

# Helping Without Overstepping: How Can We Support Each Other?

## Conversation Guide for Families

**7** Tips to help families communicate openly and compassionately about offering—and receiving—support during times of need.



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# 1. Start with the Heart

Open with a tone of care, not control.

## **Prompt:**

“I’ve been thinking about how we help each other when life changes—whether it’s a new baby, someone healing from a fall, or just feeling overwhelmed. I don’t want to assume what anyone needs. Can we talk about how we can support each other better?”



## 2. Tell a Story

Share a moment when your good intentions didn't land quite right (humor helps!)

### **Prompt:**

“Can I tell you about the time I tried to help—and it kind of backfired? I meant well, but I learned a lot from it.”

(This helps ease tension and show you're not just pointing fingers—you're in this too.)



# 3. The 15-Minute Rule

Introduce the idea gently. It's a simple and respectful framework.

## **Prompt:**

"I once learned something helpful: when someone's in a crisis, try to just get them back to where they were 15 minutes before. Not to 'fix' everything. Just to help stabilize. That idea has really stayed with me."

## **Ask:**

"Do you think that approach would work for us when someone needs help? Just meeting the immediate need, without pushing big changes unless they're really necessary?"



# 4. Short-Term vs. Long-Term Help

This helps frame needs clearly and reduces anxiety.

## Ask:

“What do you consider a short-term need—like a new baby, or recovering from surgery—and what would you call a long-term change?”

## Prompt:

“I’d love to know how you’d want support in both situations. What feels helpful? What feels like too much?”



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# 5. Boundaries & Lifestyles

Normalize that families do things differently.

## **Ask:**

“Are there things about how we each live that we should be mindful of when helping each other? Like how we cook, clean, relax—or what we’re used to?”

## **Prompt:**

“I want to be respectful, even if I would do something differently in my own home.”



# 6. What Does Help Look Like to You?

Make space for each person to speak.

## **Ask Everyone:**

“When you’re in a hard spot, what makes you feel truly supported?”

“Is there anything that’s well-meaning but actually stressful for you?”



# 7. Create a “Help Map” Together

A simple way to reduce future friction.

## Try This:

Each person shares:

- One thing they find helpful in tough times
- One boundary they'd like others to respect
- One way they like to offer help



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# Closing Thought

“We all want to show up for each other. These conversations help us do it with love, respect, and understanding, especially before the big stuff happens.”

