



GRADE 3 - CLASSROOM

COMPASS CHILD PROTECTION CHILDREN'S PROGRAM



HEAD and HEART
Parent Handout

Head and Heart

Grade 3 - PARENT FOLLOW-UP SESSION

with children who attended the session.

Instructions for Parents:

Your child attended a lesson today 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.

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.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

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. Make sure to know who is in your child's life, both children and adults. 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

The focus of the session is to help children understand that they need to use both their head (the rules they have been taught) as well as their heart (intuition) to make safe choices.

Students completed feeling charts to identify emotions that may be felt in situations.

Then the facilitator guided students to understand how sometimes these feelings must be put away, in order to follow rules. And sometimes when feelings support the rules, there is reason to get away and tell someone.

At the end of the session, students reflected on the topics that were discussed.

PARENT_CHILD DISCUSSION

A. Personal Space Boundary

Your child was taught:

It's important to be **alert when someone is in your personal space boundary**. We want to be careful about who we allow inside of our personal space boundaries. At any time, if you are not comfortable about someone being in your personal space boundary in a private place where no one can see you- say no, and get away.

B. Feelings

Feelings can be complicated. Sometimes we feel a mix of feelings all at the same time. We can feel happy and sad at the same time. Or angry about something, and guilty or happy about something else. Knowing what we feel is important, but it is also important to make good choices based on our rules and what we have been taught.

C. Head and Heart

In every situation, it's important to use our head and our heart.

- “**Use our Head**” means using **what we know** in our head. The things you have been taught today or the things your parents have taught you. The safety rules, you know.
- “**Use our Heart**” means talking about **how we feel**. Like when our parents cuddle with us and read a book to us, we feel nice in our heart. We feel happy, peaceful, and content.
- But if a stranger comes into our personal space boundary and stays close to us, we may feel nervous or uncomfortable. We may feel like we need to get away. We may FEEL like something is wrong. This ‘feeling’ is also called intuition.

Intuition seems like a big word, but it really just means knowing if something is good or bad based on the feeling you feel in your heart. Intuition is something that we are always practicing and getting better at as we grow.

The session ended with a prayer.

PARENT-CHILD DISCUSSION

Tell your child that you will be talking to them about a few things that were introduced in class. Ask them what they thought about class and what were some new things they learned. Then start a discussion guided by the points below.

1. Touch

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

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.

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)

Say:

If a touch is making you uncomfortable, you can always move away. For example, when you are sitting on someone’s lap, or close to someone, you can change your mind. Remember your body belongs only to you. If you were on your grandmother’s lap and didn’t want to stay there any longer, you can move away.

Let’s practice this. I’m going to pick you up and make you sit on my lap, and I want you to practice how you can politely move away if you don’t want me to carry you anymore. (Practice this, a couple of times.)

Now, if the person tries to get you to stay...maybe he or she holds onto you, what do you do? (Wait for response.)

Good. You say “No” or “No, thank you” and move away. The person has to let you go because your body belongs to you. You no longer want the touch and you’ve told the person that.

Do you have any questions about touch or stopping touch when you are done with it? (Answer their questions.)

2. No Good secrets

Say:

Another rule to remember is that there are no good secrets. You have to tell us, your parents all your secrets. This is important.

If someone says you or they could get into trouble, tell us so that it is no longer a secret.

So next time a friend tells you a secret and asks you not to tell anyone, you can say: "I won't tell anyone else, but I have to tell my parents. We have a rule that there are no secrets."

Have your friends ever asked you to keep secret? Discuss

3. Open & Closed Spaces

Now that you're getting older, we are starting to trust you more to take care of yourself when we are not looking. One of the ways you can keep safe is to know about open and closed spaces. It is always best to stay in open spaces where people can see and hear you, so that you can get help easily when you need.

For example, a school playground is usually an open space with many children and teachers around. These people can see you and they can hear you. If you fell and needed help, they would see you and come quickly.

A closet is an example of a closed space. If a friend took you into a closet, you might not be able to get help if you needed it.

What are some closed spaces that you must avoid? *Talk about how to be safe in school bathrooms, closets, and other closed spaces that you want your child to avoid.*

4. Head and Heart

Say:

Let's look at the Activity Book that you did in class and talk about what feelings you marked for the story about Jabez.

Jabez just finished soccer practice and a 9th grader told him that he played really well and could someday be on the school team.

(Turn to the page in the activity book called Feelings (Jabez) and discuss with your child why they marked these feelings for Jabez)

Allow time for them to explain. (Note, there are no right or wrong answers)

The older boy asked Jabez to stay back and practice in the locker room. What should Jabez do?

Discuss with your child how Jabez can use his heart AND his head to stay safe.

Say:

Tell me, from our learning today, what is a rule that Jabez should follow?

No closed spaces

Jabez must listen to both his heart (he played really well) and his head (no closed spaces, MOVE AWAY).

We need to do what is right, even if it's not as much fun. Can you give other examples of this? (Discuss with your child)

Say:

Let's look at the Activity Book that you did in class and talk about what feelings you marked for the story about Shoshy.

Shoshy goes over to her friend's house. Her friend's brother is nice to her and always says things like "nice dress," "nice hairstyle," or "you look great today."

(Turn to the page in the activity book called Feelings (Shoshy) and discuss with your child why they marked these feelings for Shoshy)

Allow time for them to explain. (Note, there are no right or wrong answers)

Say:

The older boy asked Shoshy to come and sit with him on the couch. What should Shoshy do?

Discuss with your child how Shoshy can use her heart AND her head to stay safe.

Ask:

- What do you think Shoshy's heart is telling her?
- What do you think Shoshy's head is telling her?

Say:

Shoshy must use both her heart (she thinks he's nice) and her head (he's too close, MOVE AWAY)

Ask:

What are some things that you can say to someone when they have their arm around you, or are very close to you?

(Allow time for thoughts and responses)

Practice some responses.

Talk to your child about how they can't tell if someone truly cares about them. And until they grow much older, and have the wisdom to be able to tell if someone cares about them, they need to trust you, their parents, to guide them by telling them who they can trust.

5. Prayer

End with a time of prayer, asking God for wisdom and strength to make wise choices using your head and heart.