



## Hope for Children, by Dr. Brad Schwall

What is our hope for children? How can we give them hope? In order to help our children have hope, we must think about what they **need** and our **responsibility** in meeting those needs. Educators, mentors, counselors, physicians, and families must commit every day to give children hope by actively working to meet their needs.

### **Children need safety.**

They need proper physical care and safety to help them be free from physical harm, sexual abuse, and emotional mistreatment.

### ***Our responsibility is to protect them.***

We must advocate for children ensuring that security measures are in place to protect them. We must diligently ensure a safe environment at home and school by reporting abuse, screening volunteers, training those working with children, and teaching children boundaries. Our children may face struggles with emotions and their mental health. We must respond and find the treatment or resources that will help them. There are no simple solutions. Helping our children heal and grow takes openness to help, commitment, and perseverance.

### **Children need skills for life.**

Children need skills for handling emotions and solving problems. Problem-solving enables us to be resilient and deal constructively with challenges.

### ***Our responsibility is to equip them with skills.***

We teach skills for life by modeling and prompting children to know when to apply those skills. We teach them to express themselves by listening to them. We teach them to problem-solve by guiding them to think of solutions to problems.

### **Children need attention.**

Children thrive on attention. They seek attention. Children may even seek negative attention if adults do not give them the positive attention they need.

### ***Our responsibility is to give encouragement.***

Show unconditional love. Allow children to play and be themselves. Create an environment that encourages discovery. Affirm their inner qualities, imagination, and effort. A mentor listening, a teacher affirming, a parent spending time all help children feel cared for and empowered.

We are never guaranteed complete safety or freedom from pain and challenges, but we can commit to protecting, nurturing, and advocating for children every day. We all must do our part to give children hope.

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