

PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY: HELPING YOUR FAMILY UNDERSTAND YOUR JOB



DHS employees often face unique challenges when it comes to explaining their jobs to their children. To help aid your family's conversations, review these suggestions to help navigate potentially tough conversations. Be sure to tailor your conversation with your child's developmental understanding, including age-appropriate language. Provide examples of how you do your best to keep the country safe and what a typical day looks like. Explain how you help and protect people and help your child find examples in their own life of how they help others.

WHAT IS YOUR JOB?

DHS is composed of various Components and Offices carrying out unique missions to collectively safeguard the homeland.



Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office (CWMD)

CWMD safeguards the United States against chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats.



Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

CBP protects the country's borders, on land, air, and maritime domains, and facilitates international trade and travel.



Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

CISA works to understand, manage, and reduce risk to our country's cyber and physical infrastructure.



DHS Headquarters (DHS HQ)

DHS HQ provides guidance, policy, and oversight to all DHS Components to protect the country from evolving threats.



Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

FEMA works side-by-side with local leaders and communities to respond and recover when emergency strikes.



Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC)

FLETC trains federal, state, local, tribal, and international law enforcement personnel to protect the people, property, and institutions.



Federal Protective Service (FPS)

FPS officers and agents protect federal government buildings, employees, and visitors.



Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

ICE protects the country by enforcing immigration laws to preserve national security.



Science and Technology Directorate (S&T)

S&T provides scientific and technical expertise to help address current and emerging threats to the nation.



Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

TSA protects the country's transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce.



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

USCIS manages lawful immigration to the United States.



United States Coast Guard (USCG)

USCG ensures our nation's maritime safety, security, and stewardship.



U.S. Secret Service (USSS)

USSS has two types of jobs: investigation and protection. These jobs protect important people, banks, and businesses.

PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY: EXPLAINING YOUR JOB AND SUPPORTING YOUR CHILDREN AFTER AN INCIDENT



WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS GONE?

Your child may notice that your schedule means missing some events. Be honest with your child about why and when you will have to miss things. Try some of these strategies:

- Don't make promises you can't keep. Sometimes things come up unexpectedly, so be mindful of what you are committing to, as to not overpromise or disappoint your child.
- Find a special activity or event to enhance special parent/child bonding time. This will help your child feel more connected to you when you can't be there.
- Explain why the work you do is important. Giving a purpose to your absence may bring your child some comfort.

IS YOUR JOB DANGEROUS?

- Explain why it is important to establish relationships with local law enforcement and emergency responders.
- Create family plans for different scenarios so your family knows how to react if you are in a stressful or dangerous situation.
- Explain why it is important to practice online safety and reduce personally identifiable information online.

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILDREN AFTER AN INCIDENT

- Confirm the physical safety of your child(ren).
- Reassure them of their safety and that the incident is over. Be and remain patient.
- Be an active listener, ask what they are thinking and feeling, and take their concerns seriously.
- Explain to them why the incident occurred using age-appropriate language and concepts.
- Spend time together to demonstrate your support.
- Help them feel in control by allowing them to make some decisions for themselves, like choosing their clothes or meals.
- Protect them by limiting their exposure to news reports and other reminders of the trauma.
- Contact your family's health care provider if your child develops new problems, such as flashbacks or panic attacks.
- Leverage available [DHS resources](#) to support your family in managing stressful situations and review [DHS safety resources](#).

SIGNS OF ANXIETY

Your child may begin to exhibit signs of anxiety when you discuss the dangers of your job. Be mindful in addressing their concerns and assure them of your safety. Remind them you are protecting the community they live in. Anxiety is a form of stress, typically focused on what could happen. Some common signs of anxiety include:

- Excessive, persistent worrying
- Trouble sleeping
- Restlessness
- Lack of concentration
- Irritability

Model good coping skills, like exercising, journaling, and openly discussing your emotions. If anxiety results in your child's refusal to go to school, fear of the outside world, or difficulty focusing, schedule an appointment with your child's healthcare team.

DHS FAMILY RESOURCES

DHS employees often face unique challenges when it comes to explaining their jobs to their children. To help aid your family's conversations, visit the [DHS Employee Resources Kid's Corner](#). This corner of the DHS.gov site provides resources for DHS families who are interested in how the Department works. Additionally, the International Association of Chiefs of Police provides helpful [resources for the children of law enforcement officers](#), including [tips on discussing your job with your teen](#).

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (EAP)

EAPs are Component-specific programs that provide a variety of useful resources to DHS employees and their families, including dependent care resources, financial consultation, legal aid, counseling services, and referrals to a variety of other service providers.

EAP resources are free and confidential for all DHS employees and their families. Review the [Contact Your EAP section of the DHS.gov Employee Resources site](#) to find contact information for your Component's EAP provider.

