

ESSEX

**VIOLENCE &
VULNERABILITY**

UNIT

Parent Guidance: How to have a conversation about child exploitation

Step 1:

Stay calm and observant

"I've noticed some changes in your behaviour lately, and I just want to check-in with you. Is everything okay?"

- Avoid accusations or panic
- Focus on expressing concern and love
- Observe without judgment

Step 2:

Create a safe space to talk

"You can talk to me about anything. I'm here to listen, not to judge."

- Choose a quiet, private moment
- Reassure your child that they are safe and supported
- Let them speak freely – don't interrupt or push too hard

Step 3:

Ask open-ended questions

"Can you tell me more about your new friends?"

"Is there anyone making you feel uncomfortable or pressured?"

- Avoid yes/no questions unless necessary
- Be patient – children may need time to open up
- Stay calm

Step 4:

Reassure and affirm

"You're not in trouble. I'm proud of you for talking to me."

"Whatever's happened, it's not your fault."

- Reinforce that they are not to blame
- Validate their feelings and experiences
- Avoid showing anger or disappointment

Step 5:

Take protective action

"I'm going to help you stay safe. We might need to talk to someone who can help us more."

- Contact professionals: NSPCC, CEOP, school safeguarding lead, or local social services
- Document concerns and any disclosures
- Do not confront suspected exploiters yourself

Step 6:

Continue support

"I'm here for you, always. We'll take this one step at a time."

- Keep communication open
- Monitor online activity and peer relationships
- Seek counselling or support services if needed

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