

Top 5 Tips for Every Caring Adult

Your presence, awareness, and communication eliminate opportunities for people to harm your child.

1. **Share and explain that your “family policy”** is to encourage your child to express their feelings and to say “No” to unwanted touch. Tell adults in your child’s life that 90% of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone a child knows and trusts, so by teaching your child and alerting family, friends, and caregivers, you significantly reduce their vulnerability. Tell them that you have talked with your child about private parts, and unwanted and inappropriate touch. If you are going to leave your child alone with someone, ask questions about specific plans for diaper-changing or going potty, cleaning up if there is an accident, and discipline practices. Make your presence known by being attentive, asking questions, and checking in unannounced.
2. **Talk with your child about which adults make them feel the most safe** and comfortable. Agree on your mutual top 2 or 3 Safe Adults to identify the few people allowed to take them somewhere without asking you for permission first; tell your child that those Safe Adults will be on their emergency card at school. Safe Adults want your child to feel safe and comfortable so it is important to tell Safe Adults if you ever feel scared, uncomfortable, or hurt (even if you don’t know why and no matter who is there). Be brave about being true to you and trust your feelings to be safe.
3. **Teach your child that no one has the right to hurt them.** Children are taught to be good, nice, kind, polite, use “indoor voices,” and do what they’re told, but they are rarely taught that they do not have to be kind or polite if someone is making them feel afraid or hurt. Teach your child that their safety is more important than anything else, so if they feel afraid or someone is trying to hurt or take them without permission, no matter who it is or where they are, your child can yell, get away, and tell someone right away. Give your child permission to keep telling Safe Adults until they feel safe.
4. **Teach your child the proper names of all their body parts**, including their private parts. Explain that private means that something is not for everyone to see. If something is private, they need to ask a parent for permission to share it. This applies to private parts covered by a bathing suit. No one should try to look at or touch another person’s private parts without permission. Tell your child to tell Safe Adults if anyone ever tries to look at or touch private parts with them. Note: If a Safe Adult must do something that doesn’t feel good or appropriate, like when the doctor gives them an examination or a shot, point out how Safe Adults talk about it, explain what is happening, and why. Tell your child that it is brave and safe to talk with Safe Adults about feelings, questions, and concerns (fears).
5. **The more you practice BRAVE Skill-building activities**, the better your child will understand and remember how to be brave and be safe. Avoid talking about hypothetical “what if” situations and use what is happening right now to teach important safety lessons and life skills (e.g. when they are crossing the street, playing too close to fire, or trying to put their finger into an electrical outlet). If a child is able to verbalize stories, you can role-play how to be brave and be safe in different situations with stuffed animals, toys, and/or dolls. Ask your child what they can do to be safe when real-life situations arise and guide them in assessing whether the situation is dangerous, questionable or safe, and what they can do to be brave and be safe.

Assessing Safe Adults



RED LIGHT BEHAVIORS

- Tells a child to go somewhere with them without asking permission from a parent/caregiver or the child.
- Tells a child to **keep a secret** (vs. a surprise which is usually happy and short term).
- **Seeks opportunities to be alone** with a child.
- Frequently **touching a child** and ignoring any indication from the child or Safe Adult that they do not like it.
- **Talks about sexuality** with or in reference to children who are not their own.



YELLOW LIGHT BEHAVIORS

- Ignores, insults, and/or **makes fun of the authority** of a parent/caregiver.
- Giving **overly personal** cards, notes, emails.
- Exchanging cell phone numbers and engaging in **text messaging or phone calls** without including parent/caregiver.
- **Giving 1 child special gifts**, outings, or opportunities not offered to other children.
- Teasing a child with reference to their **gender, appearance, or sexuality**.



GREEN LIGHT BEHAVIORS

- Compliments children's **accomplishments and resourcefulness** more than their looks.
- **Encourages other adults** and children to participate in their activities with a child.
- Makes sure that a **door is open** and others can see or hear if they are alone with a child.
- **Touching only safe areas**, which include the shoulders, upper back, arms, head, and hands.
- Listening to children and **adjusting if they say or show discomfort**.