

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IS AN ADULT RESPONSIBILITY

Safe Environment Information for Parents 2018-19

Having regular open conversations about safety is one of the best ways to help keep kids safe.



What should you know when talking to your child about safety?

Speak to your child in a manner that is calm and non-threatening. Children do not need to be frightened to get a point across. In fact, fear can thwart the safety message, because fear can be paralyzing to a child.

Speak openly about safety issues. If children feel you are comfortable discussing the subject at hand, they may be more forthcoming when someone violates their boundaries. Children will be less likely to come to you about issues enshrouded in secrecy.

Educate children about the dangers they face but **do not teach “stranger danger.”** Talk to your children about **“Tricky People.”** (See other side for tricks, lures and warning signs.) According to research, people known to children and/or their families actually present a greater danger to children than do strangers. In the majority of cases, the perpetrator is someone known to the parent or child and that person may be in a position of trust or responsibility to the child and family.

Children do not have the same understanding as an adult of who a stranger is; it is a difficult concept for a child to grasp. It is much more beneficial to help children build the confidence and self-esteem they need to stay as safe as possible in a potentially dangerous situation.

Practice the safety rules.

- #1. Check first with your parent before going anywhere.**
- #2. Take a friend when going somewhere.**
- #3. Tell people “NO” if they try to touch or hurt you.**
- #4 Tell a trusted adult if anyone makes you feel sad, scared or confused.**

You may think your children understand your message, but until they can incorporate it into their daily lives, it may not be clearly understood. Find opportunities to practice “what if” scenarios.

For more parent resources and information regarding diocesan policies and procedures contact:



Diocese of Erie
Office for the Protection of Children and Youth
814-824-1195

childprotection@eriercd.org
<https://www.eriercd.org/childprotection/>

Children can be hurt by both adults and other children in many ways and most often it is by someone they know and trust.



Tricks, Lures & Warning Signs of Predators

Abusers and sexual predators use various methods to entice children and ensure their cooperation and/or participation in inappropriate relationships. Here are some that you can warn your child about.

Emergency Trick:

The predator tells a child that something has happened (sickness or death of a parent, a fire, ...) and that they have come to pick up the child and bring him/her home. (Have a family password)

Bribes and Treats:

The predator offers something special that the child may want, and then asks for sexual favors in return.

Trust Grooming:

The predator gives assistance to a child when needed or may offer to help the family of the child by offering rides or babysitting. This puts the predator in a position of trust for future abuse.

Drugs and Alcohol:

The predator may give drugs and/or alcohol to a child to make them more compliant.

"Accidental" Touching:

The predator uses wrestling, tickling, accidental or deliberate contact with genitalia as part of the rules to a game.

Keeping Secrets:

The predator leads the child to believe that there is some secret that is just between them and shouldn't be told to parents.

Pornography:

The predator shows "dirty" pictures to the child to raise curiosity about sex. (Speaking profanely and telling sexual jokes can also be used to gain a child's interest in sex.)

Help Me Tricks:

The predator requests help from a child, i.e. asking for directions, finding a lost pet, carrying heavy packages.

Internet lures:

The predator will try to get personal information from the child. The predator may act as though he or she is the same age as the child in order to establish a friendship. He or she often will send the child sexual material and will try to set up a meeting with the child.

Abuse of Power or Authority:

The predator may be in a position of authority such as a coach, police officer, priest/minister, or teacher and use this position to get the child to be obedient to his or her request.

Special Attention/Favoritism:

The predator gives special attention or favor to the child to gain trust for future sexual abuse.

To report suspected child abuse call

Childline at 1-800-932-0313

Calls answered 24 hours a day/7 days a week