



Community Safety



The police cannot be everywhere at once. All members of a community can take on the responsibility for keeping their community safe for our children.

Community safety means every person in the community plays a role in keeping it safe. This approach addresses crime prevention as well as other things that may threaten safety, such as discrimination, pollution, and social exclusion.

Parents can teach children how to be safe and how to **recognize and respond to unsettling feelings**.

These skills can **empower our children** and help to make them less likely to be targeted.



Scare tactics don't work. Instead of trying to keep children away from all the potential dangers that they might face, we can **teach them skills to keep themselves safe** (Prepared – Not Scared). It is important for children to know how to protect themselves and listen to their own feelings.

Tools to Empower Children to Explore Their World with Safety & Confidence

- Walking and acting with **awareness, calmness, and confidence**
- **Checking first** with adults before changing plans to say where they are going and who they are with
- Checking with adults before letting a **person or an animal they don't know well** get close to them
- Moving **out of reach** if something or someone might be unsafe
- Setting strong, respectful **boundaries** with people they know
- Protecting their **feelings from hurtful words**
- Making a **safety plan** for how to get help everywhere they go
- Being persistent in getting **help from busy adults**
- **Yelling and running** to safety if they are scared

Some things you might say to your child to help him or her stay safe:

"It's okay to talk to someone if I'm with you or when I tell you it's all right."

"Grown-ups who need help should ask other grown-ups, not children, for help. This includes carrying a package or finding a place or a lost puppy."

"Stay near me or the grown-up with you in public places, such as stores or parks."

"If you're not close to us, stay an arm's length or more from someone you don't know. Back up or run for help if an unfamiliar grown-up gets too close. Scream and kick if a stranger grabs you."

"If you get lost, find a police officer, security person, or store clerk. If separated from me or the grown-up you're with in a public place, stay in that spot until someone finds you."

"Listen to your feelings. If you're scared, get away and look for someone to help."

Safety Tips for Families

- A stranger is a person you don't know. Just because we haven't met a person, doesn't mean that we have to teach our children to feel panicked by them. It's important to model awareness.
- If a child is old enough to be out without an adult, it is safer to be where there are other people close by to get help if needed
- Parents – use your safety plan to create an outline of rules, ideals, as a guide to create a concrete way to share it/develop it with your family.



Create a list of family safety rules for children answering the door, and using the phone or Internet.

Not all strangers are dangerous and sometimes familiar adults are. **Children need to have clear safety rules both for strangers and for setting boundaries with people they know.**

Remind Children:

- Touch or other behaviour for health or safety is not always a choice, but should never have to be a secret
- Anything that bothers them should not have to be a secret
- If they have a problem, they need to tell an adult they trust until they get help
- It is never too late to get help

Reinforce that even people we know can make us uncomfortable and **it's okay to say "no" to adults.** Children need to be taught how to respectfully disagree and ask questions, and to say "no" if something doesn't feel right.



Trusting your gut. Help your children learn to identify that **"icky" feeling** that comes when we feel uncomfortable, and let them know that they should **always listen to that feeling.** It's important to honour children's natural instincts (not to stifle it by forcing them to do something they're not comfortable with).

SOURCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

www.oup.com/uk/orc/bin/9780199215546/01student/glossary/online/

www.kidpower.org/library/article/safe-without-scared/

www.kidpower.org/library/article/kidnapping-response/



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