Short videos, stories and calming activities for ages 0 to 6. **sesameworkshop.org**

FOR EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL STAFF · NCTSN
School Shooting Resources
For teachers, special educators, school psychologists and administrators. **nctsn.org**

Questions? Call COPA at 541-389-6313.

copakids.com