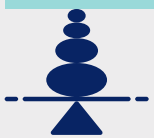
Ways to Speak to Children About Events in Ukraine

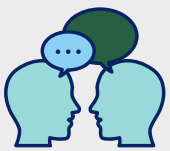
The media coverage of events in Ukraine is undoubtedly being heard by our children. The use words such as invasion, attack, bombing and war are, undoubtedly, being overheard and absorbed by our children. For some, this may well be very frightening. Sitting on top of the experiences of the last two years may add further anxiety and fear, exacerbating distress. As parents/carers or teachers, you may feel uncertain about the best way to reassure without raising anxiety further. We may inadvertently communicate our own anxieties and fears around the events by if we don't notice how we are feeling before speaking to them, or by ignoring the topic completely



Steady yourself before you start to speak to your child. Your child will take their cues from you, if you appear anxious, their fear may escalate. **Be calm, steady and factual.**

Find out what your child understands already and what they may have heard. "I'm guessing you have heard lots about Ukraine on the news, or from adults talking about it, I'm wondering what you may be thinking about it or if you have any questions ?"





Listen, Validate, Empathise to your child's fears and worries. Be compassionate and understanding and accept their feelings before moving to reassure. War **is** frightening and this comes on top of their experiences of the pandemic which may have heightened their sense that the world is not safe.



Contextualise and contain locate where the conflict is happening so the child has a sense of distance and the risk of them being caught up in the conflict for them is low. Use appropriate sources of information - BBC Newsround, Time for Kids, News for Kids, The Day to find accurate, age appropriate information



Take action: be aware of what your child is overhearing either through news bulletins or through adults discussing the situation. Find ways to empower your child in to do something meaningful - maybe contribute to care parcels sent out to those displaced by the conflict, find out what is happening locally to provide support, looking for those helping can balance the child's perspective