

Parent Tip Sheet

How to create a safety plan with your child

The threats facing our children continue to grow and evolve. As primary caregivers, parents play a vital role in teaching and reinforcing skills and strategies to help keep their children safe. Whilst it can be confronting, being proactive and discussing personal safety will help to empower your children to respond confidently in unsafe or difficult situations.

Follow these simple steps to create a safety plan with your child:

- Ask your child to identify and name adults who they trust and would include in their safety network. Your hand is a good guide – each finger can represent an adult they trust and would like to put in their network. A great activity is to trace your child's hand and write the names of the trusted adults on each finger. You can then place this in a place the child will see it, for example on the fridge or on the wall in their bedroom. You can also use this prop as stimulus to have further conversations about personal safety.
- Discuss that if they ever feel unsafe or are not sure about a situation or person then they are to go straight to a trusted adult and tell.
- Explain that sometimes adults are busy or if they feel they didn't really listen, then they are to go to the next person in their network and then the next and to keep going until they feel heard.
- Revisit the people in your child's safety network regularly. Adults will come and go in and out of your child's life. It is important that they can identify trusted adults that are accessible and currently in their lives.
- Children need to know that they have the right to feel safe at all times, they have the right to say no, even to adults and that their body belongs to them.
- As a parent, respect when your child has said no, by not overriding them. For example, if your child doesn't want to hug or kiss an adult eg relative, do not enforce that they do. This sends mixed messages to the child.
- Agree on a safe word for your family. That way, if your child is ever approached by an adult and are unsure whether they should go with them, they can ask them for the safe word first.



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