

**Mobile County Public School System**

# **Personal Safety Curriculum**



A Training Guide for Preventing, Detecting and Reporting

Child Abuse and Neglect

**Grade 6 – Grade 8**

Revised October 2016

# Table of Contents

Preface .....	2
Introduction .....	3
Acknowledgements .....	4
Overview of the Personal Safety Curriculum (PSC).....	5
Erin’s Law .....	6
Mandatory Reporting Procedures for Child Abuse and Neglect .....	8
PSC Lessons for Grade 5 and Grade 6.....	32
PSC Lessons for Grade 7 and Grade 8.....	52
Teacher Resources.....	74

## **PREFACE**

The Mobile County Public School System has had a Personal Safety Curriculum in place for the last twenty- five years. In response to the Alabama Legislature’s passage of Erin’s Law (HB197) in July 2015, a committee has worked diligently to revise the current curriculum to meet the guidelines set forth by the Alabama State Department of Education for a Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program for students in grades Pre-kindergarten through twelfth. This curriculum will be consistent with techniques to teach children to recognize child sexual abuse, equip them with skills to reduce their vulnerability, and encourage them to report their abuse.

The curriculum guide is divided into four teaching units. The concepts are the same for each grade; however, the vocabulary and lesson plans are appropriate for each grade. Each unit will add to previous skills taught.

Although several lessons may be presented per unit, the counselor/teacher is obligated to teach only one lesson per four units to each grade level. The classroom teacher will support the school counselor throughout the lesson. The lessons may be incorporated into the existing Science, Health, Physical Education and/or Language Arts Curricula.

Teachers will be provided training prior to implementation of the program. A thorough awareness and understanding of child sexual abuse will be presented. In addition, skills pertaining to identification, handling, and reporting child abuse cases will be covered. Most importantly, teachers/counselors will be provided information to implement the curriculum with confidence.

Materials will also be provided to assist parents. Included will be information related to keeping their child safe from abuse as well as proper use of cell phones and other technology. Prior to the implementation of the curriculum, a letter will be sent to parents.

During the lessons, it is important to take note of students’ behaviors. During or after the lesson, the student may share sensitive incidents or concerns with the teacher/counselor. Most importantly, students should be listened to, believed and feel cared for by the counselor/teacher.

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **BEFORE YOU BEGIN TO TEACH PERSONAL SAFETY**

Teachers are frequently the caring, compassionate and consistent adults with whom students share their concerns about abuse. Few adults have the same opportunity as a teacher to identify abused children and start a process that will restore safety in a child's world. However, many teachers have not been adequately prepared to deal with the complex social issues that have so strongly affected abused children. When properly trained, a caring, open teacher who knows and listens to his/her students will often be the adult to whom the student discloses sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse.

Prior to 1975, no laws existed in Alabama to protect children from child sexual abuse. In 2013, Alabama amended the law relating to the mandatory reporting of known or suspected child abuse or neglect. The amendment expands the persons required to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to include all employees of both public and private K-12 schools and requires that the person who hears the disclosure make the necessary report. The amendment also provides that any public or private employer who disciplines or penalizes an employee for reporting suspected child abuse and/or neglect is guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

In 2015, the Alabama legislature passed Erin's Law, which mandates that each school system provide a personal safety curriculum. Age appropriate sexual abuse awareness and prevention education in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve is required to be implemented immediately.

## **YOUR PERSONAL PREPARATION IS IMPORTANT**

Guidelines and lesson plans are included to be used with the students. Background information about child sexual abuse and procedures to follow in the event of student disclosures are also included in the curriculum. It is also necessary to consider the well-being of the counselor/teacher in the event of disclosures of abuse.

Take time to become thoroughly familiar with the materials. Choose the lesson format that best fits your class. Although it is the responsibility of the school counselor to teach the lesson, the classroom teacher must remain to assist as needed. During the lesson, the teacher should be observant of the students' behaviors and report those to the counselor for follow-up.

It is vital that each teacher/counselor assess their own personal comfort level and be mindful of biases regarding abuse, including child sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse. Included in the curriculum are resources to assist teachers, counselors and students in the healing process. Unfortunately, abuse is still prevalent in our society and often remains a secret. With the help of this personal safety curriculum, we hope to help victims of abuse become survivors.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The team members, who revised this guide, are to be commended for their capable and dedicated leadership. This team recognizes that classroom teachers and school counselors have a unique opportunity to identify abused children. They realize that probably no adult is more trusted by children who have been abused, than a beloved and caring teacher.

**Larissa Dickinson, LICSW-PIP**  
School Social Worker  
Student Support Services

**Amelia Firle**  
School Counselor  
Allentown Elementary .5  
Tanner Williams Elementary .5

**Deborah Fletcher**  
Principal  
St. Elmo Elementary

**Brenda Fore, PhD, LPC, NCC**  
Guidance Supervisor  
Academic Affairs

**Dilanie Lewis**  
School Counselor  
Meadowlake Elementary .5  
St. Elmo Elementary .5

**Paula Loper**  
Consultant

**Gwendolyn McGrew-Dale**  
School Counselor  
Forest Hill Elementary

**Denise Riemer, LICSW-PIP**  
School Social Worker  
Student Support Services

**Angela Rodgers**  
School Counselor  
Alba Middle

**Stephen Watts**  
School Counselor  
Denton Magnet School

**Kimberly Walker, PhD**  
School Counselor  
Baker High School

# OVERVIEW OF THE PERSONAL SAFETY CURRICULUM

The Personal Safety Curriculum has been taught in Mobile for twenty five years. In fact, Mobile County Public School System is one of the few school districts in Alabama with written guidelines, objectives and activities in which school personnel provide instruction to students. The program goal and the corresponding student learning objectives are intended to help students achieve, maintain and enhance their well-being. Over the years, this curriculum has provided a framework for students to report all forms of abuse and/or neglect.

Erin's Law, which was passed in Alabama in 2015, has prompted the MCPSS to reevaluate their curriculum and to make revisions to accommodate the new state guidelines. The broad goal of the Personal Safety Curriculum is to help prevent and address child sexual abuse. The overall goal of Erin's Law is to create a safe and engaging environment where students learn about and become aware of the signs of child abuse.

Included in the learning process of child sexual abuse, students learn the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touches. A unit on recognizing safe/good secrets and bad/unsafe secrets will be presented. Empowering students to find their voice, the confidence to speak up, and the ability to recognize potentially dangerous situations is vital to the well-being of all students.

To accomplish these goals, children require the following:

1. Knowledge and ability to identify abuse and an understanding of the problem
2. An understanding that everyone has the right to control their own body, especially during exchanges of physical affection
3. Effective communication skills and assertive techniques for telling someone not to hurt them
4. Knowledge of whom to tell when abuse is occurring
5. Confidence that their family or community support system will believe and protect them
6. Perseverance to tell their story until the child abuse stops
7. The understanding that: **IT IS NEVER THE CHILD'S FAULT!**

**Mobile County Public School System**

# **Personal Safety Curriculum**



## **Erin's Law The Mandate**

Revised October 2016

# WHAT IS ERIN'S LAW?



Erin's Law is named after childhood sexual assault survivor, author, speaker and activist Erin Merryn, who is the founder and President of Erin's Law, which is registered with the State of Illinois and the IRS as a 501 (c)(4) non-profit social welfare organization.

After Erin introduced the legislation in her home state of Illinois, the bill was named "Erin's Law" after her by legislators and it has caught on nationwide.

**"Erin's Law"** requires that all public schools in each state implement a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches:

1. Students in grades preK – 12th grade, age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and tell a trusted adult
2. School personnel all about child sexual abuse
3. Parents & guardians the warning signs of child sexual abuse, plus needed assistance, referral or resource information to support sexually abused children and their families



**Mobile County Public School System**

# **Personal Safety Curriculum**



## **Mandatory Reporting Procedures for Child Abuse and Neglect**

Revised October 2016

**MOBILE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM  
DIVISION OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

**PROTOCOL FOR REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT  
Revised 10/16**

**New Law Effective August 1, 2013**

Section 26-14-3, Code of Alabama 1975, was amended by Alabama HB 301 which relates to the mandatory reporting of known or suspected child abuse or neglect. The amendment expands the persons required to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to include **ALL EMPLOYEES** of both public and private K – 12 schools. The amendment also provides that any public or private employer who disciplines or penalizes an employee for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect is guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

**Mandatory Reporters**

All employees of public school systems **PERSONALLY** shall report suspected abuse or neglect of children according to the Alabama Code. The employee who obtains knowledge of suspected abuse or neglect is required to report verbally to the Department of Human Resources (DHR), followed by a written report to DHR using Form # DHR-FCS-1593. The code provides immunity from liability for persons reporting suspected abuse or neglect.

**Definitions**

1. Serious Harm is defined as *significant* physical injury; sexual abuse; *severe* impairment in a child's functioning; *permanent* disability or disfigurement; or death. "Severe impairment in a child's functioning" is a *serious* deficit in a child's behavior or cognition.
2. Abuse occurs when serious harm is inflicted non-accidentally on a child/children by any person age fourteen (14) years or older.
3. Neglect occurs when parents or primary caregivers negligently fail to protect children from risk of serious harm. This includes incidents of "blatant disregard" where children are placed in harmful and dangerous situations that require precautionary measure to protect them.
  - a. Blatant disregard is defined as incidents where the risk of harm to children is so imminent and apparent that it is unlikely a parent or primary caregiver would have exposed the children to such danger without exercising precautionary measures to protect children from harm.
4. Child Abuse or Neglect Policy – Reports to DHR must be made for all children *under* the age of eighteen (18) who have allegedly been abused or neglected.

**Reporting Procedures**

1. All employees of Mobile County Public School System are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. The employee who obtains knowledge of suspected child abuse or neglect is required by law to report verbally to the Department of Human Resources (DHR), followed by a written report using Form # DHR-FCS-1593. Employees are cautioned not to delve too deeply into the situation. The school employee's role is that of reporting suspected child abuse or neglect, not investigating. The investigative role is undertaken by DHR or an appropriate law enforcement agency. If the reporting employee needs assistance in completing the written report, he/she will contact the school counselor, nurse and/or principal/designee.
2. The employee should immediately call DHR, Child Protective Services, Intake Department at 251-450-7018 or 251-450-7001 to report the suspected abuse or neglect.
3. The following information should be provided:
  - Name of child/children, sex, ethnicity, date of birth/age, address and telephone number;

- Name of other persons living with the child/children, date of birth/age, ethnicity and relationship to the child/children;
  - If additional space is needed to describe the incident, the employee may attach a statement to the Form # DHR-FCS-1593 and write “see attached statement” under the “Other Pertinent Information” section;
  - Name of person(s) allegedly responsible for the abuse or neglect, sex, ethnicity, date of birth/age, relationship to the child/children, address and telephone number;
  - Written description of the suspected abuse or neglect, including what happened, how it affected the child/children, when it occurred, did the employee witness the abuse or neglect, and/or how did the employee obtain knowledge of the abuse or neglect;
  - Name of reporter (employee), address, telephone number, title/agency/relationship to child/children
4. Following the verbal report, the employee making the report should immediately fax a written report of the incident to DHR (251-450-7299 FAX) using the “Written Report of Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect” form, DHR-FCS-1593. A copy of this report should be retained at the school and a copy should be sent through interoffice mail to the Division of Student Support Services to be filed.
  5. The employee reporting suspected child abuse or neglect should then immediately report to the principal (or designee in absence of principal).
  6. If the suspected child abuse or neglect occurs when DHR offices are closed, a report must be made to the local law enforcement agency. (Non-emergency numbers: Mobile Police Department – 251-208-7211 or Mobile County Sheriff Department – 251-574-8633).
  7. Additional Information:
    - Information regarding the investigation is not to be released to anyone except persons authorized to investigate the matter. Confidentiality is most critical in cases of suspected child abuse or neglect.
    - Employees filing reports are granted civil and criminal immunity from liability.
  8. If a Mobile County Public School System employee is suspected of child abuse or neglect, the above procedures must be followed and then the principal (or designee in absence of principal) must immediately report to the Superintendent’s Office at 221-4394.

### **Alabama State DHR Mandatory Reporting Interactive Training**

The DHR Mandatory Reporter Training may be located at <http://training.dhr.alabama.gov/>.

The DHR Mandatory Reporter Training provides a certificate at the conclusion, which is the best method of documenting an individual’s attendance. For protecting the participating school from liability, it would be best practice for the school to maintain thorough documentation of each individual that is trained.

STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
**WRITTEN REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

Please print or type all known information. The Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Law and instructions are explained on the back of this form.

**SECTION I – CHILDREN ALLEGEDLY ABUSED OR NEGLECTED**

	NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last)	SEX	ETHNICITY	DATE OF BIRTH/AGE
1.	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____
2.	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____
3.	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____
4.	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____
5.	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____
6.	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address City State Zip Telephone Number

**SECTION II – OTHER PERSONS LIVING WITH THE CHILDREN (Include parents/custodians and other children in the home)**

	NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last)	DATE OF BIRTH / AGE	ETHNICITY	RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHILDREN
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

**SECTION III – PERSON(S) ALLEGEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

	NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last)	SEX	ETHNICITY	DATE OF BIRTH / AGE
1.	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____
	<small>Street Address City State Zip Telephone Number</small>	<small>Relationship To Children Allegedly Abused/Neglected</small>		
2.	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	_____	_____
	<small>Street Address City State Zip Telephone Number</small>	<small>Relationship To Children Allegedly Abused/Neglected</small>		

**SECTION IV – ABUSE OR NEGLECT ALLEGATIONS (Describe what happened, how it affected the children, and the date(s) occurred, if known.)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Did you see the abuse or neglect when it occurred?  Yes  No If no, how did you find out about it? \_\_\_\_\_

Please identify other people who witnessed the abuse/neglect or who may have information about the child's or family's situation.

	Name	Address	Telephone #	Relationship to Children
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____

**SECTION V - OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION**

**SECTION VI - REPORTER**

Name _____	Address _____	Telephone Number _____	Title/Agency/Relationship To Children _____
Did you verbally report the allegations to the Department of Human Resources or law enforcement? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (specify to whom in section below) <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Signature _____	Name _____	Name of County DHR, Police Department, or Sheriff's Department _____	Date Reported _____
		Case # _____	Date Report Received _____

**For DHR Use Only** County \_\_\_\_\_ Date Report Received \_\_\_\_\_

**EXPLANATION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT REPORTING LAW**  
(Code Of Alabama 1975, Sections 26-14-1 through 26-14-13)

In order to protect children whose health and welfare may be adversely affected through abuse and neglect, this law provides for the reporting of such cases to appropriate authorities. The law also contains **immunity** provisions so that any person making a report pursuant to the statute is immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.

The following institutions and persons are **required by law** to report **known or suspected** child abuse or neglect **under a penalty of a misdemeanor, fine or sentence**: hospitals, clinics, sanitariums, doctors, physicians, surgeons, medical examiners, coroners, dentists, osteopaths, optometrists, chiropractors, podiatrists, nurses, school teachers and officials, peace officers, law enforcement officials, pharmacists, social workers, day care workers or employees, mental health professionals, or any other person called upon to render aid or medical assistance to a child when that child is known or suspected to be abused or neglected. In addition, any other person may make a report if that person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Print or type all known information.

**SECTION I - CHILDREN ALLEGEDLY ABUSED OR NEGLECTED**

Enter identifying information (name, sex, ethnicity, date of birth or approximate age) for each child in the family who is suspected to be abused or neglect. If the report is for more than one (1) child and they are not all members of the same family, a separate report (1593) must be completed. This includes if the children live in separate households or are a separate family within the same household.

Enter the child(ren)'s address and telephone number.

**SECTION II - OTHER PERSONS LIVING WITH THE CHILDREN**

Enter identifying information (name, date of birth or approximate age, ethnicity, and relationship) for each person living in the home with the child(ren) named in Section I.

**SECTION III - PERSON(S) ALLEGEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

Enter identifying information (name, sex, ethnicity, date of birth or approximate age, and relationship to the child(ren) named in Section I) for each person believed to be responsible for the suspected abuse or neglect.

**SECTION IV - ABUSE OR NEGLECT ALLEGATIONS**

Describe the alleged abuse or neglect; how it affected the child (physical injury; behavior exhibited by the child due to the suspected abuse/neglect); and provide the date(s) the abuse or neglect occurred, if known.

Provide information on how you became aware of the suspected abuse or neglect.


Enter the name, address, telephone number and relationship of anyone who may have knowledge of the abuse or neglect or the child's/family's situation. If the child(ren) received treatment or evaluation by a doctor or hospital due to the abuse or neglect, provide identifying information on the doctor or hospital (if not the reporter).

**SECTION V - OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION**


Enter any other information which may be helpful (e.g., prior abuse/neglect; name of child's school; parents' employment or working hours; safety concerns for DHR staff who visit the child/family).

**SECTION VI - REPORTER (Information is confidential and not released unless required by a court order)**


You are requested to enter your name, address, telephone number and agency or relationship to the children identified in Section I. Indicate whether you made a verbal (telephone or in-person) report to either the local Department of Human Resources or a local law enforcement agency. If a verbal report was made, identify the specific person, agency, and date the report was made. Sign and date the form.



State of Alabama  
**Department of Child Abuse  
and Neglect Prevention**




**The ABC's of Mandatory Reporting  
of Child Abuse and Neglect for  
Alabama School Personnel**  
*Learning your legal obligations to reporting the signs of suspected child  
abuse*




## Overview

- History and Mission of the Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (ADCANP) & Prevent Child Abuse Alabama (PCAA)
- Define and identify the signs of suspected child abuse and neglect
- Role of a Mandatory Reporter
- Impact of Abuse
- Prevention of Abuse
- Questions




## History

- The Martin-Aldridge Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Act adopted by Legislature in 1983
- Established the Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention “The Children’s Trust Fund”



## Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Programs

- Parent Education & Support
- Fatherhood
- Home Visitation
- Community Awareness
- Respite Care
- School based
- Non-school based after school
- Mentoring



## Department of Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention

- Community-Based Prevention Programs
- Public Policy Advocacy
- Public Education
- Network of Grantees
- Affiliated with National Organizations
  - National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds
  - Prevent Child Abuse America




## What is a Mandatory Reporter?

Any person whose profession brings them in contact with children on a daily basis is legally obligated to report signs of suspected child abuse or neglect.


- Employees at hospitals, clinics and sanitariums
- Social Workers
- Child Care Employees
- Clergy
- **School Teachers/Officials**
- Dentists
- Law Enforcement
- Peace Officers
- Mental Health Professionals
- Pharmacists
- Nurses
- Podiatrists
- Chiropractors
- Optometrists
- Osteopaths
- Coroners
- Medical Examiners
- Surgeons
- Physician
- Doctors





### Added to Mandatory Reporter Law

- Physical Therapists
- **Public and private K-12 Employees**
- Employees of public and private institutions of postsecondary and higher education



### Other Changes to Mandatory Reporter Law

- The statement “or cause reports to be made of the same” has been eliminated from the law.
- It is the responsibility of the mandatory reporter to make the report and follow up with a written report to the county DHR.



## What is Child Abuse?

Harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare which can occur through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation.



## Different Types of Child Abuse

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect/ Failure to thrive





## Physical Abuse

*Abuse* means harm or threatened harm to the health or welfare of a child through:


- Non-accidental physical injury
- Sexual abuse or attempted sexual abuse
- Sexual exploitation or attempted sexual exploitation
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Biting
- Burning
- Pushing
- Shaking
- Any other physical act that can cause injury to a child

Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-1(1)



## Signs to Look for with Physical Abuse

- Bruises
- Marks in the shape of an object
- Unexplained bruises, burns or cuts
- Fear of adults
- Destructiveness toward self or others
- Poor social skills
- Aggression
- Defiance
- Clothing that may be inappropriate




## Sexual Abuse

- **Sexual abuse** includes:
  - The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in or having a child assist any other person to engage in any sexually explicit conduct
  - Any simulation of the conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of the conduct
  - The rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children
  - Incest with children

**Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-1(1)**
- **Sexual exploitation** includes:
  - Allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution
  - Allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the obscene or pornographic photographing, filming, or depicting of a child for commercial purposes

**Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-1(1)**



## Signs to Look for with Sexual Abuse

- Inappropriate displays of affection
- Unusual interest in or inappropriate sexual knowledge
- Over-compliance
- Pain during urination
- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Frequent vomiting
- Wetting pants




## Erin's Law

- Erin Merryn – child sexual abuse victim turned advocate to pass legislation in each state
- Alabama passed Erin's Law 2015 legislative session and signed into law by Gov. Bentley on June 11, 2015
- Establishes Governor's Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse Prevention
- CTF working closely with SDE & DHR with task force appointees



## Recent Headlines – Student/Teacher Inappropriate Sexual Contact


- Pinson teacher arrested on charges of inappropriate sexual contact with student
- Pell City teacher accused of having sexual contact with high school student
- Alabama leads nation in inappropriate student-teacher relationships, study says
- Teacher, 37, who is charged with sexual relationship with a student gets **MARRIED** to her now that she is 18
- Affidavit: Opp teacher's sexual contact with students started in 2013
- Former Stanhope teacher convicted of sexual contact with student



## Emotional Abuse


- Emotional Abuse includes non-accidental mental injury.
  - Belittling
  - Terrorizing
  - Lack of nurture
  - Rejecting
  - Inconsistent parenting
  - Violent environment

**Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-1(1)**



## Signs to Look for with Emotional Abuse

- Depression or withdrawal
- Lack of emotion
- Lack of interest
- Speech, sleep or eating disorders
- Repetitive actions, such as rocking, sucking or biting
- Increased emotional needs



## Neglect

*Neglect* means negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including the failure to provide adequate food, medical treatment, supervision, clothing, or shelter.

**Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-1(1)**

- Physical neglect
- Educational neglect
- Emotional neglect



## Signs to Look for with Neglect

- Clothing that is dirty, torn, poorly fitting or inappropriate for the weather
- Sleepiness
- Poor hygiene
- Untreated medical or dental problems
- Inappropriate responsibility for younger siblings
- Frequent tardiness or absences from school
- Apparent lack of supervision



## A Child's Basic Needs

- Nutrition
- Sleep
- Shelter
- Cleanliness
- Medical care
- Safety
- Supervision
- Socialization



## If you suspect abuse, what should you do?

- Trust your instincts
- Take notes
- Look at the facts
- Make a report using form:

**DHR-FCS-1593** available at your county DHR office or available online.

[http://dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child\\_Protective\\_Services/Written\\_Report\\_MandatoryReporters.aspx](http://dhr.alabama.gov/services/Child_Protective_Services/Written_Report_MandatoryReporters.aspx)






## DHR On-line Mandatory Training

- Link under Child Protective Services
  - [www.dhr.alabama.gov](http://www.dhr.alabama.gov)
  
- Link under CTF web site
  - Training opportunities
  - [www.ctf.alabama.gov](http://www.ctf.alabama.gov)





STATE OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
 WRITTEN REPORT OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT  
 Please print or type all known information. The Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting Law and instructions are explained on the back of this form.

**SECTION I - CHILDREN ALLEGEDLY ABUSED OR NEGLECTED**

1.	NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last)	SEX	ETHNICITY	DATE OF BIRTH / AGE
1.		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F		
2.		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F		
3.		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F		
4.		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F		
5.		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F		
6.		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F		

ADDRESS Street Address City State Zip Telephone Number

**SECTION II - OTHER PERSONS LIVING WITH THE CHILDREN (Do not include parents/guardians and other children in the home)**

1.	NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last)	DATE OF BIRTH / AGE	ETHNICITY	RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHILDREN
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

**SECTION III - PERSONS ALLEGEDLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

1.	NAME (First, Middle Initial, Last)	SEX	ETHNICITY	DATE OF BIRTH / AGE
1.		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F		

Street Address City State Zip Telephone Number Relationship To Children Allegedly Abused/Neglected

2.  M  F

Street Address City State Zip Telephone Number Relationship To Children Allegedly Abused/Neglected

**SECTION IV - ABUSE OR NEGLECT ALLEGATIONS (Describe what happened, how it affected the children, and the date(s) occurred, if known)**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you see the abuse or neglect when it occurred?  Yes  No If so, how did you find out about it?

Please identify other people who witnessed the abuse/neglect or who may have information about the child's or family's situation.

1.	Name	Address	Telephone #	Relationship to Children
1.				
2.				

**SECTION V - OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION VI - REPORTER**

Name Address Telephone Number Title/Agency Relationship To Children

Did you verbally report the allegations to the Department of Human Resources or law enforcement?  Yes (Specify to whom in section below)  No

Signature Name Name of County DHR, Police Department, or Sheriff's Department Date Reported

For DHR Use Only: County Case # Date Date Report Received

DHR-PCS-1395 (September 2002)



## What is your liability?

All persons reporting suspected child abuse or neglect (whether required by law or not) are presumed to be acting in good faith. Alabama law provides immunity from liability for actions by mandatory reporters.

**Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-9**


**It is not necessary to prove that the abuse or neglect happened. You must have a reasonable suspicion.**



## Is your job protected?


“A public or private employer who discharges, suspends, disciplines, or penalizes an employee solely for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect ... shall be guilty of a Class C misdemeanor”

**Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-3(g)**




## How to File a Report

- Phone the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) in your county
  - Montgomery (334) 293-3305
  - Birmingham (205) 423-4850
  - Mobile (251) 450-7018
  - Huntsville (256) 427-6200



Reports can also go to the DHR State Family Services Division (334) 242-9500

If a life-threatening situation exists - DIAL 911



## What information should you include in a Report?

- Child's name & location
- Names & addresses of parents or guardians
- Type and extent of child's injuries
- Information about previous injury that might be related
- Your name and the name of organization, school or agency
- Name of person or persons responsible for the abuse



## Penalties for Failure to Report

“Any person who shall knowingly fail to make the report required by this chapter shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punished by a sentence of not more than 6 months’ imprisonment or a fine not more than \$500.00.”

**Citation: Ala. Code § 26-14-13**




## How Common is Child Abuse & Neglect Nationally?\*

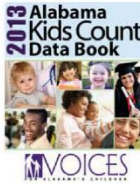
- 3.9 million reports of child abuse or neglect were reported in 2013
  - Approximately 7 complaints per minute per day
- 679,000 children classified as being maltreated (estimate)
- 1,520 children died in the United States in 2013 from abuse & neglect
- 16.1% of children experience some form of maltreatment

\*NCANDS – Children’s Bureau

## Alabama's Kids




- Alabama is ranked 44<sup>th</sup> in the nation based on 10 key indicators of child well-being
  - Low-birth weight babies
  - Infant mortality rate
  - Child death rate
  - Teen death rate
  - Teen birth rate
  - High school drop out rate
  - Teens not attending school & not working
  - Children living in families where no parent has a full time/year round job
  - Children in poverty
  - Children in single parent families




Source: Alabama Kids Count 2013 Data Book

## The Alabama Story



- 9,013 cases (2013)
- 39% Neglect
- 49% Physical Abuse
- .5% Psychological Abuse
- 22% Sexual Abuse



Most indicated abuse victims in Alabama are under the age of four.



## Long term effects of child abuse

- Learning disorders or speech deficits
- Dropping out of school
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Teenage pregnancy
- Substance abuse
- Unemployment
- Crime and violence
- Brain damage
- Suicide
- Depression, anxiety or low self-esteem



## Risk Factors for Abuse

- Living at or below the poverty level
- Lack of high school diploma
- Mental Illness
- Abuse during childhood
- Lack of knowledge of effective parenting techniques
- Lack of understanding child development
- Substance abuse
- Past unplanned or premarital pregnancy
- Abuse from their partner
- Unemployment





## Community Action and Prevention

- Promote community awareness
- Educate parents
- Educate children
- Provide role models and dependable child care
- Work with community leaders
- Support special programs
- Support children's legal rights




## What Child Maltreatment Means to Society

- Annual cost of child abuse and neglect is \$124 Billion
- A child who is abused or neglected is 59% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile than other children
- An estimated one-third of abused and neglected children will eventually victimize their own children



**“The best way to prepare for the future is to create it. Prevention is the process of proactively cultivating positive cultures, leading to a better future for children and their families.”**


Dr. Jeff Linkenbach  
Director of the Center for Health and Safety Culture  
Montana State University



## Contact Information

Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention  
Executive Director  
Sallye R. Longshore  
[sallye.longshore@ctf.alabama.gov](mailto:sallye.longshore@ctf.alabama.gov)  
334.262.2951

Prevent Child Abuse America  
[www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)



National Alliance of Children’s Trust & Prevention Funds  
[www.ctf.alliance.org](http://www.ctf.alliance.org)



**Mobile County Public School System**

# **Personal Safety Curriculum**



A Training Guide for Preventing, Detecting and Reporting

Child Abuse and Neglect

## **Grade 5 – Grade 6**

Revised October 2016

## Unit 1 - Personal Safety

Grade Level: 5<sup>th</sup> /6<sup>th</sup>

### ASCA Standards:

- PS: C1.3 Learn about the differences between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact.
- PS: C1.4 Demonstrate the ability to set boundaries, rights and personal safety.
- PS: C1.5 Differentiate between situations requiring peer support and situations requiring adult professional help.

### Learning Objective:

Identify behaviors and boundaries in different situations.

Identify/maintain appropriate Internet rules and guidelines.

### Materials/Resources:

**Activity 1-** The “What If...Game”. **Discuss** the scenarios with the class.

**Activity 2-** “What Would You Do”

### Lesson 1: (complete activities 1 and 2

1. Introduce the topic of Personal Safety. Brainstorm with students about what personal safety means to them. Write the student responses on the board. Provide definition of personal safety for students after eliciting student responses.
2. Discuss who is responsible for personal safety. Who was responsible when they were toddlers, at the age of five, and who is responsible for them at this at this moment? As students get older, discuss with them the importance of becoming more and more responsible for themselves. Ask students to provide examples of how they are becoming more responsible for themselves.

**Personal Safety means taking responsibility for out person, following safety rules, being aware of what is going on around you, making good decisions in potentially dangerous or risky situations, and asking for help when needed.**

3. Discuss that one aspect of personal safety is prevention and protection from abuse. Explain and provide examples of the four types of abuse:
  1. **Sexual Abuse**- when an adult or someone older than you forces or tricks you into any sexual contact. Examples: touching of private parts that are covered by your bathing suit.
  2. **Physical Abuse**- maltreatment that harms the body. Examples: shaking, beating, or burning.
  3. **Emotional Abuse**- maltreatment that involves assault in a non- physical way. Examples: intense or excessive yelling or criticizing.
  4. **Neglect**- maltreatment that involves lack of proper care and guidance. Examples: not providing the child with proper food and shelter, medical care, or clothing.
  
4. Complete “What If” scenarios with students. Discuss how students would feel if placed in these particular situations.
  
5. Complete “What Would You Do?” activity with students aloud. Have various students read selection and provide an answer. Students will then decide if this is a proper way to handle the specific situation.

Reinforce concepts, vocabulary, what personal safety means throughout the lesson. Make sure that students understand that they are not too blame for any abuse that they may experience. Let students know that the purpose is for them to gain an awareness of ways that they can better protect themselves and how to be more responsible for their own personal safety.

**Evaluation: Students written or verbal ability to define what personal safety is.**

# **Additional Lessons for Unit 1**

## **Unit 1: Personal Safety**

### **Grade 5<sup>th</sup> /6<sup>th</sup>**

#### **ASCA Standards:**

- PS: C1.2 Learn about the relationship between rules, laws, safety and the protection rights of the individual.
- PS.C1.7 Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices.

#### **Learning Objective:**

Identify/maintain appropriate Internet rules and guidelines.

#### **Materials/ Resources:**

**Handout-** “Netiquette”

**Activity 3-** Internet Vocabulary Matching Game Sheet for each child.

**Activity 4-** Internet Safety Sheet for each child.

#### **Lesson 2: Internet Safety (complete activities 3 and 4)**

1. Hand out the Internet Safety Sheet. **Discuss Internet Safety Rules.**
2. **Discuss with the class how each of the following could be considered internet danger:** Briefly discuss each point with the students.

- Giving out personal information over the internet;

- Communicating with strangers;
- Agreeing to meet strangers you have met on the internet;
- Not telling your parents about messages or pictures that may make you feel uncomfortable;

(You may discuss additional internet dangers as well)

3. Ask the students to review the internet safety rules with their parents and to decide with them the names of three adults, in addition to their parents, that they can talk to if they need help being safe. Direct students to keep this paper in a special place in their homes so that they can periodically review the rules and the list of trusted adults.

5. Have students complete the internet vocabulary matching game individually. Discuss the positive and negative aspects of using the internet. Divide the students into groups of three or four students. Each group will be asked to come up with three rules that they think would be good to follow when using the internet.

**Evaluation: Students will be able to verbally answer questions pertaining to proper internet safety rules.**

## Activity 1

Instructions: Read each scenario to class. Discuss possible solutions for each scenario.

### The If...Game

This game helps you to stay safe by practicing what to do in different situations. Decide what you would do if the following events happened.

**What if ...** You are at a family reunion and a relative pulls you on his lap and starts tickling you.

- Does this make you feel comfortable?
- Does this make you feel uncomfortable?
- If uncomfortable, what can you do?

**What if ...** You are at a friend's house and your friend turns on an R-rated movie for you to watch together.

When you say your parents do not want you watching this kind of show, your friend tells you not to worry because they will not find out about it.

- Does this make you feel comfortable?
- Does this make you feel uncomfortable?
- If uncomfortable, what can you do?

**What if ...** Your coach asks you to stay after practice so that she can work with you on a certain sports skill. She doesn't do this with anyone else on the team and sometimes while talking with you, you feel uncomfortable with how close she sits or stands by you.

- Does this make you feel comfortable?
- Does this make you feel uncomfortable?
- If uncomfortable, what can you do?

**What if ...** An adult has become very friendly with you. He has begun giving you gifts and asks you not to tell your parents because they would not understand this special friendship.

- Does this make you feel comfortable?
- Does this make you feel uncomfortable?
- If uncomfortable, what can you do?

## Activity 2

### “What Would You Do?” Safety Questions

**Discuss the three personal safety rules: 1. Say NO! 2. Get away. 3. Tell someone.**

**This game is used to help children feel competent and successful in handling problems.**

1. What if someone called you a name, what would you do?
2. What if you got lost in the mall, what would you do?
3. What if a stranger was following you, what would you do?
4. What if you got locked out of your house, what would you do?
5. What if someone touched your private parts or made you feel uncomfortable, what would you do?
6. What if someone offered you \$10.00 to run an errand, what would you do?
7. What if you were walking your dog and someone asked you for directions, what would you do?
8. What if you saw someone playing with matches, what would you do?
9. What if someone you didn't know tried to pick you up from school, what would you do?
10. What if someone called your house and made a prank phone call, what would you do?
11. What if there was a fire in your house, what would you do?
12. What would you do if an adult you know, a friend or neighbor, asked you to come into their house for a cookie, and you hadn't asked your mom or dad if it was okay? What would you do?
13. You are at a neighbor's house playing with your friend. Your friend wants to play a game that makes you feel uncomfortable. What would you do?
14. An older person tells you to keep a secret, and the secret makes you feel scared, confused, or worried. What would you do?
15. You fell off your bike and hurt your private parts. Your mom or dad takes you to doctor who examines your private parts. Is it okay for the Doctor to look at your private parts if you your mom or dad is in the room with you? Remember the clean and healthy rule!!!
16. Your parent's friend comes over and always gives you a hug that is so hard you can hardly breathe. What would you do?
17. Your older cousin is wrestling with you and you think you might get hurt. What would you do?
18. Someone you know asks you to rub their back. You don't want to. What would you do?
19. One person in your class is always pushing and shoving you around. You want that person to stop. What would you do? What if you tried saying “no” and moving away and that didn't help, what would you do?
20. What would you do if you saw a stray dog on the playground?
21. What would you do if the weather became really stormy while you were walking home from school?
22. What would you do if you broke a glass bottle in the kitchen?
23. What if you received a text or instant message that made you feel uncomfortable?
24. What would you do if your nose started bleeding during school?
25. What would you do if the tornado siren went off and you were home alone while your parents were next door or at the store?
26. **Formulate your own “What if?” questions.**

## Netiquette

The Internet is another place that can pose many dangers for children. Discuss the Internet vocabulary below. After your discussion hand out the *Internet Vocabulary Matching Game* sheet and have students complete it.

- **Blog** – A Web site that contains an online personal journal that is accessible to anyone.
- **Chat room** – A place in a Web site where people can type messages to one another. The messages are displayed on the screen for all in the chat room to view.
- **Instant Messaging** – A way of communicating instantly with others online by exchanging text messages.
- **Netiquette** – Polite, courteous behavior practiced on the Internet.
- **Personal Contact Information** – Information such as telephone numbers and addresses which allows an individual to be contacted or located.
- **Inappropriate material** – Messages, pictures or words on the Internet that make you or others feel uncomfortable, afraid or that degrade a person or persons.
- **Predator** – Someone who uses the Internet to obtain personal information about others with the intent to do harm.



# Internet Vocabulary Matching Game

## Word Bank

A. Blog

B. Chat Room

C. Inappropriate Material

D. Instant Messaging

E. Netiquette

F. Personal Contact Information

G. Predator

\_\_\_\_\_ Someone who uses the Internet to obtain personal information about others with the intent to do harm.

\_\_\_\_\_ Polite, courteous behavior practiced on the Internet.

\_\_\_\_\_ A way of communicating instantly with others online by exchanging text messages.

\_\_\_\_\_ Messages, pictures or words on the Internet that make you or others feel uncomfortable, afraid or that degrade a person or persons.

\_\_\_\_\_ A Web site that contains an online personal journal that is accessible to anyone.

\_\_\_\_\_ A place in a Website where people can type messages to one another. The messages are displayed on the screen for all in the chat room to view.

\_\_\_\_\_ Information such as telephone numbers and addresses which allows an individual to be contacted or located.

## **Children's Rules and Guidelines for Internet Safety**

- Never give out personal information such as your address, telephone number, parents' names and phone numbers, the name of your school or your grade level.
- Never assume someone is who they say they are.
- Treat everyone that you encounter online as a stranger, using the same rules for dealing with strangers online as you would for strangers you see on the street.
- Never agree to meet someone that introduced themselves on the Internet without a parent's approval.
- Never send a picture or anything else to someone on the Internet, especially if it contains behaviors you would not want your parents, teachers or administrators to see.
- If you come across information on the Internet that makes you feel uncomfortable, tell a trusted adult immediately.
- Never respond to any messages or send any messages that are mean, threatening, or make anyone feel uncomfortable.
- Follow the rules established by your parents for computer and Internet usage.
- Never download or install software or do anything that could jeopardize a family's privacy.
- Keep your Internet password secret and change it regularly.

Dear Parents,

The above information was included in the Child Protection lesson taught to your child today. In addition to this information, we would like you to determine with your child the names of three trusted adults (other than you) to whom your child can go for help. This is a very important step in your child's safety plan.

Three names:

---

---

---

*Please keep this paper in a special place so that you can periodically review it with your child.*

Source: Archdiocese of Mobile

## Unit 2 - Appropriate/ Inappropriate Touch

### Grades 5<sup>th</sup>/ 6<sup>th</sup>

#### ASCA Standards

PS: C1.4 Demonstrate the ability to set boundaries, rights and personal privacy.

**Learning Objective:** Students will define and describe healthy boundaries by being able to distinguish between appropriate touch and inappropriate touches.

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-45 minutes

**Materials/ Resources:** Board

Handouts “Private Body Parts”/ “Ground Rules For Group”

#### **Lesson 1:**

##### Procedure

1. Introduction: Inform students that we will be discussing physical space and touch and the personal safety rules to maintain healthy boundaries. Although this is a difficult conversation for many of us, it remains clear that we must all be able to identify healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

**Learning about personal boundaries helps children and teens to develop a sense of individual responsibility and control. Developing a sense of personal autonomy and respect for self and others leads to increased self-esteem.**

2. Provide students with the list of ground rules. Have students develop their own ground rules for the group. (see example ground rules below)

3. This discussion will help students to understand privacy and respect for the body as well as others. Learning about the concept of privacy becomes more important as children enter puberty. Understanding that “My body is private” can help students develop skills that keep them and others safe.

4. Ask your students:

- Who is the owner of your body? – You own your body! Your body is unique and special and everybody is different.
- What can you do with your body? – run, jump, dance, clap, laugh, and eat
- How do you take care of your body? – eat healthy foods, hygiene, and exercise.

Taking care of your body includes saying who can touch you and come into your personal space. Everybody deserves to be treated with respect. Your body is private and some parts are more private than others.

##### Activity:

5. List the three types of touch on the board. Have the students state the feelings that accompany these touches. Emphasize these feelings and encourage students to stop or question a touch that they are uncomfortable with.

Evaluation: Student will verbally or written, identify the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touches

## **Private Body Parts**

- These are parts that are covered by a bathing suit or underwear.
- Private parts should be covered when you are in public places.
- If you want to touch or scratch your private parts you should wait until you are in a private place.
- No one can touch your body without your permission.
- No one can see your body without your permission.
- Your body should not be shown to anyone who does not want to see it.

## **Ground Rules for Group**

- No put downs.
- No personal questions.
  - It's OK to pass.
- All questions are good questions.
  - Use correct terms.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- Classroom discussions are confidential.
  - Speak for yourself.

## Additional Lessons for Unit 2

### Unit 2- Appropriate/ Inappropriate Touch

Grades 5<sup>th</sup>/ 6<sup>th</sup>

#### ASCA Standards

- PS: C1.3      Learn about the differences between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact.
- PS: C1.4      Demonstrate the ability to set boundaries, rights and personal privacy.

**Lesson Objective:** Students will define and describe healthy boundaries by being able to distinguish between appropriate touch and inappropriate touch.

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

**Materials/ Resources:** Board

#### **Lesson 2: APPROPRIATE AND INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH**

Touch provides us with a method of communication and is important for our wellbeing. Learning about inappropriate touch can help children learn strategies to help them stay Safe including when to ask an adult for help.

#### Procedure:

1. Write “Appropriate Touches” on the board. Ask your students to describe what appropriate touching means to them. (The term appropriate can be difficult to understand so you may want to describe appropriate touches as respectful, kind and caring. They are “thumbs up” touches – use your hand to gesture thumbs up.)
2. Then write “Inappropriate Touches” on the board and ask your students to describe what inappropriate touching means to them. (Inappropriate touches are disrespectful, confusing, scary, and / or hurtful. They are “thumbs down” touches – use your hand to gesture thumbs down.)

#### Activity:

3. Draw a chart with two columns to discuss examples of appropriate and inappropriate touch.

#### Evaluation:

Students will be able to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touches as evidence by his/ her ability to identify appropriate and inappropriate touches verbally.

## Appropriate Touch or Inappropriate Touch

Hugs and cuddles	_____
Holding hands	_____
Giving a back rub	_____
High five	_____
Shaking hands	_____
Gentle pat on the shoulder	_____
Receiving help with hygiene when needed	_____
Visit to a health care professional	_____
Hitting	_____
Kicking	_____
Biting	_____
Pushing	_____
Slapping	_____
Pinching	_____
Unwanted touch that starts as fun e.g., play fighting/rough housing, tickling	_____
Being forced to touch someone	_____
Touching of private body area – breasts, buttocks, vulva, penis, testicles that is not for hygiene or examination by a health care professional	_____

**Unit 3 - Assertiveness**  
**Grades 5<sup>th</sup>/ 6<sup>th</sup>**

**ASCA Standard:**

PS: C1.4 Demonstrate the ability to set boundaries, rights and personal privacy.

**Learning Objective:** Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in the school and across the lifespan.

Estimated Lesson Time: 30-45 minutes each lesson

**Materials/ Resources:** “Assertiveness Role Plays”

Assertiveness Training- “Passive, Aggressive or Assertive?”

“Tips for Being Assertive”

**Lesson**

**Procedures:**

1. Discuss/define with the class the differences in being passive, aggressive, and assertive.
2. Read “Assertiveness Training” to or with the class. Allow the students to provide feedback as you progress through the information.
3. Have student complete handout “Passive, Aggressive, or Assertive” with a partner.
4. Assess students understanding being passive, aggressive, or assertive by providing specific examples of each behavior.

**Activities:**

1. Discuss/ review students understanding of what is being passive, aggressive, or assertive.
2. Provide students with a copy of their personal rights. Have students read aloud and discuss as a group.
3. Complete role play activity using several students from the whole group.
4. Finally, direct students to get into groups of three to four students. Student will be provided a note card which has passive, aggressive, assertive. Students will be directed to complete a role play situation representing their card. Have each group present in front of the class. The classmates must guess if the situation is representative of passiveness, aggressiveness, or assertiveness.

**Evaluation:** Students will independently define, passive, aggressive, and assertive behaviors within a small group or within their whole group.



# Assertiveness Training

Do you ever feel that you are being taken advantage of, walked on, and abused? Would you like to learn how to feel better about yourself and maybe even get your way sometimes?

Being **assertive** is about standing up for yourself. It's about expressing your thoughts, your feelings and your needs. If we look at behavior on a continuum: assertive behavior sits in between being passive and being aggressive.

There are plenty of times in your daily life that assertive skills can come in handy. You'll use these skills at home, at work, with friends, with family and with your significant other. When should you not be assertive? Well, if a police officer is giving you a ticket, I'd advise you to just sit back and take it - don't practice your assertiveness skills in that situation, being passive may be called for. When should you be aggressive? Well, possibly when you are physically threatened, but usually I think it's better to just get out of there!

You might find that you are pretty **assertive** in some situations, that there are other times when you are passive, and still others when you are aggressive. This mini lesson will help you to improve in the areas that you are weaker in. Take notice of how you act at work, with your parents, etc. You might note differences. Lots of people have a tendency to act like they are five years old when they are with their parents, or with their siblings, yet are perfectly assertive with coworkers. Take an inventory of your behavior in all your interpersonal relations and then get to work on being more assertive where appropriate.

We can all learn to be assertive. Most of us weren't born with these skills. Let's look at where some of our **passive behavior** comes from. You may have learned to be somewhat passive. Maybe you were told to be seen and not heard, or that it's selfish to ask for what you want in life. Perhaps you consider it rude or disrespectful to say "no" to people when they ask you to do something or go somewhere. Maybe you don't know how to set limits. You let people make decisions for you and take advantage of you. Is this what you want to be doing?

Maybe you don't readily express your opinions, you go along if someone asks you to go somewhere (even if you don't want to) and you most likely end up regretting that you did, but you don't know what else to do. You are definitely not in control of your life.

On the other hand if you use the aggressive style, you are able to speak up for yourself, but at the expense of others' feelings. You blame others, you make them feel guilty, etc. In the end you make others resent you and you end up losing. An assertive person expresses his or her thoughts, feelings and needs directly, while taking into account the rights and feelings of others. You are able to say "yes" or "no" to the offers of others. You are able to accept rejection of your offers without taking them personally. You state your desires, but don't necessarily get what you want. Being assertive doesn't guarantee that you get what you ask for, but you have the satisfaction of having asked, and having made yourself clear.

## Your Personal Rights

- You have a right to say No!
- You have the right to say "I don't know".
- You're allowed to make mistakes.
- You're allowed to change your mind.
- Your feelings matter.
- You're allowed to have your own opinions. You don't have to agree with others all of the time.
- You have a right to be alone sometimes.
- It's ok to ask for help or support. You don't have to do it all alone. You're not necessarily bothering others if you ask for help. It's ok to let others know that you are in pain, are hurting, or if you just require some assistance.
- You don't have to take the advice of others.
- It's ok to want some recognition for your achievements and good work. It's not necessarily showing off.
- You don't have to justify your decisions to others.

## **Assertiveness Role Plays**

### **What Would You Do?**

- \* Teacher scored your test incorrectly and you want it corrected.
- \* You have an important test on Monday but your best friend wants you to join them for a movie and dinner on Sunday night.
- \* Your parents are concerned about your grades. You would like for them to provide you with a reward for making better grades.
- \* You need a quiet place to take tests and want to approach the teacher about getting out of the classroom and take your tests somewhere quieter.
- \* You are to be at your club meeting and let the group know what your concerns, needs, and wishes are to help you to be successful in school.
- \* Your best friend has been helping you with your math, but tends to give you the answers rather than explain things and then allow you to work it out on your own.
- \* You want to talk to your friend about this situation, as you want to figure things out so you do better on tests. You also want your friend to know that you appreciate their help and assistance.

## Passive, Aggressive, or Assertive?

For each situation listen below, write whether the response is passive, aggressive, or assertive.

**Situation #1: Your teacher made a mistake averaging your grade.**

\_\_\_\_\_ “My grade is different from what I think it should be. Would you mind averaging it again?”

\_\_\_\_\_ “Do nothing about the mistake.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “You didn’t average my grade right.”

---

**Situation #2: Your best friend asks you to do something that you think is wrong.**

\_\_\_\_\_ “I don’t feel comfortable doing that. I’d rather not.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “Maybe, I’ll think about it.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “No way! You are crazy and you’re going to get in trouble!”

---

**Situation #3: The cashier in the cafeteria gives you the wrong change.**

\_\_\_\_\_ “You’re trying to cheat me!”

\_\_\_\_\_ “Excuse me, I don’t believe you gave me back the right amount of money.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “Say nothing about the mistake.”

---

**Situation #4: A friend asks you to copy your homework assignment.**

\_\_\_\_\_ “I don’t feel comfortable doing that because I spent a lot of time on this, and I don’t want to get into trouble for cheating.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “No way! You shouldn’t be so lazy. Do your own work.”

\_\_\_\_\_ “I guess it will be all right for you to copy it.”

**Mobile County Public School System**

# **Personal Safety Curriculum**



**Grade 7 – Grade 8**

Revised October 2016

## Unit 1

### Personal Safety

### Grade Level

7 & 8

### ASCA Standards

PS: C1.2 Learn about the relationship between rules, laws, safety and the protection of rights of the individual.

PS: C1.4 Demonstrate the ability to set boundaries, rights and personal privacy.

### Learning Objectives

1. Identify the dangers associated with the use of social media, texting, sexting, and the internet as it relates to one's personal safety.
2. Pledge to use best practices to ensure personal safety when using the internet and cell phones.

### Materials

- *Your NetSmartz infographic*
- *Under 13 on Facebook infographic*
- *Snapchat Statistics infographic*
- *The Truth about Sexting infographic*
- *Online Predators infographic*
- *Internet and Mobile Safety Pledge*

### Lesson

Personal Safety – How to stay safe in the world of middle school dating, surfing, and texting.

### Introduction

Introduce the lesson's topic with the video, "Friend or Fake." The video can be accessed at <http://www.netsmartz.org/NSTeens/FriendOrFake> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4nyluaXoFY>.

### Activity

1. Display or distribute for students' review the *Your NetSmartz*, *Under 13 on Facebook*, *Snapchat Statistics*, and *The Truth about Sexting*, and *Online Predators* infographics. Explain to students how the information is presented in the infographic as students may not be familiar with an infographic's layout.
2. Form students into small groups and assign each group one of the infographics to review. Instruct the students to gather and summarize 5-7 of the most important central ideas (facts) found within the infographic. Have students record the facts on large sheets of chart paper.
3. Allow students to present their finding to their classmates through oral presentations while using their chart paper as a visual aid. Facilitate the discussion and answer any necessary questions as students present to their peers.

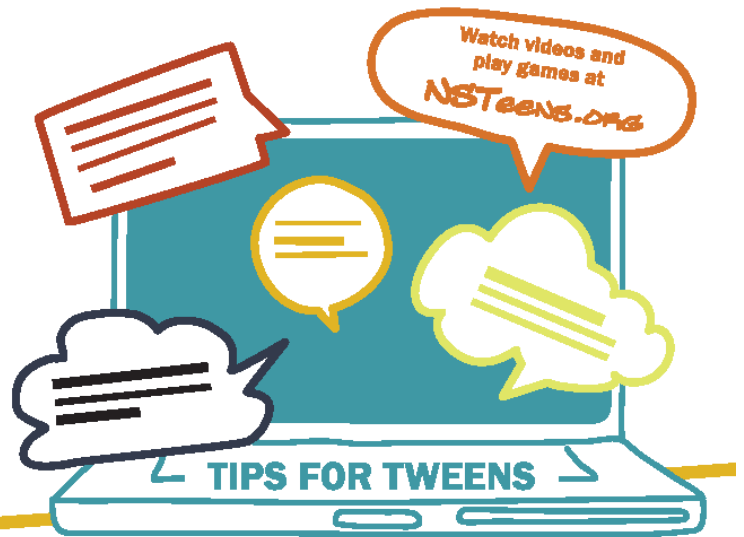
Possible questions for further discussion:

- A. What types of social media websites or applications were not covered by the infographics?
- B. What are the dangers of “new” social media websites or applications and how can those dangers be avoided?
- C. What precautions can be taken to avoid harmful and dangerous situations involving texting and other cell phone usage?

### **Evaluation / Final Activity**

1. Encourage students to sign the *Internet and Mobile Safety Pledge* as a statement of their intent to follow best practices when using social media, cell phones, and the internet.
2. *Optional:* Allow students to take and complete the online quiz *To Send or Not to Send*. The quiz can be accessed at <http://www.nsteens.org/Quizzes/ToSendOrNotToSend>.

# YOUR NETSMARTZ



## CYBERBULLYING

**Don't be mean.**  
Gossiping doesn't make you cool.

**Ignore. Block. Tell.**  
Ignore mean or threatening messages, block the sender, and tell a trusted adult who can help you report them.

**Speak up**  
if your friends are cyberbullying someone.

## ONLINE PREDATORS

**Recognize the difference between cute and creepy.**  
An older guy who wants to date someone much younger is just creepy.

**Don't just sit there - REPORT**  
anyone who asks to meet you in person to the police and [www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com).

## SHARING TOO MUCH

**Avoid TMI.**  
Don't post anything too personal or embarrassing.

**Protect your space.**  
Use privacy settings and don't accept just anyone as a friend.

**Don't be that kid**  
who gets suspended for posting something stupid online.

## TRUSTED ADULTS

**Talk to your parents or guardians**  
about what you're doing online. They're not as bad as you think.



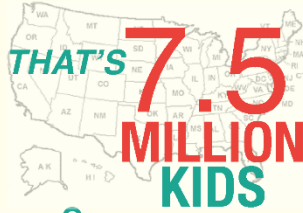
# UNDER 13 on Facebook

PARENTS & EXPERTS WEIGH IN...

## THE STATS:

**38%**

OF CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS OLD ARE ALREADY ON FACEBOOK



CURRENTLY, Facebook deletes **THOUSANDS** OF UNDER 13 ACCOUNTS EVERY DAY

**55%** of TEENS

HAVE GIVEN OUT PERSONAL INFORMATION, INCLUDING PHOTOS AND PERSONAL DESCRIPTIONS TO SOMEONE THEY DON'T KNOW ONLINE.

Facebook intends

TO LINK ALL UNDER 13 ACCOUNTS TO HIS OR HER PARENT'S ACCOUNT IN ORDER TO ALLOW PARENTS TO MONITOR THEIR CHILD ONLINE.

## WHAT PARENTS THINK



**86%**

OF PARENTS ARE FRIENDS WITH THEIR CHILD ON FACEBOOK.

**36 PERCENT**

of parents knew their child had a Facebook account before the child was 13 years old. (the majority of those parents helped set up the account.)

Many parents agree that **children UNDER 13** should have access to Facebook to learn how to use it responsibly.



**74%**

of parents are still concerned about his or her child's online presence.

## WHAT EXPERTS SAY



**LAWMAKERS**

hope that Facebook does not exploit children and their personal information as a source of revenue.

**EXPERTS BELIEVE**

that Facebook can be a valuable resource for children to learn:

**SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCHERS** claim that allowing children under 13 on FB may make it easier for child predators to find new targets.



References:  
The Online Mom <http://theadvocate.com>  
Forbes <http://www.forbes.com>  
Threat Post <http://www.threatpost.com>  
Net Family News <http://www.netfamilynews.com>  
Designer: Brigit Gilbert

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MONITORING YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS VISIT:  
[www.uKnowKids.com](http://www.uKnowKids.com)

# Snapchat

...defined and dethroned.

## THE STATISTICS:

### What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is a **PHOTOSHARING** application where users can send photos to friends, acquaintances or even **PERFECT STRANGERS**. The user can choose how many seconds the photo will be visible until it **SELF DESTRUCTS**

(from one to ten seconds, maximum)



**30** times Snapchat is used every single day **MILLION**

### So, what's the big deal?!

Because of the self-destruction design of the app, users think it is a safe medium to send nude and semi-nude pictures. And with the majority of the users of Snapchat being teens and tweens, this creates a huge problem, exposing young people to the dangers of sexting.

The CEO Evan Spiegel has said that this app was not created with the intention of sexting, but teens will be teens...

**20%**

of teenagers that have sent nude or semi-nude images via cellphone or online.

**4<sup>th</sup>** Snapchat is the most popular free iPhone app!



**ONE** in **SIX** teens have received nude or semi-nude photos via text message.

photos sent **EVERY** second on Thanksgiving day alone **1,000**

**THINK** before you snap.

**HEY!**

There are many ways users can prolong the life of a picture that is sent via Snapchat. Users can take a screenshot of the image that you are sending (you will be notified) or they can take a picture with a camera or another phone.

### Short Term Consequences

Unintended people seeing your photos  
Humiliation at school  
Suspension or expulsion from school  
A bad reputation

### Long Term Consequences

The image going viral  
Denial of college admission or job prospects  
Conviction and jail time  
Possibly registering as a sex offender for life  
Restrictions on living situations

## The **BOTTOM** Line

Sending **ANYONE** inappropriate pictures is a **RISK** teens should **NOT** take. Even with the built in safeguards that Snapchat has, there are still ways for people to spread and keep a permanent copy of pictures that could **RUIN** a reputation.

Teens caught sexting may be charged with production, distribution and/or possession of child pornography – all are federal crimes.

53% of teens who sext are girls

47% of sexters are boys

17 percent of the sexting recipients report that they have passed the images along to someone else. 55 percent of those who passed the images to someone else say they shared them with more than one person.



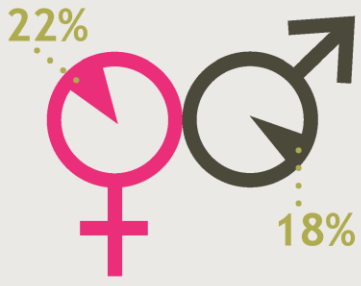
# THE TRUTH ABOUT TEEN SEXTING

86% OF SEXTERS ARE NOT CAUGHT

48% OF TEENS HAVE RECEIVED A SEXUALLY SUGGESTIVE MESSAGE

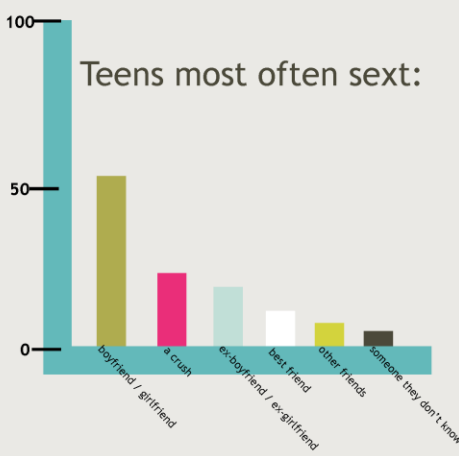
39% OF TEENS HAVE SENT A SEXT

PERCENTAGE OF TEENS THAT HAVE SEXTED NUDE OR SEMI-NUDE PHOTOS OF THEMSELVES:



AND

11% OF YOUNG TEENAGE GIRLS, AGES 13 to 16 HAVE SEXTED NUDE OR SEMI-NUDE PHOTOS OF THEMSELVES.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SEXTING AND HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD VISIT: [www.uKnowKids.com](http://www.uKnowKids.com)

References:  
 PC's n Dreams <http://www.pcandreams.com>  
 American Osteopathic Association <http://www.osteopathic.org>  
 The Pew Charitable Trusts <http://www.pewtrusts.org/>  
 Enough is Enough <http://www.internetsafety101.org>  
 Designer: Brigit Gilbert

ONE in  
**FIVE**  
kids have been  
sexually solicited  
online



# ONLINE PREDATORS

KNOW THE FACTS  
TO KEEP YOUR  
KIDS SAFE



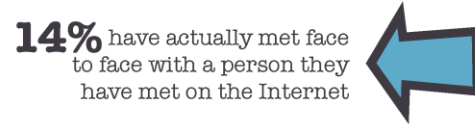
**75% of youth who received an online sexual solicitation did not tell a parent**

**64 percent of the teens surveyed admitted they did things online that they would not want their parents to know about**

**75% of kids are willing to share personal info online about themselves and their family in exchange for goods and services**



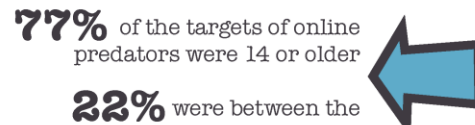
There is estimated to be over  
**5,000,000**  
predators that surf the internet



**14%** have actually met face to face with a person they have met on the Internet



Nearly **75%** of victims who met offenders face-to-face did so more than once



**77%** of the targets of online predators were 14 or older

**22%** were between the ages of 10 and 13

**9 out of 10** parents will NEVER KNOW that any INAPPROPRIATE CONTACT has occurred



MySpace **DELETES** an average of  
**45,000 accounts**  
per year  
of **registered sex offenders**

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CHILD PREDATORS  
AND HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD VISIT:

[www.uKnowKids.com](http://www.uKnowKids.com)

References:

The Pew Charitable Trusts <http://www.pewtrusts.org/>  
PCs n Dreams <http://www.pcsndreams.com>  
Online Safety Tips <http://www.onlinesafetytips.com>  
Ezine Articles <http://EzineArticles.com/4019801>  
Designer: Brigit Gilbert

# Internet & Mobile Safety Pledge

**1**  
**I will think before I post.**

I agree not to post information and images that could put me at risk, embarrass me, or damage my future such as

- » cell & home phone numbers
- » home address
- » sexual messages
- » inappropriate pictures and videos.

**2**  
**I will respect other people online.**

I will not

- » post anything rude, offensive, or threatening
- » send or forward images and information that might embarrass, hurt, or harass someone
- » take anyone's personal information and use it to damage his or her reputation.

**3**  
**I will be careful when meeting online friends in person.**

I agree to

- » ask my parent or guardian's permission
- » have a parent or guardian accompany me
- » meet in a public place.

**4**  
**I will protect myself online.**

If someone makes me feel uncomfortable or if someone is rude or offensive, I will

- » not respond
- » save the evidence
- » tell my parent, guardian, or another trusted adult
- » report to the website, cell phone company, cybertipline.com or the police.

This resource brought to you by  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR  
**MISSING & EXPLOITED**  
CHILDREN



Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_



## Unit 2

### Appropriate and Inappropriate Touching

#### Grade Level

7 & 8

#### ASCA Standards

PS: C1.3 Learn about the differences between appropriate and inappropriate physical contact.

PS: C1.5 Differentiate between situations requiring peer support and situations requiring adult professional help.

#### Learning Objectives

1. Understand and use the concept of boundaries and limitations in all relationships.
2. Define vocabulary that can be used to discuss trust and respect for one another.

#### Materials

- *“What if” Scenarios*
- *Appropriate/Inappropriate Touching Sentence Starters, Grades 7 and 8*

#### Lesson

Appropriate and Inappropriate Touching – What is and isn’t OK?

#### Introduction

Lead the following discussion:

We are going to talk about personal safety and boundaries. The government has safeguards for us (for example, traffic rules). Our parents set boundaries to keep us safe (for example, curfews, not allowing us to swim alone, not allowing us to give out personal information on the internet). Schools keep us safe too (for example, all teachers and volunteers have to have background checks, our computers have internet filters).

Today we are going to talk about ways you can keep yourself safe.

#### Discussion

- A. **Appropriate Boundaries** - Healthy relationships and friendships can help us to understand ourselves and others.  
Discussion topics:
- **Appropriate and inappropriate touching** - Appropriate touch makes us feel safe and good. An inappropriate touch makes us feel scared and bad. We have the right to say “no” to touches that do not make us feel safe. Inappropriate touches cannot be openly shared with others. This usually makes us feel bad. We have a responsibility to avoid or report any unwanted or unsafe (inappropriate) touch to a parent or a trusted adult.
  - **Respect for ourselves and others** – We should use respect in how we talk, act and live. We

need to know the difference between respectful and disrespectful language and actions and avoid anyone who disrespects us. The private parts of our body (those which are covered by shorts and t-shirts or a bathing suit) are not to be violated.

- **Free will** - We can make good and bad choices. All actions have consequences. If we experience the bad choices of another, we need to report them and get help.
- **Secrets** -
  - a. Good secrets can be shared with others, especially your parents. A good secret is keeping a present or a surprise party secret until someone's birthday.
  - b. A bad secret is one that makes us feel bad and/or confused. It cannot be shared. If someone tells us to keep a secret because we will be hurt, we will get in trouble, or someone we love will be hurt, then this is a bad secret. Always question secret play and secret games and determine if the secret will cause harm.
  - c. Why would it be difficult to share a bad secret? Reasons: fear, embarrassment, thinking we are in trouble or it was our fault.
- **Friendship** -
  1. Good friends help us to understand others and ourselves.  
(Have students share characteristics of a good friend).
  2. False friends mistreat or take advantage of our trust and friendship. They can hurt us psychologically, emotionally, and physically. People who manipulate or misuse friendship are not friends.  
(Have students share characteristics of a false friend.)

### **Activity 1**

Distribute the *"What if" Scenarios, Grades 7-8* and direct students to distinguish those situations that are appropriate from those that are inappropriate.

### **Evaluation / Final Activity**

Distribute the *Appropriate/Inappropriate Touching Sentence Starters, Grades 7 and 8* and direct students to complete each sentence starter with information that they gained from the lesson.

## “What if” Scenarios Grades 7-8

Discuss aloud or display for students viewing the following scenarios. Have the student identify each scenario as **Appropriate** or **Inappropriate** and explain what a student should do if he or she found himself or herself in a similar situation.

### Grade 7

- Your dad’s boss comes over for dinner. After being introduced to you, he puts his hand on your shoulder, smiles and tells you he has heard a lot about you and is happy to meet you.
- You choose to watch a television show, which has people who are dressed in revealing clothing. You know that your parents would not approve, but you continue to watch the show anyway.
- A classmate that you hardly know adds you on social media and asks you to privately send a picture.
- A relative comes over and you feel very uncomfortable with his or her long and “mushy” kiss.
- A friend asks you to take pictures with his webcam that he will post online. He wants you to wear revealing clothes for the photos.
- You are at a movie and a stranger sits down next to you and then puts his or her hand on your thigh.
- While collecting payment from a babysitting customer, the customer offers you a beer, puts an arm around you, and says you have a fine body.
- Your boyfriend or girlfriend suddenly starts rubbing your leg and smiling while the two of you are studying.



## Grade 8

- You wake up yelling because of a bad dream. Your dad comes into your room to comfort you and you immediately feel better.
- A teacher invites you on a special trip. She gives you a permission slip to take home to your parents, but tells you not to tell anyone else because he wants this to be your special time together.
- A classmate posts untrue things about you online causing your friends to stop talking to you and they share these untrue stories with others.
- A family member comes into your bedroom in the middle of the night and touches you on your private areas or asks you to touch his or her private areas.
- You are contacted by someone you do not know and they ask you to meet them at the mall.
- Your friend's older brother texts obscene messages to your cell phone and asks you to send nude or revealing pictures of yourself to him.
- A friend of your cousin's offers you a ride home and instead of taking you to your home, he drives down a dead-end street, parks and starts rubbing his hand on your leg.
- Your best friend tells you that she/he tried some beer at a party and that it made her/him act crazy and get sick. Your best friend asks you not to tell anyone.

# Appropriate/Inappropriate Touching Sentence Starters

## Grades 7 and 8

*Directions: Complete each sentence starter with your own words using the information that was presented in the lesson.*

1. Touching is good when . . .
2. Touching is bad when . . .
3. Girls are inappropriately touched when . . .
4. Boys are inappropriately touched when . . .
5. If someone touches me inappropriately . . .
6. If I had a friend who told me he/she was inappropriately touched I would . . .
7. If a person is being touched inappropriately at home, he/she should . . .
8. A bad touch would make me feel . . .
9. It's not funny anymore when . . .

## **Units 3 and 4**

### Assertiveness & Support Systems

#### **Grade Level**

7 & 8

#### **ASCA Standards**

PS: C1.4 Demonstrate the ability to set boundaries, rights and personal privacy.

PS: C1.5 Differentiate between situations requiring peer support and situations requiring adult professional help.

PS: C1.6 Identify resource people in the school and community, and know how to seek their help.

PS: C1.7 Apply effective problem-solving and decision-making skills to make safe and healthy choices.

#### **Learning Objectives**

1. Set boundaries with all types of relationships.
2. Identify methods of assertiveness to ensure one's own safety.
3. Identify trusted adults and agencies to whom an unsafe or inappropriate situation can be reported.

#### **Materials**

- *Tips for Talking to Children About Child Abuse sheet*
- *Personal Boundaries handout*
- *Knowing My Rules for Safety handout*
- *Help Resources List*

#### **Lesson**

Lesson: Assertiveness & Support Systems – Setting boundaries and knowing how to say “NO” when boundaries are crossed.

#### **Introduction**

Introduce the topic of one's personal boundary and assertiveness by having a student stand 10-15 feet away from you. Instruct the student to raise his or her hand toward you and clearly say “NO” when you are too close to the student. Then, begin walking toward the student. When the student says “NO,” stop. You should not get any closer than an arm's length to the student. Use the demonstration of personal space to begin discussing students' personal space, personal boundaries within all relationships, and being assertive.

#### **Activity**

1. Display or distribute for students the information from the *Tips for Talking to Children About Child Abuse* sheet. The information can be presented in whatever way you find best, but a PowerPoint is one useful method of presentation. Highlight the four types of child abuse:

- Child abuse is when an adult hurts a child, and it is not an accident. Hitting, constant yelling, or unwanted touching can all be child abuse. If someone is hurting you or making you uncomfortable, ask the person to stop or leave and tell someone you trust about what happened.
  - Physical abuse is when an adult hurts a child by hitting, shaking, choking, burning, pinching, beating, or any other action that causes pain or injury. If you are physically abused, you may notice cuts, bruises, or other marks on your body.
  - Emotional abuse is when an adult hurts a child by always yelling at the child, threatening to leave, or saying mean things. If you are emotionally abused, you may feel like you are all alone and that no one cares about you.
  - Sexual abuse is when an adult or someone older than a child touches the private parts of a child's body or has a child touch the older person's private parts. Private parts are the parts covered by bathing suits or underwear. It is also sexual abuse if an adult shows a child pictures or movies of people without their clothes on or takes these types of pictures of a child. If someone is sexually abusing you, you may feel uncomfortable, scared, or confused.
  - Neglect is when an adult does not give the food, care, and place to live that a child needs. If you are neglected, you may not have clean clothes, a bed to sleep in, or medicine when you are sick.

2. Explain the concept of personal space and personal boundaries using the *Personal Boundaries* handout. Next, discuss appropriate behaviors within the different "boundaries."

- Family Circle: Family members are the people we're closest to. Family members can sometimes have hugs and kisses. We say "I love you," to family members. We can talk about private things with our parents.
- Best Friend Circle: To our closest friends, we might give hugs when we say hello and goodbye.
- Friend Circle: We can shake hands with our friends, or pat them on the back.
- People We've Met Circle: People in our classes at school or neighbors can have a handshake, and a wave.
- Strangers (On the outside): Strangers are people we have not met and don't know. We don't touch them in any way.

3. Review the *Knowing My Rules for Safety* handout with students.

- CHECK FIRST with my parents, guardians, or other trusted adults before going anywhere, helping anyone, accepting anything, or getting into a vehicle.
- TAKE A FRIEND when going places or playing outside.
- TELL people "NO" if they try to touch me, hurt me, or get me to do anything I am uncomfortable with. It's OK for me to stand up for myself and say "NO."
- TELL a trusted adult if any action or situation makes me feel sad, scared, confused, or conflicted. When in doubt, I ask!

4. Direct students to write a personal safety plan using the guidelines covered in the lesson. Students may personalize the plan using the trusted adults identified in Lesson #2. The personal safety plan may be in letter (prose) format or in list form. Encourage the students to include concepts related to internet and cell phone/texting safety in their plans (covered in Lesson #1).

5. The information can be presented in whatever way you find best, but a PowerPoint is one useful method of presentation followed by a discussion.

**A. Protections** - There are also things that we ourselves, our families, our school, and our community can do that help keep us safe (family, school and community rules).

*Discussion topics:*

**Family rules** - Curfews, cell phones, texting, internet usage, dating, social activities, appropriate attire, etc.

**School rules** - Safety procedures, student handbook, etc.

**Personal rules** – Know when to say no and whom to approach when help is needed.

**B. Open Communication** - Good communication with parents and family members helps to keep children safe. It can also help to keep younger siblings and others safe. Parents, family members and other trusted adults, by being observant and concerned, will listen to children and help them.

**C. Reporting and Seeking Help** – Students always have the right to report any touch or action that makes them uncomfortable. Students must be equipped with the knowledge of whom to contact when in need of help. Share and discuss the following people and agencies as trusted resources to whom a student can report and from whom a student can seek help.

**Family and Friends** –

**Community** - Mobile Fire Department, Mobile Police Department, Child Advocacy Center

**School** – Principal, Teacher, Counselor, Nurse

**Agencies** –

Department of Human Resources (OHR), 690-6222

Crittenton Teen Service, Inc., 479-8585

Boys and Girls Club, 432-1235

Penelope House, 342-3144

Strickland Youth Center, 476-1450

Child Advocacy Center, 432-1101

Drug Education Council, 433-5456

Mobile County District Attorney, 690-8400

### **Evaluation / Final Activity**

Distribute the *Help Resources List* and direct students to complete each entry with information that they gained from the lesson.

## Help Resources List

*Directions: Complete each contact resource using the material learned from the lesson.*

**Four trusted people/agencies I can contact if I need help with an inappropriate or unsafe situation are...**

A. Name:

Contact Info:

B. Name:

Contact Info:

C. Name:

Contact Info:

D. Name:

Contact Info:

## Tips for Talking to Children About Child Abuse

Many adults are uncomfortable about talking with children who have questions about child abuse or who, unfortunately, may be victims themselves. This tip sheet was developed by experts to suggest language appropriate for communicating effectively with children about this sensitive subject. Its aim is to answer children's questions in a way that they can understand without frightening or confusing them.

Don't assume that a child will behave or react in any particular way. Every situation that involves child abuse is different, and every child responds differently. Simply being an available, responsible adult may provide the support a child needs. Establishing or maintaining a sense of normalcy or routine may help to reassure a child and start the healing process.

Your community has resources that can help you, the child, and troubled families through this difficult time. Refer to the resources in this brochure for more information about how to help.

### Questions That Children Often Ask

#### "What is child abuse?"

Child abuse is when an adult hurts a child, and it is not an accident. Hitting, constant yelling, or unwanted touching can all be child abuse. If someone is hurting you or making you uncomfortable, ask the person to stop or leave and tell someone you trust about what happened.

- ♦ **Physical abuse** is when an adult hurts a child by hitting, shaking, choking, burning, pinching, beating, or any other action that causes pain or injury. If you are physically abused, you may notice cuts, bruises, or other marks on your body.
- ♦ **Emotional abuse** is when an adult hurts a child by always yelling at the child, threatening to leave, or saying mean things. If you are emotionally abused, you may feel like you are all alone and that no one cares about you.
- ♦ **Sexual abuse** is when an adult or someone older than a child touches the private parts of a child's body or has a child touch the older person's private parts. Private parts are the parts covered by bathing suits or underwear. It is also sexual abuse if an adult shows a child pictures or movies of people without their clothes on or takes these types of pictures of a child. If someone is sexually abusing you, you may feel uncomfortable, scared, or confused.

- ♦ **Neglect** is when an adult does not give the food, care, and place to live that a child needs. If you are neglected, you may not have clean clothes, a bed to sleep in, or medicine when you are sick.

#### "Who abuses kids?"

Some kids are abused by strangers, but most are abused by someone they know—a parent or stepparent, another relative, a babysitter, a teacher, or an older kid. Abuse can happen to all kinds of kids, no matter where they live or how much money their families have. It can happen just about anywhere—at home, school, day care, or the playground.

#### "Why would someone abuse a kid?"

Most adults care about kids and never hurt them. It can be hard to believe that someone you love or someone who is nice can hurt you or other kids, but some adults lose their tempers or can't control the way they act. Drinking alcohol or using drugs can also make it hard for some people to control how they act. An adult who hurts children has a problem and needs to get help to stop.

#### "Is it my fault that this happened to me?"

No. No matter what, abuse is never your fault and you don't deserve it. It's normal to feel upset, angry, and confused when someone hurts you. But don't blame yourself or worry that others will be angry with you. Even if you think you've done something wrong, that does not make it okay for someone to hurt you. All kids deserve to have adults in their lives who love and support them as they grow up.

#### "How can I stop it?"

If you think that you are being abused, the bravest and most important thing you can do is tell someone you trust. Never keep it a secret, even if the person hurting you tells you that something bad will happen if you tell. Trusting someone after you've been hurt can be hard to do. If you can't trust anyone at home, talk to someone at school (like a teacher, counselor, or school nurse) or a friend's mom or dad. And if that person cannot help you, keep telling until you get the help you need to feel safe.

#### "What will happen to the person who hurt me if I tell?"

An adult who hurts children needs special help to learn to stop. While this person is getting help, you may see less of him or her. This may be tough for you, especially if that person is a part of your family. Your whole family may need help, too.

You may find that the child asking questions is a victim. If you are a "mandated reporter"—a person in a profession such as a social worker, teacher, or child care provider—you are required by law to report suspected abuse. Laws about reporting suspected child abuse vary from state to state. For more information about laws and reporting procedures in your state, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway Web site, hosted by the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, at [www.childwelfare.gov/responding/mandated.cfm](http://www.childwelfare.gov/responding/mandated.cfm).





Source: <https://www.families.com/blog/teaching-children-relationship-boundaries>



# ★ Knowing My Rules for Safety ★

1. I CHECK FIRST with my parents, guardians, or other trusted adults before going anywhere, helping anyone, accepting anything, or getting into a car.
2. I TAKE A FRIEND with me when going places or playing outside.
3. I TELL people "NO" if they try to touch me or hurt me. It's OK for me to stand up for myself.
4. I TELL my trusted adult if anything makes me feel sad, scared, or confused.

Sometimes there are people who trick or hurt others. No one has the right to do that to you. So use these rules, and remember you are **STRONG**, are **SMART**, and have the right to be **SAFE**. Always

- CHECK FIRST
- TAKE A FRIEND
- TELL PEOPLE "NO" IF THEY TRY TO TOUCH YOU OR HURT YOU
- TELL AN ADULT YOU TRUST IF ANYTHING HAPPENS



1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678)  
www.missingkids.com



This project was supported by Grant No. 2009-MC-CX-K002 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® and 1-800-THE-LOST® are registered service marks of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. This document was previously published as *My 3 Rules for Safety* and *Knowing My 3 Rules for Safety*. NCMEC Order #28.

Copyright © 1991, 1999, 2005, and 2010 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. All rights reserved.

Detach and share the bookmark below with your kids!

## ★ Knowing My Rules for Safety ★

1. I CHECK FIRST with my parents, guardians, or other trusted adults before going anywhere, helping anyone, accepting anything, or getting into a car.
2. I TAKE A FRIEND with me when going places or playing outside.
3. I TELL people "NO" if they try to touch me or hurt me. It's OK for me to stand up for myself.
4. I TELL my trusted adult if anything makes me feel sad, scared, or confused.

Sometimes there are people who trick or hurt others. No one has the right to do that to you. So use these rules, and remember you are **STRONG**, are **SMART**, and have the right to be **SAFE**. Always

- CHECK FIRST
- TAKE A FRIEND
- TELL PEOPLE "NO" IF THEY TRY TO TOUCH YOU OR HURT YOU
- TELL AN ADULT YOU TRUST IF ANYTHING HAPPENS

1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678)  
www.missingkids.com

This project was supported by Grant No. 2009-MC-CX-K002 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® and 1-800-THE-LOST® are registered service marks of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. This document was previously published as *My 3 Rules for Safety*. NCMEC Order #28.

Copyright © 1998, 2005, and 2010 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. All rights reserved.



# ★ Conozco mis ★ ★ Reglas de Seguridad ★

1. **CONSULTO PRIMERO** con mis padres, guardianes u otros adultos de confianza antes de ir a cualquier lado, ayudar a alguien, aceptar algo o subir a un auto.
2. Siempre **VOY CON UN AMIGO** cuando voy a algún lado o juego afuera.
3. **DIGO QUE "NO"** si alguien trata de tocarme o lastimarme. **ESTÁ BIEN** que me defienda.
4. **LE DIGO** a un adulto de confianza si algo me hace sentir triste, asustado o confuso.

A veces hay personas que tratan de engañar o lastimar a otros. Nadie tiene el derecho de hacerte eso. De manera que usa estas reglas y recuerda que eres **FUERTE, INTELIGENTE** y que tienes el derecho de **ESTAR A SALVO**. Siempre

- **CONSULTA PRIMERO**
- **VE CON UN AMIGO**
- **DI QUE "NO" SI ALGUIEN TRATA DE TOCARTE O DE HACERTE DAÑO**
- **SI ALGO OCURRE, DÍSELO A UN ADULTO DE CONFIANZA**



1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678)  
www.missingkids.com



Este proyecto fue financiado por el subsidio N° 2009-MC-CX-K002 otorgado por la Oficina de Justicia Juvenil y Prevención de la Delincuencia, Oficina de Programas de Justicia, Departamento de Justicia de Estados Unidos. Los puntos de vista u opiniones expresadas en este documento son los del autor y no representan necesariamente la posición oficial o las políticas del Departamento de Justicia de Estados Unidos. *National Center for Missing & Exploited Children*® y 1-800-THE-LOST® son marcas de servicio registradas del Centro Nacional para Menores Desaparecidos y Explotados. Este documento fue publicado previamente con los títulos *Estas son mis 8 Reglas de Seguridad* y *Mis 8 Reglas de Seguridad*. Orden N° 28 del NCMEC.

Copyright © 1991, 1999, 2005 y 2010 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Todos los derechos reservados.

¡Corte y comparte este señalador con sus hijos!

## ★ Conozco mis ★ Reglas de Seguridad

1. **CONSULTO PRIMERO** con mis padres, guardianes u otros adultos de confianza antes de ir a cualquier lado, ayudar a alguien, aceptar algo o subir a un auto.
2. Siempre **VOY CON UN AMIGO** cuando voy a algún lado o juego afuera.
3. **DIGO QUE "NO"** si alguien trata de tocarme o lastimarme. **ESTÁ BIEN** que me defienda.
4. **LE DIGO** a un adulto de confianza si algo me hace sentir triste, asustado o confuso.

A veces hay personas que tratan de engañar o lastimar a otros. Nadie tiene el derecho de hacerte eso. De manera que usa estas reglas y recuerda que eres **FUERTE, INTELIGENTE** y que tienes el derecho de **ESTAR A SALVO**. Siempre

- **CONSULTA PRIMERO**
- **VE CON UN AMIGO**
- **DI QUE "NO" SI ALGUIEN TRATA DE TOCARTE O DE HACERTE DAÑO**
- **SI ALGO OCURRE, DÍSELO A UN ADULTO DE CONFIANZA**

1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678)  
www.missingkids.com

Este proyecto fue financiado por el subsidio N° 2005-MC-CX-K002 otorgado por la Oficina de Justicia Juvenil y Prevención de la Delincuencia, Oficina de Programas de Justicia, Departamento de Justicia de Estados Unidos. Los puntos de vista u opiniones expresadas en este documento son los del autor y no representan necesariamente la posición oficial o las políticas del Departamento de Justicia de Estados Unidos. *National Center for Missing & Exploited Children*® y 1-800-THE-LOST® son marcas de servicio registradas del Centro Nacional para Menores Desaparecidos y Explotados. Este documento fue publicado previamente con el título *Mis 8 Reglas de Seguridad*. Orden N° 28 del NCMEC.

Copyright © 1998, 2005 y 2010 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. Todos los derechos reservados.



**Mobile County Public School System**

# **Personal Safety Curriculum**



## **Teacher Resources**

Revised October 2016

## Indicators of Child Abuse

These are possible indicators and do not necessarily mean sexual abuse. They were developed with information compiled through the resources of the Louisiana Council on Child Abuse, Baton Rouge, LA.

Type of Abuse	Physical Indicators	Behavioral Indicators
Physical Abuse	unexplained bruises or marks, unexplained burns, unexplained fractures, lacerations or abrasions	self-destructive, behavioral extremes, uncomfortable with physical contact, seems to be afraid to be at home, wears clothing inappropriate to weather to cover body, chronic runaway (adolescents), complains of soreness or moves uncomfortably
Physical Neglect	abandonment, unattended medical needs, poor supervision, consistent hunger, inappropriate dress, poor hygiene, lice, distended stomach, emaciation	regularly appears fatigued or listless, falls asleep in class, steals or begs from classmates, reports that no caretaker is at home, frequently absent or tardy, self-destructive, school drop-out (adolescents)
Sexual Abuse	torn, stained, or bloody underclothing, pain or itch in genital area, difficulty walking or sitting, bruises or bleeding in external genitalia, venereal diseases, frequent urinary or yeast infections, excessive masturbation	withdrawal, chronic depression, excessive seductiveness, role reversal, overly concerned for siblings, poor self-esteem, self-devaluation, lack of confidence, peer problems, lack of involvement, massive weight gain, attempts at suicide (adolescents), unable to control emotions, inappropriate sex play, premature understanding of sex, intimidated by physical contact
Emotional Abuse	speech disorders, delay in physical development, substance abuse, some physical illnesses	delinquent behavior (adolescents), habit disorders, antisocial, exhibits neurotic traits, extreme passive aggressive behavior

Note: Spanking by a parent is not abuse. Poverty should not be confused with neglect.

## **Appropriate and Inappropriate Contact with Minors**

1. Appropriate affection is important for a child's development and is a positive part of Church life and ministry. There are forms of affection between Church personnel and minors that are regarded as appropriate examples for most Church sponsored and affiliated programs:
  - Shoulder to shoulder or "temple" hugs
  - Pats on the shoulder or back
  - "High-fives" and hand slapping
  - Verbal praise
  - Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of minors
  - Holding hands while walking with small children
  - Sitting beside small children
  - Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children
  - Holding hands during prayer
  - Pats on the head when culturally appropriate (Example: This gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities.)
  
2. No form of physical discipline is acceptable and is prohibited as a way of behavior management of minors as directed by the Archdiocese.
  
3. Some forms of physical affection have been used by adults to initiate inappropriate contact with minors. In an effort to provide the safest possible environment for minors, the following examples of affection are not to be used in Church sponsored and affiliated programs:
  - Inappropriate or lengthy embraces
  - Kisses on the mouth
  - Holding minors over two years old on the lap
  - Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas
  - Showing affection in isolated areas of the program such as bedrooms, staff only areas, or other private rooms
  - Sleeping in bed with a minor
  - Touching knees or legs of minors
  - Wrestling with or tickling of minors
  - Piggyback rides
  - Any type of massage given by minor to adult
  - Any type of massage given by adult to minor
  - Any form of unwanted affection
  - Compliments that relate to physique or body development
  
3. When working with minors keep in mind two very important points: a) focus on meeting the needs of the minor/s, not on meeting your own needs and b) establish and keep very clear boundaries between yourself and the minor/s. Adults must be cautious in their ministry settings and need to be aware of their behavior.

4. The following behaviors are considered inappropriate when working with minors.
  - a. Sharing of one's personal life; telling adolescents **your** problems
  - b. Exclusivity, spending an inordinate amount of time with a particular minor
  - c. Social trips outside the ministry setting and tutoring in the home setting
  - d. Keeping confidentiality in cases that threaten health and safety
  - e. Wearing immodest or provocative attire
  
5. A person who habitually lacks the use of reason is to be considered equivalent to a minor and is therefore protected under the Archdiocese of Mobile Child Protection Policy.

## **Cell Phone Safety Tips for Parents**

- Take the time to teach your child how to use the cell phone. Learn its features so that you can occasionally check the child's cell phone usage. Discuss with your child the rules that you expect him/her to obey.
  
- Set a time limit for the use of your child's cell phone. Be sure that cell phones do not interfere with family time, homework, or sleep time. It can be beneficial to take the child's phone at night.
  
- Be aware of and teach your child about the expenses of cell phone ownership and usage, especially text messaging, games and sharing photos.
  
- Explain to your child that there are risks involved with cell phones. Let them know that they should not answer calls or messages from unknown numbers. Watch out for prank calls and for sexting. Sexting is the sending or receiving of inappropriate pictures and videos of self or others.
  
- Be aware that cell phones may offer complete internet access with e-mail, web browsing, and instant messaging, and that your child is at risk of receiving calls, text messages, and e-mail from the outside world as well as from friends.
  
- Make sure that your child is ready to accept the responsibilities that come with owning a cell phone. They should be expected to follow the rules of usage at school, assemblies, sporting events, etc. In most cases your child will be able to use a regular phone or the cell phone of an adult who is supervising the activity.

## Parent Checklist

### Protecting Your Children from Internet Pornography

The Internet is full of both opportunities and pitfalls. Kids today have more information at their fingertips than we could have dreamed of just twenty years ago. On the other hand, they also have access to more inappropriate content than we could have feared.

Chances are, if your child uses the Internet, he/she has seen pornographic content whether he/she wanted to or not. As parents, it is important that we talk with our kids about who they are hanging out with and what they have seen online. Internet “incidents” can be a great opportunity to talk to your child about important issues like sex, alcohol and drugs, and relationships. Do not miss the opportunity to connect with your child on these important issues.

- Keep the computer in a family common space, making it easier to see what sites the child is visiting online.
- Talk to your child about where he/she has been and what he/she has seen online.
- Talk to your child about how you feel about online pornography and your family values.
- Talk to your child about what to do if he/she ends up on a site that makes him/her feel uncomfortable or receives messages that are inappropriate.
- Establish Internet house rules so that your child understands the expectations and consequences.
- Become familiar with the way the Internet works and with popular teen sites.
- Check into and use filtering or tracking software and parental controls.
- Limit the amount of time your child spends on the Internet.
- Use Internet “incidents” as opportunities to communicate – not as platforms for endless lectures.
- Expect some exploration from your child – do not be surprised if your child has deliberately or accidentally seen pornography online.
- If you find that your child has been to a site with pornography, initiate a conversation with your child about why they went to the site, what they saw when they got there and how they felt about it. Remember to LISTEN first!
- Young people are curious. Don’t let websites provide the only answers to their questions or curiosity. Let them know that they can talk to you.
- Review with them what they should do when they see something that makes them feel uncomfortable – turn off the monitor and tell you about the incident.
- Make sure your child has a clear understanding of how you feel about online pornography and your expectations for responsible Internet use.



## Understanding the Grooming Process: Preventing Inappropriate Behavior and Sexual Misconduct with Children

In most cases of sexual misconduct with children, offenders use a subtle and gradual process known as grooming to put children and their families at ease. Grooming is typically done over weeks, months or years to slowly lure and manipulate children into abuse. On the surface, grooming behaviors can appear quite innocent, and may even give the perception that the individual is good with children.

Over 90% of sexual offenders are individuals known and trusted by the child and family. Notoriously friendly and likable, they insinuate themselves into a child's life through his/her family, school, house of worship, sports and hobbies.

Secrets typically play a significant role in the grooming process. Teach children early on that there should be no secrets from parents, even seemingly innocent ones. Secrets often lay the groundwork for future abuse.

Most incidents (81%) of child sexual abuse occur in **one-on-one situations**. Therefore, limit opportunities for individuals to be alone with your child. Adults who must spend one-on-one time with children should be within sight and earshot of other adults. Question the motives of adults who want to spend the majority of their time with children.

Abusers come from all walks of life. Both men and women offend, although men offend more often. Notably, **juvenile offenders** (abusers under the age of 18) are responsible for over 30% of child sexual abuse. Average onset of juvenile sexual assault behavior is 12-14 years old. For safety's sake, supervise children whenever possible, especially during sleepovers and gatherings involving multi-aged youth. Abuse often occurs while adults are socializing and youngsters are playing unsupervised in separate areas.

By being aware of the Grooming Process, adults can interrupt behaviors that may lead to inappropriate or sexual misconduct with children, thus allowing youngsters to grow up healthy and safe.

### Grooming Behaviors:

#### How Offenders Build Familiarity & Trust

- Befriending the youngster and their family to slowly gain trust.
- Giving gifts, money, trips, and/or performing special favors for youngster.
- Promoting the notion that the relationship with the boy or girl is special.
- Encouraging harmless secrets, laying the foundation for future sexual secrets.
- Taking pictures/video of the child.
- Communicating with the boy or girl excessively; texting, emailing or calling.
- Desensitizing the child through nonsexual touching, "accidental" touching of privates and/or walking in on bathroom or dressing time.
- Testing a child's boundaries by using inappropriate language and/or telling dirty jokes.
- Playing body contact games with children; tickling, backrubs or wrestling.
- Making alcohol/drugs available to the boy or girl.
- Introducing pornography to initiate sexual interest or to normalize the behavior.
- Offering to carpool and babysit, including overnight trips or sleepovers.



Dear Parent,

Today we completed the **MCPSS Personal Safety Curriculum** training for students. Please go over the Safety Sheet that your child has brought home to you. Talk to your child about the points we covered in class. These points are on the sheet. Also, please talk to your child about the trusted adults in their lives. Help him/her generate the names of three adults (in addition to parents) that he/she can talk to when he/ she needs help in being safe.

Listed below are some safety tips to help your child remain safe in his/her home and school environments. Please read and discuss them with your child.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

(Teacher's name)

## **Know the Rules...General Tips for Parents and Guardians to Help Keep Their Children Safer**

While many parents and guardians feel they are faced with new and unprecedented challenges when trying to keep their children safer in today's fast-paced and increasingly global society, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children<sup>®</sup> offers these commonsense, general safety tips to help families put these challenges into perspective.

- 1. Make sure you know where each of your children is at all times.** Know your children's friends and be clear with your children about the places and homes they may visit. Make it a rule for your children to check in with you when they arrive at or depart from a particular location and when there is a change in plans. You should also let them know when you're running late or if your plans have changed to show the rule is for safety purposes and not being used to "check up" on them.
- 2. Never leave children unattended in a vehicle, whether it is running or not.** Children should never be left unsupervised or allowed to spend time alone or with others in vehicles as the potential dangers to their safety outweigh any perceived convenience or "fun." Remind children to never hitchhike, approach a vehicle or engage

in a conversation with anyone within a vehicle they do not know and trust, or go anywhere with anyone without first getting your permission.

3. **Be involved in your children's activities.** As an active participant you'll have a better opportunity to observe how the adults in charge interact with your children. If you are concerned about anyone's behavior, take it up with the sponsoring organization.
4. **Listen to your children.** Pay attention if they tell you they don't want to be with someone or go somewhere. This may be an indication of more than a personality conflict or lack of interest in the activity or event.
5. Notice when anyone shows one or all of your children a great deal of attention or begins giving them gifts. **Take the time to talk to your children** about the person and find out why the person is acting in this way.
6. Teach your children they have the right to say **NO** to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touch or actions by others and get out of those situations as quickly as possible. If avoidance is not an option, children should be taught to kick, scream, and resist. When in such a situation, teach them to loudly yell, "This person is not my father/mother/guardian," and then immediately tell you if this happens. Reassure them you're there to help and it is okay to tell you anything.
7. **Be sensitive to any changes in your children's behavior or attitude.** Encourage open communication and learn how to be an active listener. Look and listen to small cues and clues indicating something may be troubling your children, because children are not always comfortable disclosing disturbing events or feelings. This may be because they are concerned about your reaction to their problems. If your children do confide problems to you, strive to remain calm, noncritical, and nonjudgmental. Listen compassionately to their concern, and work with them to get the help they need to resolve the problem.
8. **Be sure to screen babysitters and caregivers.** Many states now have a public registry allowing parents and guardians to check out individuals for prior criminal records and sex offenses. Check out references with other families who have used the caregiver or babysitter. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask your children how the experience with the caregiver was, and carefully listen to the responses.
9. **Practice basic safety skills with your children.** Make an outing to a mall or park a "teachable" experience in which your children practice checking with you, using pay telephones, going to the restroom with a friend, and locating the adults who may be able to help if they need assistance. Remember, allowing your children to wear clothing or carry items in public on which their name is displayed may bring about unwelcome attention from inappropriate people looking for a way to start a conversation with your children.
10. **Remember there is no substitute for your attention and supervision.** Being available and taking time to really know and listen to your children helps build feelings of safety and security.

**Printed courtesy of the Archdiocese of Mobile Office of Child Protection**

Copyright © 2000 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). All rights reserved.

This project was supported by Grant No. 2005-MC-CX-K024 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. National Center for Missing & Exploited Children ® and 1-800-THE-LOST ® are registered service marks of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.