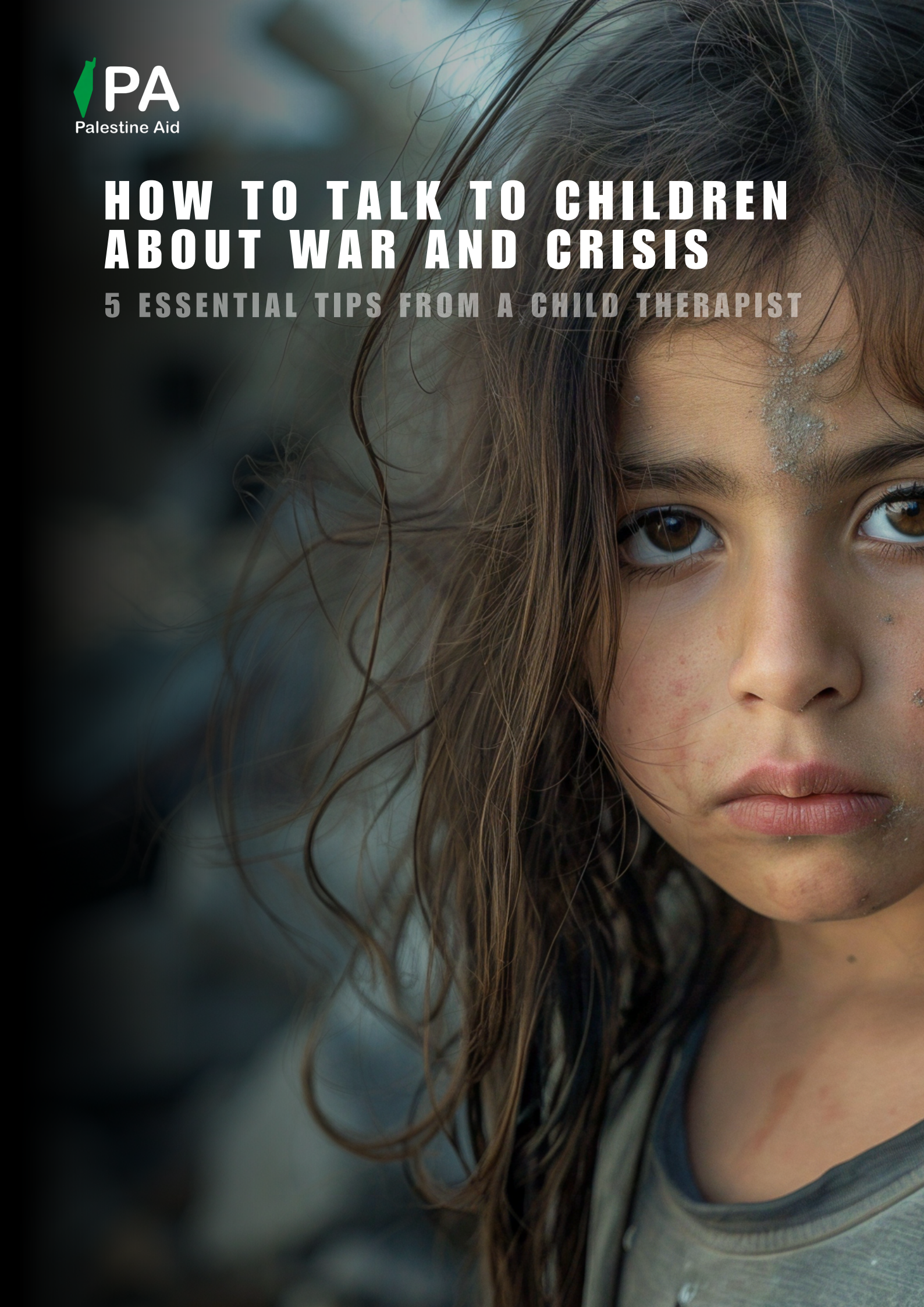


HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT WAR AND CRISIS

5 ESSENTIAL TIPS FROM A CHILD THERAPIST



About Us

Since 2008, Palestine Aid (PA) has been reaching out to Palestinian communities, striving to alleviate their suffering. We provide life-saving support to millions of Palestinians every year through our programs. Palestine Aid is a not-for-profit organisation, registered under number 13410072, and trading as Filastin Aid.

History

On 27 December 2008, the Gaza Massacre took place, which was a three-week armed conflict between Palestinians and the Israel Defense Forces, resulting in 1,417 Palestinian and 13 Israeli deaths. On 14 February 2009, after raising over £1 million worth of humanitarian aid in under four weeks, hundreds of volunteers launched the first convoy comprising approximately 110 vehicles for Gaza. Following this, Palestine Aid was formally established to continue providing front-line support in Palestine.

Where We Work

Together with our team and local partners, we work in Palestine, including Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza and Egypt. We also operate in Lebanon and the Jordan refugee camps.

Our Partners

Palestine Aid is an implementing partner for international NGOs.

In every crisis or conflict, children are among the most vulnerable. Whether caught in the middle of warzones or watching events unfold from afar, the impact on their mental health can be profound and long-lasting.

Even children who are not directly affected—those living far from the epicentre—are increasingly exposed to distressing news and imagery through social media, television, and adult conversations. Many are frightened, confused, and overwhelmed.

To help parents, caregivers, teachers and guardians support children through these difficult conversations, Abu Muad, counsellor at Palestine Aid, shares five expert tips on how to respond with sensitivity, honesty and care.

1. Make Time and Truly Listen

Children often raise concerns when you least expect it—during playtime, at bedtime, or while you're busy. When they do, stop and give them your full attention.

Invite them to share what they've heard, what they're feeling, and what they want to know. Don't rush to correct them—listen first, without interruption. This will help you understand their thoughts and fears and give them confidence that their voice matters.

2. Adapt the Conversation to Their Age

Children process information differently depending on their age and emotional development.

For younger children, simple explanations may be enough—such as “Sometimes, people or countries argue and fight, and it's very sad.” Older children and teenagers may need more context and may ask difficult questions. Be prepared to offer honest answers, even when you don't have all the information.

Stick to facts, avoid graphic detail, and correct misinformation gently. Your calm and clarity will help them feel more secure.

3. Acknowledge and Validate Their Feelings

It's natural for children to feel scared, sad, angry or even guilty. Let them know it's okay to feel this way.

Avoid minimising their emotions by saying things like "Don't worry" or "It's not that bad." Instead, try: "I can see that this is really upsetting for you, and I'm here with you."

Providing a safe space for children to express themselves without judgement allows them to process emotions in a healthy way and fosters trust.

4. Offer Reassurance and Stability

Children need to hear that they are safe and that trusted adults are doing everything they can to protect them—and to help those who are affected.

Remind them that it is not their responsibility to fix the world's problems. Their job is to be a child: to play, learn, laugh, and grow. Let them know that feeling joy or having fun does not take away from caring about others—it actually brings hope.

5. Empower Them with Practical Ways to Help

Helping children take constructive action can turn helplessness into purpose.

Encourage them to get involved in age-appropriate ways—organising a fundraiser at school, writing cards or messages of support, creating drawings for peace, or learning about the cultures and stories of people affected. These small acts nurture compassion and give children a sense of agency.

"These children have lost everything; they stand alone in the world with no surviving family, no living soul to call their own."

W. Diab

Palestinian Kindergarten Teacher



Palestine Aid

PALESTINE AID
124 CITY ROAD
LONDON
EC1V 2NX

EMAIL US AT [INFO@PALESTINEAID.ORG](mailto:info@palestineaid.org)

CALL US ON 020 8088 9789

PALESTINE AID IS A NOT FOR PROFIT ORGANISATION. REGISTRATION NUMBER: 13410072