

TALKING TO YOUR 4-11 YEAR-OLD

SAFETY RULES

As a family, we can learn and teach others how to keep safe. Parents and teachers teach children many different ways to keep themselves safe, such as, “look both ways before crossing the street,” and “wear your helmet when you ride your bike.”

There are other safety rules we should know about, and these rules are about children feeling comfortable in every situation. Teach your child:

- Your body belongs to you. You can keep it safe and private.
- It’s not okay for anyone to touch the private parts of your body and tell you to keep it a secret.
- It is not okay for you to be told to keep a secret that makes you feel uncomfortable. It’s okay to tell an adult you trust.
- If you ever feel unsafe, or get a feeling in your belly that something is not okay, talk to an adult about it. Keep talking about it until
- you get help.
- It’s never too late to talk with your parents or an adult that you trust about anything that makes you feel uneasy. Your parents want
- you to talk with them.
- Remember it’s always okay to talk to an adult you trust who can help you with your questions and concerns.

SAFETY HELPERS

Parents, together with your child, come up with names of people who will be safety helpers:

At school: _____

At church: _____

At after-school activities: _____

WHY ARE PARENTS FEARFUL OF HAVING A CONVERSATION?

As parents, there are many reasons why we don’t talk to our children about this type of safety.

- Parents may not want to give their children information about this type of abuse for fear their innocence will be lost.
- Parents may believe that they have given them enough information and don’t want to overwhelm them with more.
- Parents may be afraid that children will ask questions that they will not be able to answer correctly.
- Parents may be afraid of saying the wrong thing or not knowing how to say things perfectly.
- Parents may believe having the “stranger danger” conversation will be sufficient.
- Parents may believe that because they are good parents their children are safe at all times.

It’s okay to be afraid and nervous. It’s normal to have these fears. As parents we must realize that it’s okay not to be perfect each time we talk with our children. Try not to let your fears prevent you from talking to your children. An adult’s role is to keep children safe as much as possible. One important way of doing this is by having these sometimes difficult conversations.

WHAT DO CHILDREN THINK?

Young children are amazing in their thinking. Children may see things as black or white, and yes or no. Here are some typical ideas and thoughts that children may have because they think concretely.

- Children may think unsafe things only happen at night.
- Children may think only strangers are unsafe.
- Children may think they are too smart to be fooled by a possible predator.
- Children may believe they are more powerful than they really are.

It is a parent's job to use age appropriate words to help children understand realistic situations.

QUESTIONS TO RAISE WITH YOUR CHILD

- What do you think is personal safety?
- When you think of someone who is unsafe, how do you describe this person?
- Is an unsafe person pretty or ugly? Why do you think this?
- Strangers aren't the only unsafe people we come across. Can you tell me who else might harmful?
- How do you think a person we love and trust could cause us discomfort?
- Who can you talk to if you are confused or have questions?

WHAT IF GAME

- What if someone you know and trust makes you feel uneasy? What would you do?
- What if someone you like asks you to do something you think is wrong? What would you do?
- What if someone asks you to keep a secret that makes you feel funny? What would you do?
- What if you go to an adult with your questions or concerns and nothing is done? What would you do?