



DAILY NEWS Boroughs



Search for

ftr

Current



Home | News & Views | Sports | Entertainment | Business | Boroughs | City Life

Shift your dial-up
connection into high gear!



Helping kids deal with 9/11

By JOYCE SHELBY

DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Just two nights before it was time to go back to school, Regina Coleman's daughter, Zekiiyah, 5, had an unusual bedtime request.

"She said, 'Mommy, could you sleep with me? Could you hold on to me? I'm scared of the dark.' I was surprised," said Coleman, of Coney Island, "but I told her that I'd stay with her and light a candle. And when I did, I could see that she was crying."

In the mid-'90s, Coleman worked as a receptionist and secretary at the World Trade Center. She said she cried for days when the towers collapsed. "A year later, it's still hard," she said.

But Coleman, who now works for the Board of Education, said she didn't connect her daughter's tears to memories of Sept. 11 until she talked with Project Liberty social worker Lizzie Livingston.

On Wednesday night, Livingston conducted a session for parents at the Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island. It was sponsored by the council and the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty.

The Jewish Community Council received a \$300,000 grant last winter to help people who lost their jobs because of the World Trade Center attack. Leah Miller, who is in charge of the program, said, "We realized that as kids go back to school and programs come on television, a lot of fears will come up. We wanted to give parents direction."

Reluctance

Miller said many of the parents invited to the session declined to attend.

"They said they didn't need it or they didn't want to talk about 9/11 anymore," she said.

Such reactions are typical, said Livingston, who has conducted sessions in Brooklyn and Manhattan. "But the parents who attend are shocked by how

The
40
we
will
fro
B
Ca

much 9/11 has impacted them. ... And I don't think they recognize the anxieties they see in their children as being related to 9/11 until you help them make the connection."

Livingston said studies two years after the Oklahoma City bombing showed that some children were still very much affected by what happened.

"There is no one in New York City who wasn't affected directly by 9/11," Livingston said.

A year later, children under age 2 might not ask any questions, she said, and parents of children ages 3 to 5 should talk about the anniversary in simple terms, and only if asked.

Classroom talk

But school-aged children will probably discuss 9/11 in their classrooms. Livingston recommended asking children about what is planned as a way of opening discussions on feelings.

"Don't over-question," Livingston advised, "and reassure your children you'll do everything possible to keep them safe. Children need to feel safe."

As parents listened, their children met in an adjoining room to paint a mural and talk.

"We gently brought up 9/11," Miller said. "We told the children everyone felt sad about it, and that's okay."

After the session, Coleman said she was glad she had fought off the urge not to attend. She said, "Lizzie made me aware of things I had missed."

Project Liberty offers help to adults and children at (800) LIFENET. People in Brooklyn who need help because they lost their jobs as a result of Sept. 11 can call the Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island, (718) 449-5000, ext. 222.

Originally published on September 6, 2002

 [Email a Friend](#)

 [Printer Friendly Version](#)

LEFT

	> Save with a low rate
	> Tax-deductible interest ¹
	> No closing costs
	Find out more >

[Home](#) | [News & Views](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Business](#) | [Boroughs](#) | [CityLife](#) | [Services](#)

All contents © 2004 Daily News, L.P.
[Disclaimer and Copyright Notice](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#)