

KEEPIN' U SAFE

Self-Esteem & Safety Curriculum



THE KID'S
DEFENSE PROJECT

SIS HER
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www.KidsDefenseProject.org



Introduction:

Your child's safety is our main concern. With the right tools and information, we can all work together to keep our children safe.

Sadly, we're seeing more and more harmful activity involving children online. Criminal activities by sexual offenders have escalated across various platforms, including social media, peer-to-peer networks, and the dark web.

Statistics show that children who suffer from low self-esteem are at a higher risk and are more vulnerable to sex trafficking and child sexual exploitation. That's why it's so important to help boost their self-esteem - it can actually help keep them safe. Communicating and affirming children are strategies that adults can use to help build self-esteem while reducing risks of vulnerability.

Our Keepin' U Safe curriculum gives you and your child resources to build self-esteem and safety awareness.

Together, we can help our children grow in a safe and secure environment. Thank you for being a part of this important effort.

With Care,
The Kid's Defense Team



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Before starting the activity

Building a Safe Space through Conversation Agreements

We encourage adults to review these conversation agreements with their children. By establishing these conversation agreements, you can create a safe space where everyone's voice is valued, and where children feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, worries, and personal experiences.

01 We Listen Actively:

When someone is speaking, we agree to listen carefully without interrupting. We will give our full attention to the speaker, avoiding distractions.

02 We Speak Respectfully:

We will always use kind and respectful language. Shouting, insulting, or belittling each other is not allowed.

03 All Feelings Are Valid:

We will respect and acknowledge each other's feelings. It is important to understand that everyone has the right to express their emotions.

04 We Ask Before Assuming:

If we don't understand someone's point of view or feelings, we will ask clarifying questions instead of making assumptions.

05 We Respect Privacy:

We recognize and respect personal boundaries and privacy. Each person has the right to their own space.

06 Honesty is Essential:

We will strive to be honest and truthful in our conversations, even when it may be challenging.

It's important to assure your child that their honesty won't be penalized. Assure your children that they won't get into trouble for expressing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences honestly. Commit to responding to your children with understanding and compassion. This encourages open dialogue and builds trust, even around difficult subjects.





SAFETY SHIELD



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Activity 1:

The Safety Shield

Objective: To empower children with safety strategies to reduce their vulnerability to exploitation.

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: Paper, markers, or colored pencils;
Safety Shield

Activity Steps:

1. Discussion (15 minutes):

Start the activity with an open conversation about safety. Make sure your child understands that they have the right to feel safe at all times, and that their feelings are important. Explain the concept of a "Safety Shield" as being a metaphorical shield made up of knowledge, strategies, and actions that protect them from harm. Discuss some general situations where they might need to use their "Safety Shield".

For example, you could use a situation where they receive a direct message on social media from a stranger. Ask them what they would do in such a situation and listen to their response.

Remember, the aim of this step is to make your child feel comfortable discussing safety and to understand that they play an active role in their own protection. Make sure to listen to their input and answer any questions they may have.

Additional questions you can ask your child:

- If your neighbor asked for you to go to the store alone with them, what would you say or do?
- Imagine you're playing at the park and a stranger approaches you and starts asking you personal questions. How would you respond?
- If a friend's parent or an adult at school asks you to keep a secret from your parents, how would you handle that situation?
- What would you do if an older person you met online starts sending you messages and asks if they can send you a gift?
- Why is it important to turn off your location before posting a picture or video on social media?
- If you witnessed a friend or heard about a peer experiencing something that might be harmful (i.e sexual abuse, dating an adult, dating violence), what would you do?



2. Building the Safety Shield (10 minutes): Explain to your child that their “Safety Shield” will be made up of the things and people that make them feel safe. This will help them recognize their support system and safe spaces.

Reiterate that their “Safety Shield” isn't just about dealing with strangers. It can also be used in situations with people they know. For instance, if a friend or family member is asking them to do something that makes them feel uncomfortable, they can use their “Safety Shield” to say no and tell a trusted adult.

2A

Start by having your child list the people, places, or things that make them feel safe and secure. This could include family members, a favorite teacher, a best friend, their bedroom, a pet, or a cherished object like a teddy bear. Ask them to share how these things or people provide comfort and security.

2B

Ask your child to write these elements around the outside of their shield. They can write names, draw pictures, or use symbols to represent these safe elements.

3. Review Safety Tips (20 minutes): Review each of the “Keep It Safe” Tips mentioned below with your child, discussing each one in detail.

- **"It's A NO For Me":** Discuss situations where it's okay for a child to say "No" to an adult. For example, if an adult they don't know well asks them to go somewhere alone with them.
- **"Listen To Your 'Uh Oh' Voice":** Talk about how their gut feeling, or "Uh Oh" voice, might alert them when something doesn't seem right. Ask them to share a time when they listened to their “Uh Oh” voice.
- **"Don't Keep Secrets":** Explain the difference between good secrets (like surprise parties) and bad secrets (anything that makes them feel uncomfortable or scared).
- **"I DO NOT Date Adults":** Explain what a "romantic relationship" is in an age-appropriate way. Emphasize that adults seeking such relationships with kids is not okay and it is illegal.
- **"Memorize It.":** Discuss the importance of knowing key contact information. Have your child practice reciting their home address, your phone number, and the contact number of a trusted friend/family member.
- **"Turn It Off":** Discuss internet safety, including the importance of not sharing location information online. Show your child how to turn off location services on their devices.
- **"Report It":** Ensure your child knows how to seek help if they're in danger, including the National Human Trafficking Hotline number. Explain what the hotline does in a way that's suitable for their age. (See “How To Report” for more information)



3. Creating Safety Strategies (10 minutes): After the discussion, ask your child to write inside the shield how they can apply each safety tip in their daily life. For example, under the "It's A NO For Me" tip, they might write "I can say NO when a stranger offers me a ride home."

Make sure your child knows they can always talk to you or another trusted adult if they're ever unsure about a situation or if something makes them uncomfortable. Inside of their "Safety Shield", have your child write down the phone numbers of trusted adults they can call if they feel unsafe. Write the number to the Human Trafficking Hotline inside of the shield, as well.

Personalizing the shield: Encourage your child to personalize the shield. They could color it in their favorite colors, add symbols or drawings that are meaningful to them, or anything else that makes the shield feel uniquely theirs.

4. Wrap-up (5 minutes): Close the activity by applauding your child for their hard work on their "Safety Shield". Let them know you're proud of them and keep the conversation open. Invite them to ask more questions whenever they feel the need. Keep the shield in a visible place as a daily reminder of the importance of making safe choices. Encourage your child to add to the shield as they discover new strengths and safety strategies.

How To Report:

The National Human Trafficking Hotline is a resource available 24/7 for reporting any suspected abuse or exploitation. If you or your child encounters a situation that may involve human trafficking or child exploitation, don't hesitate to call.

Here's how to use the hotline:

1. **Call 1-888-373-7888:** This line is available around the clock. Trained professionals will answer your call and guide you on the next steps.
2. **Text 233733:** If calling isn't possible or you feel uncomfortable doing so, you can also send a text message. Just type "HELP" to 233733.

The service is confidential, and your child can use it anonymously. It's better to be safe than sorry - if something doesn't seem right, encourage your child to use this resource. It's here to help protect them.



MY SAFTEY SHIELD



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MIRROR MIRROR

I Am Safe



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Activity 2:

"Mirror Mirror: I Am Safe"

Objective: To enhance children's self-esteem to decrease their susceptibility to exploitation by fostering self-belief, confidence, and the ability to make safe choices.

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: A mirror, a quiet comfortable space, and printed "I AM SAFE" affirmations.

Activity Steps:

1. Preparation (5 minutes):

Start by engaging your child in a conversation about self-esteem. Ask them what they think self-esteem means. Listen to their response and validate their understanding, then build upon it by giving a detailed definition. You might say, "Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves, like how we see ourselves and what we think about ourselves. It's about feeling good about who we are and knowing that we are special and valuable, just the way we are."

Explain that having strong self-esteem is like having an inner shield that protects us. When we believe in ourselves and recognize our own worth, it helps us make better choices and stay safe.

Sometimes, people who want to harm others look for those who seem unsure of themselves because they think they can easily manipulate them. But when we have a positive view of ourselves and feel good about who we are, we become stronger and less vulnerable to being deceived or coerced.

Having self-esteem means we believe in ourselves, respect ourselves, and know that we deserve to be treated with kindness and respect. It gives us the confidence to set boundaries, say no when needed, and seek help from trusted adults when we need it.

This activity will focus on understanding our worth, feeling confident, and protecting ourselves by making safer choices and seeking support when necessary.



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2. Introduction to Affirmations (20 minutes): Hand your child the printed list of "I AM SAFE" affirmations. Read each one out loud together, discussing briefly what each affirmation means. For example, when reading "I AM LOVED," you might say, "This means you are cared for deeply by many people, especially me."

Review these reflective questions with your child after discussing each affirmation:

01 "I AM LOVED"

- Can you think of a time when you felt really loved and appreciated?
- Who are some people in your life who show you love?

02 "I AM KIND"

- Can you remember a time when you did something kind for someone else? How did it make you feel?
- What are some ways you can show kindness to others?

03 "I AM ENOUGH"

- Have you ever felt like you weren't enough? Can you share that moment with me?
- Why do you think you are enough just the way you are?

04 "I AM BEAUTIFUL"

- What do you think makes a person beautiful?
- In what ways do you think you are beautiful?

05 "I AM HONEST"

- Why is honesty important to you?
- Can you remember a time when being honest was difficult, but you chose to be honest anyway?

06 "I AM UNIQUE"

- What makes you different from your friends or siblings?
- Why is being unique a good thing?



07 "I AM IMPORTANT"

- Can you think of a time when you did something important?
- Why do you think you're important?

08 "I AM SMART"

- What are some things you're really good at or know a lot about?
- Why is making safe choices important?

09 "I AM POWERFUL"

- Can you remember a time when you felt powerful and in control?
- What makes you feel powerful?

10 "I AM SAFE"

- Can you share what makes you feel safe?
- What can I and other adults do to make you feel safe?

3. Practicing Affirmations (15 minutes): Now, move to a space where there's a mirror. Stand with your child in front of the mirror and take turns saying each affirmation out loud. Encourage them to look at themselves in the mirror as they say these affirmations, really taking in their own reflection and the positive words they're saying about themselves.

Here's how you can do it:

Adult: Repeat after me: I AM LOVED."

Child: "I AM LOVED."

Repeat this process for each affirmation on the list.

4. Valuing and Validating (10 minutes): As a concluding part of this activity, it's essential to create a moment that makes your child feel “so special” and validated. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to do it:

- **Sit down with your child in a comfortable and quiet space.** Maintain eye contact to make the conversation more engaging and meaningful.
- **Compliment them on something they did well recently.** This could be related to school, chores, a hobby, or just a kind act they performed. This will show them that you notice and appreciate their efforts.
- **Share a moment when you felt proud of them.** This could be any situation where they showed bravery, kindness, or any other positive trait. It's important to be specific and genuine. This serves to boost their self-esteem by highlighting their strengths.
- **Wrap up by showing them affection, in your own way, and letting them know you're always there for them.** Remind them that they can always turn to you and the affirmations they've learned whenever they feel upset, anxious, or unsure about their safety. This step of making them feel special and validated plays a crucial role in building their self-esteem, which directly contributes to them feeling safe and secure.



6. Daily Practice (5 minutes): Give your child a copy of the affirmations and encourage your them to say these affirmations every day, in the morning or at night. They can say them quietly to themselves or out loud in the mirror. This daily practice can help boost their self-esteem over time.

7. Wrap-up (5 minutes): Conclude by praising your child for their engagement in this important conversation. Stress that these affirmations are not mere words, but actual reflections of who they are. Encourage them to remember and believe in these affirmations because they hold power and truth about their own self-worth and safety.



KEEPIN' U SAFE

AFFIRMATIONS

I AM LOVED
I AM KIND
I AM ENOUGH
I AM BEAUTIFUL
I AM HONEST
I AM UNIQUE
I AM IMPORTANT
I AM SMART
I AM POWERFUL
I AM SAFE



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