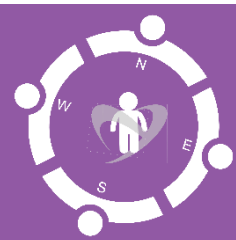


Grade 1 - CLASSROOM

COMPASS CHILD PROTECTION CHILDREN'S PROGRAM



GETTING HELP
Parent Handout

Getting Help

Grade 1 - PARENT FOLLOW-UP SESSION

with children who attended the parish/school session.

Instructions for Parents:

Your child attended a lesson which dealt with personal safety. The classroom session was intended to open discussions with your child and encourage dialogue with you, the parents.

You are encouraged, sometime within the next week, to set aside 30 minutes for a discussion on this material with your child. This packet contains information to guide your conversation, as well as a step-by-step guide with suggestions.

Dealing with issues of personal body safety often requires a child to behave in ways that can be uncomfortable to a child. For instance, saying “No” to an adult or summoning the courage to tell you a secret that your child was threatened not to tell can be challenging exceptions for younger children who have been taught to respect adults. You will need to give them the permission and the affirmation required so that your child believes that they can tell you anything. Practice saying “No! Stop!” with your child. In this way, children build confidence in their ability to shout if they need help.

The information in this handout can allow you to reinforce the information taught in the session. Please repeat this dialogue with your child on a regular basis.

General Safety Tips

*As you prepare to lead your child through a conversation on staying safe, **this background information is for you, not your children**, to better understand the issues.*

Child sexual abuse is a form of abuse that includes sexual activity with, or in front of, a minor. When a person engages in this way, they are committing a crime that can have lasting effects on the child. **A child cannot consent to any form of sexual activity.**

The following are forms of child sexual abuse:

- Sending obscene phone calls, text messages, images or other communication.
- Touching a child's private parts.
- Forcing or tricking a child to touch the private parts of an adult or another child.
- Having sex of any kind.
- Exposing oneself.
- Producing, owning, or sharing pornographic images of children.
- Trafficking children for sex.
- Engaging in any other sexual conduct that is harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical development.

Some behavioral signs in children that may indicate sexual abuse include sudden and intense fears, trauma, isolation from others, drastic disruptions in temperament and coping styles, hygiene changes (such as bedwetting, refusing to bathe or washing excessively), being over-protective of siblings, sleep problems or nightmares, inappropriate sexual knowledge, or behaviors beyond their years, or running away from home.

Most sexual abusers have a pre-existing relationship with their victims and/or families. Sexual abusers have gained access, authority, and often the trust of both the child and parent. They

may involve themselves in a family's life as well as appear to do great things in the community – this is a way of being “hidden in plain sight” to gain access to children.

A process—often called “grooming”—is a way that abusers break down a child or young person's physical, emotional, and behavioral boundaries while, at the same time, damaging their relationships with adults, their spiritual life, their values, and their sense of self. As part of a grooming process, potential abusers (also called predators) might give presents to or offer favors for children.

Grooming bribes or “guilt gifts” might include unexplained clothing, cash, jewelry, phones or trips. Parents should **know the source of any gifts and treats their child receives**. Children and teens should ask their parents before accepting ANY gifts.

Abusers use grooming tactics with parents and caregivers, too. Predators may be eager to babysit; they may offer “a shoulder to cry on” or financial help. They may pose as the wise counselor with sage advice (what a stressed parent often needs) or the go-to neighbor with exciting “treats” or offer to take a child on a family trip with them (things a lower-income parent may not be able to provide). These intentional behaviors are designed to trick the parent into trusting their child with the predator.

A predator's boundary violations may become so entrenched into daily life that adults fail to recognize it. The people in a child's life become convinced that the predator's inappropriate behavior is safe. **If a child says that they have been abused, believe them—even if you think it's impossible.**

It is common for children who are victims of abuse, including neglect, to blame themselves and believe a situation is their fault. Furthermore, this message may be reinforced by the

person who is abusing them. It is our responsibility as their parents to let them know that it's NOT THE CHILD'S FAULT, they did NOT do anything wrong. This should be continuously reinforced—don't just say it one time and think that's enough. For kids to believe it, we have to say it over and over.

One of the most important ways we can keep our children safe is to have open and courageous communication. Encourage them to come to you when they are confused about anything or have questions. Clearly teaching the names of private body parts, enables a child to share with you accurately when they suspect abuse happening to a friend, or even to themselves.

Build strong communication bridges with your children so that when they have to talk about something heavy or hard, they are able to bring it to you with greater ease. For example, your child may step forward and share about a mistake they made, something a friend did, or an unjust situation. Your reaction to these situations determines their level of comfort in continuing to bring such things your way.

When your child does come to you, avoid reacting emotionally, and be supportive. Assure them that you love them and you will help them find a solution.

PARENTS: Please read the entire handout before reviewing the information with your child. Be prepared to discuss the material using language that is appropriate to your child's intellectual and social abilities. And be advised that at this age level, you will find your child rapidly advancing in understanding and retention of the information.

SESSION OVERVIEW

Here are some of the main ideas discussed in this lesson:

- Each of us is a Gift from God.
- You can always say no to a touch from someone.
- Say No, Move away and Tell Someone when you experience an unsafe touch.
- Ways to get help.
- “Get Help wave.”

The session ends with a prayer.

PARENT-CHILD DISCUSSION

1. You are a gift.

Ask your child to show you the picture they drew of themselves in their activity book. Remind them that they are a gift.

2. Touch

(Direct your child to the page in the Activity Book that is titled "Touch.")

Say:

Let's discuss the types of touch mentioned here.

Explain different types of touch to your child and help them understand and why that type of touch is safe, or unsafe, and maybe even a context when that changes.

Say:

I'm going to read out some types of touch and let's talk about it.

Read out randomly different types of touch mentioned in this chart below, allowing time for discussion after each. The ones bolded were discussed in class, but the more sensitive ones were left for you to discuss with your child.

- a hug when you want it
- holding hands
- hand placed lightly on your shoulder
- gentle kiss on the cheek from someone in the family
- rocking or holding a younger child
- a tap on the shoulder
- a pat on the back to indicate someone did a good job
- holding a person's body while they learn to ride a bike
- kick or a hair pull

- being tickled after saying “Stop!”
- a squeeze that feels too hard
- an unwanted kiss
- looking at or touching a private part of the body
(remember that private parts of the body are those that are covered by a bathing suit)

(If you have not done so before this, or if you would like to review, Use this opportunity to teach your child the names of their private parts. This is important because it helps the child accurately share with an adult if they have experienced any type of abuse)

You can say, “No” to any type of touch. If you don’t want to sit in someone’s lap anymore or be hugged or kissed by someone, you can simply say, “No” in your nice indoor voice and move away. You can say “No” and move away because your body belongs to you.

This works in any situation. People who give unsafe touches don’t like to be told “no” and when a kid yells and runs, the person usually stops.

If there is an unsafe touch, you must tell your mom and dad about it.

Let’s talk about some other times when saying “No! Stop!” would be the right thing to do:

What if an adult, older child or teen surprises you on the playground at school, or anywhere, and tries to take you with them in a car or make you walk away with them? What do you do?

(Wait for response.) That’s right...Tell them “No! Stop!” and move away from them. Never leave where you are supposed to be even if you know the person. Wherever you are, there are

adults responsible for you and they must know where you are at all times.

Do you have any questions about touch or stopping touch?
(Answer their questions.)

3. Telling Adults

Say:

In your class, you talked about telling adults. Who are some adults that you could tell if you need help?

Allow your child to share their thoughts. Consider various settings your child may be in. Guide the conversation and discuss who your child might approach in when they need help or in an emergency. You might include uniformed officers, teachers, the school principal or such on your list.

Say:

Can we trust all adults?

Consider telling your child that there are people in the world who might hurt children even if they seem nice. Let them know that sometimes adults trick children and parents by making them think that they are nice.

You may say: "If think someone might not be nice, please tell me, and I will help you."

Ensure your child knows who and how to get help in an emergency. Use the Important Information Chart to write out some key phone numbers, addresses or other emergency information that you want them to remember. You can put this chart up on your fridge or some other place in your home where it will be viewed frequently. Consider using songs to help your child learn this information.

4. Get Help Wave

In class you would have learnt about this new wave, the “Get Help wave.” Together, let’s look at the pictures in your activity book on the page: “Get Help Wave” and practice it.

(Practice the steps in the wave together with your child so that they can learn to do it.)

Say:

Now let’s do the “Get Help wave” slowly.

(Practice a few times)

Now let’s do the “Get Help wave” fast.

(Practice a few times.)

Say:

Now let’s do the “Get Help wave” with our eyes closed...

(Do it with your child)

With our hands behind our back.

With our hands stretched out on top.

While singing the ABC song.

Say:

You did such a good job with that. It’s great we practiced because the “Get Help wave” can be used in any position at any time. There’s no proper time or place to use it- you can use it anytime, anywhere.

Parents, share this “Get Help wave” with those you know in the community as it can help keep your child and other children safe.

5. Prayer

End the session with a time of prayer, asking God for protection and wisdom to stay safe.