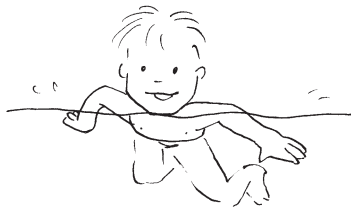


PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH
PHYSICAL DISABILITY



PERSONAL SAFETY SKILLS FOR CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITY

A multi-disciplinary approach to teaching personal safety skills to children with a physical disability is essential and parental involvement is crucial to its success.

Some physically disabled children also have communication difficulties. For these children communication may be in the form of sign or symbol in conjunction with some level of speech. Some of the teaching suggestions outlined in the section for children with a hearing impairment may be helpful.


There are also children for whom speech may not be an option. These children may use communication boards, e.g. Bliss, Touch Talkers, Light Talkers. Historically such boards have not included sexual symbols or words as it was presumed that these children would not need them. Chailey Heritage have designed a communication board specifically for child protection assessments. While the board is not designed for the classroom situation some teachers may wish to teach the children symbols appropriate to their level of understanding.


Note


The board should only be used in conjunction with a child's own communication board, and by people familiar with the child's method of communication.



Children complete worksheet no. 4 before the introduction of Topic 1.



NAME: _____ AGE: _____

EYE COLOUR: 

HAIR COLOUR: 



LIKES:  

DISLIKES:  

MY SIGNATURE: _____

TOPIC 1 - FEELING SAFE AND UNSAFE

Objectives

To give children the opportunity to discuss times when they felt safe and unsafe.

To help children to anticipate potentially dangerous situations.

To enable children to devise practical ways of dealing with unsafe situations.

Feeling Safe

Teacher introduces the topic of feelings. Our feelings tell us how we are inside. Give each child an opportunity to say how he's feeling today.

Alternatively get children to work in twos or threes describing times when they felt happy. Photographs of the children participating in various school events could be used to encourage them to talk about their feelings. Explain that over the next few weeks they will be learning about safe and unsafe feelings.

Use a variety of illustrations to explain the concept of being safe.

- Sarah cycling her bicycle, Patch in his kennel. (Stay Safe, Senior Infants, lesson 1)
- Children with their friends. (Stay Safe, 1st and 2nd class, lesson 4)

The Safe Place

The teacher guides the children through this exercise.

Sit in a comfortable position, close your eyes and think about your breathing. Feel the breath as it moves in and out of your nostrils. As you breathe out, your body gets more relaxed. As you become relaxed, imagine you are travelling to a place which is safe for you. It may be a room or a forest or a place by the sea but somewhere you feel safe. Explore that space, the feel of the place, the colours, the smells. What makes you feel so safe there? Just enjoy feeling completely safe. Let the children experience their safe place for a while. When you think they are ready start preparing them for leaving their special

place. Now imagine that you are leaving your safe place. See yourself walking away - closing the door if it is a room or walking out of the forest or up the footpath away from the sea. Bring the safe feeling with you. Now open your eyes.

Children talk in twos or threes about their safe place. Ask them to think about who they feel safe with. The children can then draw some of these people.



Feeling Unsafe

Story (use worksheet no. 5)

This is a story about a time when Jack felt unsafe. Jack can't walk very well, so he has a wheelchair. His mother jokes to him about how fast he is in his wheelchair and how she can hardly keep up with him. Jack and his mother love coffee. Usually they have a cup when Jack gets in from school. One day Jack's Mum was about to make the coffee when she realised she had no sugar. She said she'd pop next door to borrow some. Jack's mum had just left when the doorbell rang. Jack got a fright, he didn't know what to do. While he was still thinking, the bell gave another loud ring. Jack whizzed into the living room and peeped out. It was a woman and she had books in her hands. She looked friendly and the books looked colourful and interesting. Jack was tempted to open the door, because he loved reading. Then he remembered the rule, never open the door to strangers. It seemed like an age before the lady left but eventually she turned away and walked back down the path.

About five minutes later Jack's mum came back. He told her what had happened. When his Mum had

heard the full story she gave Jack a hug and told him how delighted she was that he'd remembered the safety rule.

What happened when Jack's mum went next door?

Did Jack feel safe or unsafe when the doorbell rang?

Did Jack make a safe choice?

Why was Jack's mum delighted when she came back?

Jack felt unsafe when he was in the house on his own and the door bell rang.

Ask the children if there were times when they felt unsafe. Examples might include being pushed too fast in your wheelchair, being afraid in the dark, watching a scary film or being frightened by a dog. Encourage them to tell an adult they trust whenever they feel unsafe. Remember the rule: Tell an adult you trust if you feel unsafe.

Music

Play some music from the 'Safe' and 'Unsafe' selections to help children distinguish between feeling safe and unsafe (see audio tape).

Rules if You Get Lost

Note

While children with a physical disability are rarely unaccompanied, teaching them what to do if lost can develop their ability to solve problems.

Ask the children why we have rules. Explain that rules are there to keep us safe. Discuss situations where rules are used, e.g. 'The Safe Cross Code'.

Discuss with the children times when they got lost or became separated from their carer. When did it happen? Where were you? How did you feel, safe or unsafe? What did you do?

Alternatively, discuss with the children what they would do if they got lost -

- in a supermarket?
- in a shopping centre?
- in a sports centre?
- in a strange town?
- at a football match?

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Help them to decide on the safest options. Give simple direct rules to the children taking into account their everyday experience. Children then role-play what they would do in each situation. Get them to practice the words they would use to ask for help.

Note

Liaison with parents and care staff in relation to these safety strategies is important.

Before moving on to follow-up activities give the children an opportunity to recap on the concept of safe and unsafe. Ask them to give their meaning of safe and unsafe. Make sure they understand the terms in relation to **being** physically safe and unsafe, and **feeling** safe and unsafe.

Follow-up activities

- Draw a picture of your face when it's happy. Put your happy face picture in front of your face and move your body to show how you look when you feel happy.
- Make a model of Jack in his wheelchair from play dough. Children may work in pairs for this activity.
- The class makes up a rhyme about feeling safe or listens to the musical pieces again.
- Use Poster 1 and relevant worksheets for this section.

Note

When teaching the lessons to children with a severe physical disability some teachers have asked parents to help out with the relevant worksheets at home. Subsequently the teachers have used the completed worksheets as a basis for follow-up work in the classroom.

Homework: Talk to Mum, Dad or a special adult about times when you feel safe and unsafe.



TOPIC 2: BULLYING

Objectives

To teach children to value friendship.

To give children safety strategies for dealing with bullying.

To teach children that it is not acceptable to bully others.

Friendship

Story: A New Friend

James lives on a farm with his Mum and Dad. He has two sisters and one brother. James' favourite hobby is swimming. He goes to the pool every Saturday. Over the last year he made a new friend at the pool. His name is Pat. Pat has a physical disability, but now that he is getting more confident in the water, his arms and legs are stronger. James has great fun with Pat. Pat's always puffing up his cheeks and making funny faces which makes James laugh and laugh.

During the Summer holidays James invited Pat to visit his family on the farm. The day of his visit finally arrived. James and his sisters had made special party buns for Pat's visit. All of James' family liked Pat from the start.

After lunch the children went down to the bottom of the garden where they had their tree house. They knew that Pat would love to get up into the tree house. It took a while but with a step-ladder and the help of James' older brother and sisters they managed. You see, because of his disability Pat had never been in a tree house before.

All the children struggled but then Pat got there. 'Hooray!', they all shouted. Pat could see things in a way he had never been able to before. "So that is what it's like to climb a tree", he said happily. They stayed in the tree house for a long time playing games and talking about all sorts of things.

Where did Pat and James meet?

What treat did James and his sisters make for Pat?

What was at the bottom of James' garden?

What did the children do in the tree house?

All the children were friends. Name some of your friends.

Why are friends important to us?

How do we make friends?

How do we keep friends?

How do we talk to our friends?

How do friends behave towards one another?

- Friends help one another.
- Friends listen to one another.
- Friends have fun together.
- Friends care about one another.
- A friend is someone who listens to me, plays with me, who is kind to me.
- (Name) is my friend because...

Give the children the opportunity to play various games suitable to their age, ability and physical capacity. This will help them to learn how to take turns, follow rules, share and to accept losing and winning.

What is Bullying?

Teacher-directed discussion on what bullying is, using the following poem to promote discussion.



Poem

My name is Paul,
I'm not so tall,
In fact I'm quite small.

Bullies took away my ball,
Caused me to fall,
Laughed at it all.

At first I felt mad,
I was hurting real bad,
I was a lonely lad.

Then I went to my dad,
I told him I was sad,
And now I feel so glad.

My name is Paul,
I look quite small,
But inside I feel tall.

What happened to Paul?

How did Paul feel at first?

What made Paul feel glad?

Why do you think Paul felt tall inside?

Paul told his Dad about the bullying.

Encourage the children to think about what they would do if they were bullied. Remind them that we all have the right to be safe.

Discussion follows on how the children think Paul felt. Ask them if they have ever been bullied. The teacher may like to use an example of when she was bullied herself as a child to emphasise that she understands what it's like. Some children may want to talk about being bullied because of their disability. Reinforce that the bullying is not their fault. However, some children behave in ways that make them more vulnerable to being bullied. Ask the children why they think this might happen. Follow on by discussing the ways in which our voices, posture and our responses to questions can sometimes provoke bullying. It is very important that the teacher emphasises that no one should have to put up with bullying and that everyone has the right to feel safe.

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Use various illustrations and posters to help clarify what bullying is:

- I am afraid when I am bullied in the swimming pool (see worksheet no. 15).
- I don't like it when the other boys and girls leave me out of their games (see worksheet no. 13).
- I don't feel safe when I'm pinched or kicked or punched (see worksheet no. 13).
- I feel sad when I'm called names (see worksheet no. 13).

We have the right to be safe. So what can we do if we are bullied? We can follow some rules which will help to make us feel safe again. The rules are: Say 'No', Get Away and Tell.

Safety Rules

1. Say 'No'

Explore with the children how they can use their voices and bodies to say 'No' with confidence. Some children may find it too frightening to say 'No', or in some situations it may be dangerous for them to do so. Acknowledge that this response is okay too. However, the children can still say 'No' in their heads as they know that they have the right to be safe, and that they don't have to put up with bullying.

2. Get Away

Discuss this safety rule taking into account the physical capacity of the children. An appropriate response for children with limited mobility or in wheelchairs could be to move their wheelchair a little bit to the right or left away from the bully. Other options may be to shrug at the bully, letting him know that the bullying is his problem, or to deliberately choose to become engaged in some other activity, e.g. reading, playing a game or talking to a friend. As shrugging may be a particularly useful response to bullying for children with limited mobility, give them the opportunity to practice this response. Depending on the children's physical capabilities show them how to do some or all of the following movements:

- Shrug your shoulders.

- Twist your hands around so that your palms are facing upwards.
- Tilt your head to one side.
- Lower the corners of your mouth.
- Raise your eyebrows.

3. Telling

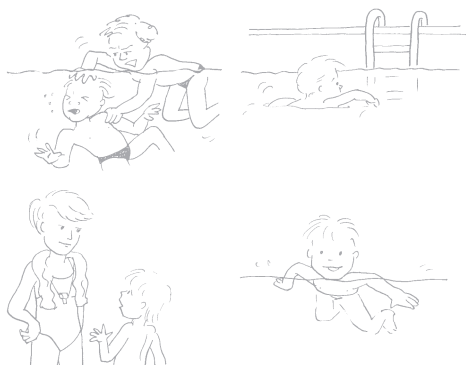
This rule requires the most emphasis so that the children know they don't have to put up with bullying. Each child needs to be clear about who they would tell, when they would tell and how they would tell.

Teacher breaks down the three safety rules about bullying. Firstly talk about the rules and write them out separately. Let the children practice using the rules. When the teacher feels confident that the children understand the rules clearly, combine them. Now the children can role-play using the three rules consecutively.

Teacher reminds the children that bullying is wrong and that they should never make another child feel unsafe by bullying. Encourage good behaviour and discourage any activity which might make someone else feel miserable.

Follow-up activities

- Close your eyes. Imagine you're Pat in the tree house with his new friends. What kind of tree is it? What can you see, hear and smell? Do you have any treats with you to eat in the tree house? (see worksheet no. 11).



- Make a 3D model of the tree house and the children, using play dough.
- Teacher-directed discussion on situations where the children may be bullied, such as the playground, on the bus or in the swimming pool. Use puppets to illustrate the various situations. Devise short dramas around each bullying situation showing how the children coped by using their safety rules.
- Children role-play rejecting and reporting bullying.
- Using modelling material, make a model of yourself saying 'No' to a bully.
- Use Poster 2 and relevant worksheets for this section.

Homework: Talk to Mum, Dad or a special adult about the safety rules you would use if someone bullied you.

TOPIC 3: TOUCHES

Objectives

To encourage children to value and enjoy normal affection.

To teach children how to deal with an inappropriate touch.

To teach the rule - never keep secrets about touching.

'Our Five Senses'

Teacher revises 'Our Five Senses' with the children.

Smelling

You can find out if food is good to eat just by smelling it. If the food is bad it will smell bad and your nose will tell you so. You can't see smells, they're like air, quite invisible. How would you respond to a bad smell? Wrinkle your nose or move your nose away from it. Let the children smell some pleasant scents like flowers, food they like, perfume or freshly cut grass. Cookery class can give children

direct experience of this sense. Growing flowers which have a strong scent like Hyacinths and Freesias in Nature class can also help children to appreciate this sense. Children will give you lots of examples of nasty smells. Such examples can give the teacher an opportunity to remind the children about personal hygiene.

Tasting

If something smells good enough to eat, it usually tastes good too. Taste starts in your tongue. The very tip of your tongue collects sweet tastes. The middle and sides of your tongue collect sour tastes. The back of your tongue collects bitter tastes. Let the children taste honey, a slice of lemon, dark chocolate etc. Lunch time, parties and cookery class are all useful ways of illustrating how we experience this sense.

Seeing

Your nose collects smells. Your tongue collects tastes. What do your eyes collect? Light! Give each child a turn at playing 'I spy'. Encourage the children to be more observant by questioning them on their surroundings. What colour is the school door? What colour track suit was teacher wearing at PE yesterday? What kind of tree is growing in the far corner of the school yard? Describe what you see on your journey into school. Are there any flowers blooming in the school garden yet? Slides from the Irish Times Art in the Classroom series can bring the beauty of art into the classroom and can further help children to appreciate their sense of sight.

Hearing

Your ears collect sounds. Teacher has a tape with various sounds on it (see audio tape). The children have to guess what each sound is. Encourage them to talk about the sounds they hear at home, in school, in church and so on. The children may like to talk about sounds they like and dislike. The Irish Times Music in the Classroom series could be used to ensure that children have the opportunity to experience different musical sounds. Ears and eyes like to work together. It is easier to hear what someone is saying if you can watch their lips move.

PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Touching

All of your body collects touch feelings. You can use your arms or your legs or your feet or your knees or your bottom to find out how things feel. But some parts of your body are much better at finding out than others, like your finger tips or the tip of your tongue.

Make up a treasure bag to stimulate the children's sense of touch. Include various objects which have a variety of textures such as leather, textiles, paper or cardboard.

- Guessing game. Child puts his or her hand into the bag and has to guess what one particular object is just by touching it.
- Objects are placed in a basket. Therefore a child can see them but is free to spend as much time as he or she likes touching and examining the objects.

Discuss with the children the things they like and dislike to touch, and textures they like and dislike. Do you like touching animals? Name some animals you would like to touch. Name some animals you would be afraid to touch.

Touches We Like/Dislike

Touches we like

Use Poster 3 to promote discussion on touches the children like. Examples given will vary according to the physical capacity of the children. They might include examples such as when my helper dresses me, when Mum washes me, or when Grandad helps me into my wheelchair.

Touches we don't like

Apart from examples of physical bullying, children with a physical disability may want to include examples of painful medical procedures which they have experienced. They may also talk about procedures carried out by Mum, Dad, helper or nurse on a daily basis. Explain that sometimes these adults have to touch us in a way we do not like to keep us clean and healthy.

Ask the children if there any other kind of touches which they do not like? Children may come up with various examples, such as having their hand held too tightly. Teacher prompts the children if necessary, to recognise that they can say 'No' politely to a touch they do not like.

To emphasise this point present the children with the following dilemmas:

- What if your aunt is always patting you on the head and pinching your cheeks when she comes to visit?
- What if your brother thinks it is fun to keep shaking your hand until it really hurts?
- What if your Mum still wants to help you dress even though you do not need help?
- What if your uncle keeps tickling you when he comes to visit and you do not like it?

Ensure that each child feels confident about dealing with a touch they do not like. Children role-play their response to the above situations.

Unsafe Touches

Discussion follows on touches which might make the children feel unsafe. Ask the children for examples of unsafe touches or use examples like the following to explain what you mean:

- Someone deliberately kicked you while you were playing in the school yard. What could you do?
- The boy beside you in class keeps pinching you on the arm when the teacher is not looking. What could you do?

Children role-play using the Stay Safe rules, Say 'No', Get Away and Tell, to deal effectively with such situations.

Inappropriate Touching

Before moving on to the topic of inappropriate touching it is important to establish that all children are clear about the definition of the private parts of their bodies. How this is taught will depend not only on the physical capacity of the children, but also on the school's policy and ethos concerning Relationships and Sexuality education.

Suggested approach for revising body parts with the children, including private parts:

- Who am I?
- My home
- My family, friends
- I am special - shoe size, height, age, finger print.
- I am a girl/boy.
- Use photographs of women and men from magazines. Get the children to identify the sex of each person.
- Proceed to teach the children about body parts -
 - Clothed first** arms, legs, ankles etc.
 - In the bath** skin, hair, nails.
 - Private parts** Girl, teenage girl, woman
 Boy, teenage boy, man

'The Body Book' by Claire Rayner is easily understood by children and has very clear illustrations in it.

Remind the children that some parts of our bodies get touched a lot. People may shake your hands or pat your head. Other parts of our bodies are private and do not get touched so much.

Are there times when an adult might have to touch your private parts? Yes, if you were sick, hurt, or if you need help bathing. But you won't be asked to keep these touches a secret.

Note

This point needs to be emphasised when working with children who need intimate care (worksheet no. 18).



- What if you need help with dressing, will Dad, Mum or your carer ask you to keep it a secret? Of course not.
- What if your private parts are sore and the doctor needs to examine you, will he ask you to keep the examination a secret? Of course not.
- What if you need help with bathing, will your carer ask you to keep it a secret? Of course not.
- What if Mum or Dad need to wash your private parts to keep you clean and healthy, will they ask you to keep it a secret? Of course not.

Therefore these touches are safe touches, and your Mum and Dad or your carer or doctor help you stay clean and healthy.

No one should ever ask you to keep a touch a secret. No one should ask you to touch their private parts either. The rule is - Never keep touches a secret - and this rule applies at home, in school, in the swimming pool and so forth.

If anyone ever touches your private parts and asks you to keep it a secret, what could you do? Firstly, remember it is not your fault. You could use your safety rules - Say No, Get Away and Tell.

Note

Some children may need to modify the safety rules as outlined in Topic 2 on bullying.

Children role-play using the safety rules in the following situations:

- What if someone touched your private parts and you felt unsafe?
- What if an older boy or girl wants to touch your private parts and warns you not to tell anyone, what would you do?
- What if a stranger offers you sweets if you touch his private parts?
- What if a woman you know and like wants to touch your private parts but warns you to keep it a secret?

PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Remember it is okay to tell even if you know and like the person who is touching you. It is never your fault and you have the right to feel safe.

If you didn't know what words to use you could use the puppets or dolls or one of the teacher's pictures about our body parts.

How many of you think that you might get into trouble for saying 'No' to an adult? There are times when it is right and good to say 'No' to an adult. Ask the children to give you a list of situations where it is appropriate to say 'No' to an adult. Include circumstances where an adult asks a child to do something which is dangerous, wrong or which Mum and Dad have forbidden.

Differentiate between saying 'No' to something that is dangerous, wrong or inappropriate and saying 'No' to going to bed, doing homework or household chores. Emphasise the importance of saying 'No' to keep safe.

Follow-up activities

- Display Poster 3 and use it to promote discussion on touches we like and don't like.
- Teacher makes out a personal hygiene table for each child. Caption: "With the help of some special adults I keep myself clean and healthy."

Body Part	When	Who
Hands		
Face & Neck		
Private Parts		
Feet		
Hair		
Ears		
Whole Body		



- Decide which of the following touches you would need to tell about:
 - You are doing Drama in school and the teacher asks you to hold hands with the child beside you.
 - The doctor needs to examine your tummy.
 - An older boy wants to touch your private parts.
 - Your Dad wants to give you a hug.
 - You need help to dress.
- Ensure that each child gets plenty of opportunities to role-play telling about an inappropriate touch.
- See worksheets on this section.

Homework: Talk to Mum, Dad or a special adult about touches you like and don't like. Explain to them why you never keep a touch a secret.

TOPIC 4 - TELLING AND SECRETS

Objectives

To help children to recognise the difference between a good secret and a bad secret.

To help children to identify the adults they could tell if they had a bad secret.

To give children the opportunity to practice telling an adult about a bad secret.

Good and Bad Secrets

Teacher has a surprise wrapped up in a parcel. The children have to guess what's in the parcel. Let the children decide if this is a good or bad secret.

Emphasise that surprises are good secrets, like a surprise card for father's day or a special gift for a friend who is ill.

Did you ever have a surprise birthday party or Halloween party or a surprise picnic? All these are good secrets, or safe secrets. Explain that a good secret is something you feel good about and that good secrets are not secrets for ever.

Story: Liam's secret

Liam is years old. He has just changed schools and is now going to a special school. At first he liked his school a lot. But now some of the boys on his street are calling him thick and stupid. Liam has started to hate himself. He feels sad. Sometimes the boys hit him as well as calling him names. They warn him if he tells he will be in big trouble. This makes him feel very unsafe. A few weeks ago the teacher started to do the Stay Safe programme with the children. Now Liam has learned that he can say 'No' to the bullies.

Liam shouted 'No' at the bullies and ran away. Next day he told his teacher in private. His teacher helped him. Now Liam is happy again. He feels safe and there is no more name calling or hitting.

What kind of secret did Liam have? Good or bad? Safe or unsafe?

Who did he tell?

Why do you think Liam told his teacher in private?

What happened after he told?

The rule is - Never keep a bad secret, always tell an adult you trust.

Telling

If a child has a communication difficulty the information on communication boards at the beginning of this section may be useful. See also the section on meeting the needs of children with Hearing impairment.

Who to tell

Discuss with the children who they could tell if they've a problem. When all the children have

identified the adults they would tell, they form a circle and take turns in naming these special grown-up helpers.

Some children may need help to choose the adult they would tell. They should include people outside the family as well as parents. Explain that it is important to tell an adult rather than another child.

When to tell

Clarifying with the children when they would tell is also important. What if I am just about to teach a new maths lesson to the class, would that be a good time to tell? What if Mum is trying to get the grass cut before it starts raining, would that be a good time to tell? What if Dad is just about to go off to a football match with his friend, would that be a good time to tell? The teacher also highlights for the children the benefits of telling in private.



What if the adult doesn't listen

The children need to look at what they would do if the adult they chose just would not listen. One story which illustrates this is 'Not Now, Bernard', by David McKee, which tells the story of a small boy called Bernard who cannot attract the attention of his parents who are busy with household tasks. Even when Bernard goes into the garden and is eaten by a monster and the monster returns and takes Bernard's place his parents still ignore the Monster/Bernard. The book ends with the Monster in bed, saying, 'But I'm a monster.' 'Not now, Bernard', said Bernard's mother (Cattanach, 1992:116).

PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Ask the children to think of a solution to Bernard's problem with help if necessary.

What if you tried to tell your Mum about bullying on the street? She was not busy at the times you tried to tell but she still did not listen. What could you do then?

Encourage the children to look at the possibility of telling another adult if the first adult does not listen. The rule is - Keep telling until someone listens and helps.

As a follow-on from this the teacher gives the children an example of an unsafe secret, e.g. being bullied on the school bus. Each child in turn role-plays telling their special adult helper, with the teacher playing the part of this adult helper. The teacher can use this method to teach children where to get help for a wide variety of situations.

Examples may include:

- A child who is bullied at the swimming pool.
- A child who is touched on his private parts and asked to keep it a secret.
- A child who doesn't like his auntie hugging him so tightly.
- A child who doesn't need help with showering any more but his Mum and Dad still think he does.

What if another boy or girl on your street keeps hitting you and calling you names, is this a good secret or a bad one? Is it safe or unsafe? What can you do? You can tell.

Revise touches they like and don't like. Are touches ever kept secret? No!

We have learned what to do about bad secrets. Who remembers the rules?

- Say No
- Get Away
- Tell
- Keep Telling until Someone Listens and Helps

If anyone ever asks you to keep a touch a secret what can you do? Firstly, remember it is not your fault. You can tell even if you've been warned not to. If a touch makes you feel unsafe what can you do? You can tell an adult you trust.

The children will need plenty of opportunities to role-play these safety rules in a variety of situations.

- What if someone you know touched you on your private parts and you felt unsafe?
- What if someone you know touched you on your private parts but asked you not to tell as it was your special secret?
- What if a stranger offered you money if you let him touch your private parts?
- What if someone you know touched your private parts and warned you not to tell or you would get into trouble? Who would you tell? Children decide, with teacher's help, who they would tell. When would you tell and how would you tell? The children practice the words they would use.

Follow-up activities

- Make models or draw some of the special adults in your life.
- Design a poster illustrating good and bad secrets.
- Teacher plays a piece of calm instrumental music (see audio tape). Get the children to close their eyes. Imagine you have a problem and you need help. You tell an adult. Now you feel okay again.



Just imagine yourself there with the adult who helped you.

- Have a 'listening time'. The teacher is doing the listening.
- Use Poster 4 and relevant worksheets for this section.

Homework: Explain to your Mum, Dad or a special adult the difference between safe and unsafe secrets. Talk to them about who you'd tell if you had an unsafe secret.

TOPIC 5: STRANGERS

Objectives

To clarify for the children who strangers are.

To give children safety strategies for dealing appropriately with strangers.

To help children to feel less fear and anxiety about strangers.

Note

Before introducing this topic the school should review its practice concerning visitors to the school.

So far we have learned about keeping ourselves safe. We have learned about safe feelings and unsafe feelings and we have learned the safety rules, say 'No', get away and tell someone. Today we are going to talk about using these rules if a stranger ever makes you feel unsafe.

Definition

As children may have some difficulty understanding who strangers are, the teacher may wish to do some preparatory work.

Asking children who strangers are can produce some surprising answers, e.g:

- Strangers wear dark glasses.
- Strangers are always men.
- Strangers have big cars.
- Strangers have beards.

If a teacher receives such answers she may like to ask the children's parents to point out who strangers are when they're shopping or travelling with their children.

In class teacher can give out a selection of pictures from magazines, depicting a variety of people - faces or full-length figures, male or female, well dressed or shabbily dressed, young or old, pleasant or unpleasant looking, with or without beards, glasses, sunglasses.

Ask the children whether these people are strangers or not. Naturally they're all strangers, but some children may say that they are not because they're smartly dressed or friendly-looking or young.

Clarify any misconceptions the children may have about who strangers are. A stranger is anyone you do not know. Most strangers are nice people. Can you tell by looking at someone if they are a nice person or not? Of course you can't! Do you think it does any good to be afraid of strangers? No, but there are rules that can help you be safe.

Story

Ciara loved to go shopping with her Mum. Because of her disability she had to be extra careful about keeping up with her Mum and not getting lost. Once she did get lost but she remembered what her Mum had told her. Ask someone to show you to the information desk in the shopping centre and wait for me there. Ciara did just that. She saw a woman beside her and turned and asked for help. The woman said straight away, 'I'd love to help you.'



PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Ciara knew the shopping centre well and was very alert as to where the woman pushed her wheelchair. After a while she said, 'I think we're going towards Burger King and not the information desk.' The woman replied that she thought that Ciara might like a drink or maybe a milk-shake first. Ciara was tempted because she loved milk-shakes, especially chocolate flavoured ones. But there was something about the woman's voice that made Ciara feel unsafe. She said, 'No, thank you.' The woman got angry then and said, 'I was only trying to be nice to you.' Ciara didn't care if the woman was angry or not. She felt unsafe with her so she wheeled herself into the next shop and asked for help. The shop assistant brought her to the information desk straight away where her Mum threw her arms around her and gave her a hug.

Discuss the story. Focus on what made Ciara feel uneasy about the woman.

Discuss the rules children have been given about going places, such as to the shops, library or swimming pool. What have they been told to do if they become separated from their Dad, Mum, older brother or carer? What have they been told to do if a stranger makes them feel unsafe? Encourage them to use various examples of who strangers might be, e.g. an older child, couple, woman, man, teenage boy or girl. Get the children thinking about who would be the safest person to ask if they were lost while shopping. Who did Ciara choose first? Was it a safe choice? What about Ciara's second choice, was it a safe one? Explain to the children that if they ever need help while out shopping it is safer to choose someone who is working in the shops. If you were Ciara, would you have gone off with the woman for a milk shake? What is the rule if you are offered a gift from someone you do not know? You could do what Ciara did - Say 'No', Get away and Tell someone. Children then act out Ciara's story incorporating the safety rules into it. Ask the children what they would do if a stranger called them by name and offered them a lift home. See what solutions the children will have.

Explain that just because someone uses your name it does not mean the person knows you. Ask how else could they know your name? Encourage the children to recognise that the safe choice is to ignore the person, Say 'No', Get Away and Tell. This is not rude - it is simply keeping yourself safe.

Ask the children to give you examples of when they made safe choices. Get them to explore the safe choices in the following situations.

- What if you were offered a lift from someone you do not know, what would you do?
- What if a boy you do not know says he will give you a video game if you will go home with him, what would you do?

Telephones - if appropriate teach children how to use public telephones, coin and card operated, as a further safety measure.



Reinforce

- Never go anywhere with a stranger.
- Never take anything from a stranger.

So does this mean that strangers are bad? No, it just means you do not know them. You do not go with or take anything from someone you do not know. This rule applies when you are on your own or with your friends.

- What if your next door neighbour asked you to come in for a drink of coke?
- What if an older girl asked if you would like to see her new puppy?
- What if your friend's father asked if you would like to go swimming with them?
- What if a woman from the stables down the road asked if you would like to see the ponies?

In all these situations explain to the children that the safe choice is to check with Dad, Mum or the adults in charge first. Children role-play their response.

Follow-up activities

- Dramatise Ciara's story.
- Role-play saying 'No' to a stranger who makes you feel unsafe.
- Make a model of yourself saying 'No' to a stranger:
 - Who offers you something
 - Who asks you to go somewhere.
- Use Poster 5 and relevant worksheets for this section.

Homework: Talk to Mum, Dad or a special adult about the safety rules for strangers.