

Book review



When the world feels like a scary place: Essential conversations for anxious parents and worried kids

Category: Book Reviews / Children & Youth

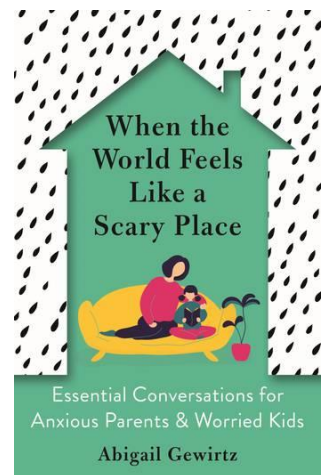
Author: by Abigail Gewirtz PhD

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Audience: Self-help



Conversations with children can be challenging, especially when it comes to the big stuff. Bullying, violence, climate change, racism and Covid-19 are examples of subjects tackled in this book by child psychologist Abigail Gerwitz. After reading, parents will have a plethora of tools and strategies to handle the curliest of questions with their child.

This is an excellent book for parents who want guidance on what to say and how to say it when faced with difficult conversations. Children are not immune to stress, anxiety and the negative emotions caused by societal issues. For parents, talking and listening are the fundamental tools in the parenting toolbox. Ultimately, effective communication can foster resilient, confident children in times of stress.

Abigail strongly emphasises the need for parents to ‘coach’ their child through big emotions. Over three chapters, emotions are explored and advice is tailored to infants, children and teens. Remaining chapters are broken down into subject-specific scenarios, such as natural disasters and technology. Although an American perspective is evident, it doesn’t detract from the core themes and is suitable for New Zealand parents.

With clear explanations and examples, readers are shown how to manage conversations effectively. The conversation scripts peppered throughout the book are a highlight. They use likely scenarios to demonstrate word-for-word how a conversation could develop.

Any parent who has been lost for words after a child's tough question will benefit from reading '*When the World feels like a scary place*'.

Reviewed by Gina Speedy, School Counsellor at Auckland Normal Intermediate