

Safety lesson – K-2

As part of our developmental guidance curriculum, I will be covering personal safety with students in Kindergarten, First, and Second Grade in March. As part of this lesson, I will discuss body safety as well as safety with strangers. Below is some additional information.

Body Safety: With regard to body safety, the children are taught that their body is theirs and their feelings are theirs and no one has the right to hurt or touch them on their body in a way that makes them feel bad or uncomfortable. They are taught that certain areas of their body are more private than others and that if someone is touching or hurting them in a way that makes them feel bad or uncomfortable, they should TELL. We review that they should tell even if the person tells them not to, makes them feel scared or tells them no one will believe them. As part of the lesson, we review that parents or caregivers helping them bathe and doctors giving them check-ups are both appropriate, but other than this, no one should be touching private areas of their body, nor should they be touching anyone else's private areas.

Safety with Strangers: We start by identifying what a stranger looks like and work toward the understanding that a stranger looks like someone you don't know. Every year children share that strangers wear masks or black clothes and look scary so we work to change this thinking to the identification of a stranger as someone they don't know. We review the rule that they should not talk with, go with, or take things from strangers without their parent, teacher, or caregiver saying it is okay. We discuss that some strangers may seem nice, but they may be tricky so it is important that they follow the rule and let their grownups figure out if the stranger is safe or not.

Below are some additional tips for parents. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. nschrecengost@gvsd.org or 610-644-1790 ext. 41129 Thank you for continuing these important conversations with your children as we all work together to keep them safe. Throughout the lesson, it is emphasized that the discussion is not to make them feel scared, but rather to feel "safety smart and safety strong".

Parenting Pointers: Helping Children Learn Body Safety

The following pointers are for parents from the book [My Body is Mine, My Feelings Are Mine \(a Storybook about Body Safety for Young Children\)](#) by Susan Hoke, LCSW, ACSW

Personal safety educates children in the following simple, yet essential KID BODY RULES:

1. Certain parts of our bodies are special and private.
2. Except for a quick cleaning, we do not share our special, private body parts or the special private body parts of others.

3. If a kid or grown-up tries to share our or their private body parts no matter what they say we always:
 - Stand up and say a loud “NO!”
 - If you can, go to a safe place;
 - Tell a grown-up right away, and keep on telling until the unsafe touching stops forever;
 - Remember, it is never your fault.

Additional Tips:

1. Stop body shame; teach body safety – do not be ashamed to discuss self-protection. Stress that the child should tell you about child unsafe touches, no matter who was involved or what may have been said.
2. Be available - If you are relaxed and open, if you initiate follow-up discussions and periodically remind the child about body safety, you may decrease the likelihood of abuse, or increase the chance of early disclosure.
3. Be protective – A safe child is among caretakers who carefully monitor their social contacts.
4. Keep Talking - Have discussions with your child. Teach them to come to you if they feel frightened, confused, guilty, angry or worried, just as they would if they were proud or happy. Play “what if” games with them as they learn best through repetition and creativity, not drilling and scaring.
5. Listen to your child - Often abused children later recall having tried to tell a caretaker or trusted adult about the offense. Be attentive to their words and behavior.
6. Ask direct questions – Nothing can replace periodically asking your child, especially if you become suspicious. Even when young children have a basic understanding of privacy and body safety, it is not uncommon for them to simply forget or be too shy or frightened to act or to tell.

Parenting Pointers: Helping Children Learn Caution with Strangers

The following pointers are for parents from the book Not Everyone is Nice by Alimonti and Tedesco, Ph.D.

1. Set up rules about where and with whom children can go places. Always know where your children are.
2. Teach children to be wary of strangers and to follow their instincts if they are uncomfortable or afraid of people, even relatives.
3. Teach kids to say “No!” and get away from scary people and situations.
4. Teach children to immediately check with a caregiver if an unfamiliar adult approaches them.

5. Play "what if" games with your children so they will know what to do if strangers approach them with typical ploys such as "I'm looking for my puppy" or "I need directions."
6. Teach children to dial 911 and be sure they know their addresses and phone numbers.
7. Do not leave young children alone.
8. Create a secret password in case someone other than a family member has to pick up your child.
9. Teach children to go to security or the police if they are lost or get separated from you in public places.
10. Carry a recent picture of your child with height, weight, and other important identifying information on the back.