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7 Tips for Parents & Guardians: How to Support Children When They Feel Sad

Helping children cope with sadness.

7 evidence-based tips for parents and guardians, based on UNICEF guidance.

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Tip 1: Acknowledge the feeling

Let your child know it’s okay to feel sad.
Don’t rush to fix it, simply accept the emotion.

Source: UNICEF -“Supporting Children with Depression, Stress, and Anxiety”

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Tip 2: Be present and calm

Your calm presence brings safety.
Children mirror your emotions.
Stay grounded and patient.

Source: UNICEF -"Supporting Children with Depression, Stress, and Anxiety"

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Tip 3: Listen more than you speak

Give space for feelings to come out. Sometimes silence and attention say more than advice.

Source: UNICEF -"Supporting Children with Depression, Stress, and Anxiety"

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Tip 4: Encourage healthy expression

Art, play, or storytelling help process emotions.
Creativity turns sadness into understanding.

Source: UNICEF -"Supporting Children with Depression, Stress, and Anxiety"

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Tip 5: Protect from stress

Create a peaceful, predictable environment.
Small routines can make children feel secure again.

Source: UNICEF -"Supporting Children with Depression, Stress, and Anxiety"

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Tip 6: Offer comfort and connection

A hug, shared time, or kind words matter most.
Presence builds resilience and trust.

Source: UNICEF -"Supporting Children with Depression, Stress, and Anxiety"

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Tip 7: Seek help if sadness deepens

If sadness lasts or affects daily life, reach out.
Support from family or professionals can help.

Source: UNICEF -"Supporting Children with Depression, Stress, and Anxiety"

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Build emotional skills that last a lifetime.

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