



PARENTS & FAMILIES / FREE RESOURCE

Supporting Emotional Wellbeing

Everyday listening, relationships and knowing when to seek more help.

FOR: Parents, carers and wider families

Being a CODA is not a mental health condition. This guide is about supporting any child's wellbeing while recognising that some experiences may be specific to Deaf-parented families.

Every family is different. Every CODA story matters.

Start with listening

Children need freedom to express positive and difficult feelings.

All feelings have a place

A child may feel proud of their family, frustrated by strangers' questions, happy about signing or unsure how to explain something at school. Several feelings can be true at once.

Keep conversations low pressure

Try "What was the best part of today?" and "Was there anything uncomfortable?". Listen before problem-solving and avoid insisting on an explanation.

- Create regular one-to-one time that is about the child's interests.
- Notice changes in mood, sleep, friendships or school enjoyment without jumping to conclusions.
- Offer choices: talking, drawing, walking together or coming back later.

Avoid assumptions

Not every CODA feels caught between communities or has interpreting responsibilities. Learn what this child experiences instead of using a fixed narrative.

Your child does not need to be positive about every experience to love their family.

When extra support could help

Support should be accessible, proportionate and respectful of the family.

Check the basics

Ask about friendships, bullying, exams, school stress and routines. If the issue relates to unwanted interpreting, work with the relevant service to arrange adult communication support.

People who may help

- A trusted adult chosen by the child.
- The school pastoral or safeguarding team.
- A GP or other suitable health professional if worries persist or interfere with daily life.
- Appropriate children's mental health support when indicated.

Urgent safety concerns

If a child is at immediate risk of serious harm, seek urgent emergency assistance. For other safeguarding concerns, follow local safeguarding pathways.

A family check-in

Make space for a small weekly conversation, without turning it into a formal assessment. Keep plans realistic, positive and led by what the child finds useful.

Your notes or next steps

When does our child seem most comfortable opening up?

Who are their trusted adults outside the family?

A simple feelings and support plan

You can complete this together, or let your child skip it.

What helps me feel good?

- People, places and activities I enjoy: _____
- One thing I feel proud of: _____

When I feel worried or frustrated

- A sign I might need support: _____
- Something that helps me feel calmer: _____

People I can turn to

- At home: _____
- At school or in my community: _____

Remember

Children deserve confidentiality appropriate to their age, but adults must act where safety concerns arise. Adapt this to individual needs, including communication preferences.

You can change this plan whenever your child wants to.