

When Your Kids Feel Stuck: Here's How to Help

Kids giving up. Kids not asking for help. They're asking for help when they should know what to do on their own. Sound familiar? These are common frustrations.

As I write about in *Screens and Teens*, helplessness can be an effect of digital devices. Kids of all ages believe things should be easy, learning shouldn't take any effort and winning should be guaranteed. Of course, none of this is true!

Many parents and teachers tell me that kids are hurrying through their work, not concerned with excellence. They skip things they can't easily do on their own. This is true of academic pursuits, musical practices and handling chores around the house.

When children aren't sure what to do, many of them aren't asking for help. Perhaps they can't admit they need it because "everything should be easy." They might not even know what kind of help they need. When that's the case, asking for help is nearly impossible.

Some children get easily scared of something that looks new and hard and ask for help before making honest attempts on their own.

I feel for these children and for you because this isn't healthy, but it is stressful. The next time you see kids behaving in one of these ways, maybe you can use the example of an escalator to open up communication.

Remind your kids of escalators they've seen in movie theaters, shopping malls and museums. Ask them to picture two people on an escalator when it unexpectedly stops. They realize it's broken and they feel stuck. They wait quite a while, just

looking around. Then they begin to shout,

“Somebody help us!”

“Help us! The escalator isn’t moving!”

“We’re not moving! Somebody get help!”

Hopefully your kids will see how silly that is. Perhaps you’ll all have a good laugh. Then talk about what they could have done instead. “Walk up the stairs created by the escalator, of course.”

Exactly. Take a step. Get moving. Do for yourself what you can do. {eo}

Dr. Kathy Koch *is the author of* Screens & Teens: Connecting with Our Kids in A Wireless World.

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