



A Checklist for Teaching Older Children and Adolescents Personal Safety Skills

- Talk to them about trusting their intuition. If they have the feeling things are not right they should leave or get help.
- Help them to establish their own personal limits and give suggestions about getting out of situations or telling others what their limits are.
- Teach them to watch out for inappropriate behavior. If, for example, a person makes sexual comments, sexual gestures, inappropriate physical contact, or is offensive to them in any way, leave the area and/or telephone a trusted person to pick them up and take them home.
- Help them establish a list of people they can go to for help. There are some issues that teens may not be comfortable discussing with their parents. Tell them that if they go to one of these adults for help, they will be believed and supported. Remember, children and even teens, very rarely lie about sexual abuse.
- Set rules for the Internet. Teach them that they must not meet in person anyone they meet on the Internet.

Help for Reporting Suspected Abuse

Local Child Protection Office

Check your local phonebook.

United Way 211 (First Call for Help)

1-800-543-7709

National Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-422-4453



Questions to Help Evaluate the Safety of a Program or Activity

Assessing safety is a factor in considering any program or activity in which your child might participate.

WHO

- How many people will be participating in the program/activity?
- What is the adult to child ratio?
- What kind of training or background is required of the adults?
- What policies are in place related to interactions with a child, especially being alone with a child?
- Who will be monitoring the activities to assure that policies are enforced and the children are safe at all times?

HOW

- What is the child safety policy?
- How are the activities monitored?
- Can parents or guardians drop in to check how things are going?
- Will there be times when children are alone with an adult? What kind of safeguards, including monitoring, are in place to assure the safety of everyone involved?
- How will concerns from children or adults be raised and addressed?

WHERE

- Where will the activities take place?
- What kind of procedures are in place to address potential safety problems in the space(s)?
- Do any activities take place off-site? If yes, how will I be notified and what procedures will be followed to assure safety?

RESOURCE FOR PARENTS



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There are some important steps we can take together to protect our children from sexual abuse. Partnering with your local parish or Catholic school in child protection catechesis is only one of them.

All children deserve to be safe and to grow up in the midst of healthy relationships. This brochure offers additional resources you might use to help your child naturally develop personal safety skills. They also offer support to you as you do your part in creating safe and sacred places for all children and young people.

**A Checklist for
Teaching
Young Children
Personal
Safety Skills**



- Teach children their full name, address and phone number.
- Teach children to tell if anyone asks them to keep a kiss, hug, or touch a secret. Explain that no one should ask them to do this and you will never be angry if they tell you. Ensure they know they must do this even if it feels good or if someone threatens them.
- Explain that it is alright to say NO. Practice with them. Shout NO loudly together. Also, allow them to choose to not hug or kiss Great Aunt Mary or Uncle Joe when he/she comes to visit if they so choose.
- Help them understand that their bodies are sacred and belong to them. Explain that this means their entire bodies, including their genitals. It is best if children know the correct names for all their body parts. However, if this makes you uncomfortable, you can say, "that includes the parts of your body covered by your bathing suit."
- Explain that they do not always have to listen to and obey adults if they feel unsafe and that you will support them.
- Tell them they should run away from someone who frightens them.
- Tell them that hugs and kisses are nice, but they are never kept secret.

Ten Principles of Child Protection Catechesis

1. Each person is uniquely made in the image and likeness of God. God is love; therefore, each person is made in the image of love and created to act in love. Our bodies are sacred and holy.
2. God lives in a family or a community which we call the Blessed Trinity. Persons are created to live in community, the smallest and most intimate of which is family. Family, in God's image, respects and cherishes the uniqueness and life of each of its members. The Church and school are partners with the family in educating, nurturing and protecting children.
3. Each person has dignity and must be treated with respect. We show our respect for each other in our language, behavior, and interactions with each other. Caring, concern and empathy for each other must be a hallmark of our lives as followers of Jesus. Because of the dignity of each person, our right to respect includes the right to privacy, especially privacy for our own bodies.
4. Touch is an integral part of being human. Touch can be safe, unsafe or unwanted. Safe touch, appropriate physical affection, is that kind of touch which is good for the person's body, makes one feel cared for, loved and important. Unsafe and unwanted touch makes a person feel uncomfortable and unhappy.
5. God has blessed every person with the gift of choice. Some bad choices affect a number of people negatively. Suffering, which is not willed by God and is not the fault of innocent persons, is the result of those bad choices.
6. Some actions or behaviors are wrong. Some actions or behaviors between adults, between adults and children, and between children are wrong. Behavior that harms self or others physically, psychologically, emotionally, or spiritually is wrong.
7. There are good secrets and bad secrets. There is good play and bad play. We can share good secrets and good play experiences and we must avoid bad secrets and bad play experiences.
8. Good and loving human relationships and friendships can help us understand ourselves, God and others. Some people misuse friendship and harm others.
9. Every person has the right to be safe. Children have the right to be protected from anything and anyone who may harm them. Adults have the responsibility to make the environment in which children live as safe as possible. That includes teaching children and young people proper, adequate coping and safety skills which will enable them to be safe and healthy.
10. Parents and teachers have the responsibility to assist children to identify a number of people in their lives to whom they can talk openly and honestly. Children must be taught that if help is not received to keep telling other trusted adults until someone helps them.