Teaching Young Children about Personal Safety in ECE programs - Challenging Conversations

by Abbie Schiller & Pattie Fitzgerald
Abbie’s Bio & Story

• Founder & CEO of The Mother Company
• Background in PR & Marketing
• Children’s Show Creator, Producer
• Children's Author
• Mom

(follow the company @TheMotherCo or Abbie @Mocomama)
Abbie’s Bio & Story

[Images of Abbie and her children with books and toys from The Mother Company]

The Mother Company | www.TheMotherCo.com
Pattie’s Bio

- Child Safety Advocate & Prevention Educator for over 14 years
- Keynote Speaker
- Court Appointed Visitation Monitor
- Former Preschool Teacher
- Children's Author
- Mom

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Pattie’s Story
Seminar Goal

- a different and more effective way to keep children safe
- the myth of stranger-danger
- authentic child-friendly language and concepts that work

Hope that everyone comes away with new skills to share with their children.
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Safety Statistics:

90% of child sexual abuse happens to children by SOMEONE THEY KNOW, not by a stranger.
Safety Statistics:

Myth vs. Reality: What does a predator look like?

VS

[Images of mugshots of alleged predators vs. non-predatory individuals]
Stranger Danger VS Tricky People:
How do I talk about strangers?
“Grooming”

• 89% of offenders gain access to children through “grooming”
• How to recognize a “tricky person”
• The most common lures & tricks a predator uses
• Red Flags and Warning Signs
Safety Statistics:

Approximately 40% of abusers are family members or someone close within the family’s inner circle.
Safety Statistics:

1 in 10 children are sexually exploited by the age of 18
Two elements must be present for a predator to victimize a child:

ACCESS AND PRIVACY
Safety Statistics:

Most vulnerable age range: 9-12
Safety Statistics:

- 39 million survivors of sexual abuse in US today
- Childhood sexual abuse is one of the most under-reported crimes
- Occurs among all socioeconomic, educational, racial, and cultural groups.
Use Empowering Language:

- Parent and Teacher Guidelines
- Language for talking to children in an effective, non-fearful manner
The Super Ten “Safe Smarts” for kids

1. I AM THE BOSS OF MY BODY!
2. I know my NAME, ADDRESS, & PHONE NUMBER, and my parents’ names.
3. Safe Grownups Don’t Ask Kids for Help!!
4. I never go ANYWHERE or take ANYTHING from someone I don’t know.
5. I must “CHECK FIRST” with my safe grownup for permission: before I go anywhere, change my plans, or get into a car even if it’s with someone I know.
6. Everybody’s bathing suit areas are PRIVATE.
7. I don’t have to be POLITE, if someone makes me feel scared or uncomfortable. It’s okay to say NO... even to a grownup, if I have to.
8. I don’t keep SECRETS... especially if they make me feel scared or uneasy.
9. If I ever get LOST in a public place, I can FREEZE & YELL or go to a Mom with Kids and ask for help.
10. I will always pay attention to my Special Inner Voice, especially if I get an “uh-oh” feeling.

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The Super Ten “Safe Smarts” for kids

I AM THE BOSS OF MY BODY!

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Resources for teachers:

Free teaching guide download at: TheMotherCo.com under “downloads”
The Super Ten “Safe Smarts” for kids

Hugo tries to answer. “My name is Hugo Hippo, and my phone number is... 508... 555...”

All the numbers start mixing up in his head. Hugo can’t remember his phone number!

I know my NAME, ADDRESS, & PHONE NUMBER, and my parents’ names.

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Safety Cuff Craft

Duct Tape safety cuffs craft with child’s Safe Adult phone number on the inside. Close with velcro.

Craft ho- to video at: http://bit.ly/1sBv76S (or search TheMotherCo.com for “safety cuff video”)

1.970.493.8416
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Safe Grownups Don’t Ask Kids for Help!!

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I never go ANYWHERE or take ANYTHING from someone I don’t know.
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I must “CHECK FIRST” with my safe grownup for permission: before I go anywhere, change my plans, or get into a car even if it’s with someone I know.
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Everybody’s bathing suit areas are PRIVATE.

“Ta-da!”

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I don’t have to be POLITE, if someone makes me feel scared or uncomfortable. It’s okay to say NO... even to a grownup, if I have to.

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I don’t keep SECRETS... especially if they make me feel scared or uneasy.

“Could you do me a favor and go get me more Bugsicles from my truck?” the ostrich says to Hugo. “I'll give you a free Slugpop if you do. It'll be our little secret.”

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If I ever get LOST in a public place, I can FREEZE & YELL or go to a Mom with Kids and ask for help.

“MAAAAA MAAAAAAA!!!”
I yelled and hoped she would hear me.
But she didn’t.

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I will always pay attention to my Special Inner Voice, especially if I get an “uh-oh” feeling.

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What to avoid:

- Good Touch/Bad Touch
- Scary Words (i.e. kidnapping)
- Scary concepts (i.e. stranger danger)
- Minimize a child’s “uh-oh feeling”
- Over protecting
Preschool safety:

- Sign ins and Sign outs
- List of safe adults (save the password for 8+ yrs)
- Giving children a choice of how to greet people/say goodbye
- Be aware of regular outsiders (Delivery people, volunteers, etc)
POLL 3

POLL
A Parent’s Role:

- Minimize the risk to their children
- Do due diligence
- Recognize grooming tricks
- Educate and empower our children
- Strike a balance

Helicopter Parent
A Teacher’s Role:

- To empower kids with right language
- Respectful boundaries for all students
- Mindful of any child who is at risk
- To take action when necessary
Working with kids on a spectrum:

- 4x more likely to be abused
- more likely to get lost/wander
Working with kids on a spectrum:

1. Why it's hard
2. Why it's necessary
3. How to do it
1. Determine how the child learns:
   - Visual
   - Tactile
   - Auditory

2. What challenges do they face?

3. Know who’s working with them
How teachers can talk to parents about safety:

1. Establish Trust
2. Document any concerns
3. Help parents with the right language
4. Re-assure the child is safe

Parents look to teachers for guidance

Be their expert
Most Commonly Asked Questions

• A preschooler is showing his private parts in school. What do I do?

• Does this behavior indicate abuse?

• Normal developmental curiosity vs hyper sexuality

• How do I talk about strangers?
How do I handle reasonable suspicion if I think a child is at risk?
Summary

Child Safety Is An Adult Responsibility

• Listen to Your Instinct
• Minimize the Risks
• Get the Dialog Going
• Keep It Positive!
• Knowledge is Power
Thank you!

www.TheMotherCo.com
Contact  Abbie Schiller – abbie@themotherco.com  - 310.826.2400
Pattie Fitzgerald – safelyeverafter@aol.com

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