Teaching personal safety in early childhood:
Tools for preventing abuse

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The ACEs Study is one of the largest scientific research studies of its kind, with over 17,000 mostly middle income Americans participating from 1995 to 1997. The focus was to analyze the relationship between childhood trauma and the risk for physical and mental illness in adulthood.

Over the course of a decade, the results demonstrated a strong, graded relationship between the level of traumatic stress in childhood and poor physical, mental and behavioral outcomes later in life. Participants in the original study continue to be tracked by the researchers.

The ACEs Study is an ongoing collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente.
Kidpower’s Core Principle – Put Safety First

The safety and well being of a child are more important than ANYONE’S embarrassment, inconvenience, or offense.

Ellen Bass, Founding Board President and Co-Author of The Courage to Heal

Put Safety Over Embarrassment

Give grandma a BIG HUG!

Sorry Mom. She doesn’t want a hug right now. She gets to choose.

Put Safety Over Inconvenience

Dad, I need to talk to you. This is about my safety!

Just a second, son! Hey Carl, I’ll have to call you back later.
Put Safety Over Offense

"I just felt something."

Use your awareness: Keep your radar on

Take Effective Action:
Adult Leadership to Keep Kids Safe

Protection • Intervention • Advocacy

- Know what you stand for
- Split your attention to avoid tunnel vision
- Intervene to stop unsafe behavior
- Advocate with other adults to create a safe and respectful climate
- Coach use of skills in daily activities
- Get help instead of going it alone
Avoid the Illusion of Safety
Don’t automatically assume that someone is worthy of trust!

- Sexual predators usually start by cultivating a relationship of trust with parents, schools, or organizations before trying to get a child alone.
- They act generous, charismatic, and fun to be with.
- They often start by “grooming” a child by pushing boundaries in subtle ways before doing anything overtly sexual.
- Pay attention to attention.

Power of the Situation

Privacy and Control increases risk


Keys to Teaching Safety to Young Children - The Kidpower Method

- Fun, not fear
- Empower, don’t scare
- Be specific and keep it simple
- Be consistent – Full Circle Safety
- Keep it emotionally safe – Teach Stranger Safety, NOT Stranger Danger; Teach Boundaries, NOT Good Touch/Bad Touch
- Don’t just show and tell – PRACTICE!
Kidpower’s Positive Practice Method

Stay Aware And Act Confident
What are boundaries?

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Kidpower Boundary Rules -
1. We each belong to ourselves.

Kidpower Boundary Rules -
2. Some things are not a choice.

Health and safety are not a choice
Going to bed is not a choice

Kidpower Boundary Rules - 3. Problems should not be secrets.

Keep telling to get help

Kidpower Consent Checklist:

1. Touch or play for fun or affection should be SAFE

Kidpower Consent Checklist:

2. Touch or play for fun or affection should be the CHOICE of each person
● If you do not want someone to touch you, tell them with a strong, clear voice

The girl has to stop tickling if her friend does not like it.
Tickle, tickle!
Please stop! I do not like this game.

Not the choice of both people

● Touch or games for play, teasing, or affection should be a choice

This touch is okay because it is the choice of both people.

The choice of both people

● Touch to show affection should be a choice

Okay, you decide about hugs. I’ll see you tonight.

Going hugs should be a choice.
Kidpower Consent Checklist:

3. Touch or play for fun or affection should be ALLOWED by the adults in charge.

4. Touch or play for fun or affection should be NOT A SECRET, so others can know.
Hands Down Power

Next time a kid is mean, I breathe and remember to use my Hands Down Power. I can feel like hitting but stop myself.

Walk Away Power

I can use my Walk Away Power to stay safe; I do not have to stay next to someone who is acting mean.
**Calm Down Power**

Press your palms together, straighten your back, breathe deeply and slowly, and feel your feet to signal calming down to be safe.

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**Mouth Closed Power**

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**Hands and Feet Down Power**

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The Kidpower Trashcan

You can imagine catching hurting words instead of taking them into your heart. I am SMART!

Put your hand on your hip. Imagine the hole it makes in your Kidpower Trash Can. Catch the hurting words, push them through your Trash Can, and say something good to yourself.

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Trash Can Power

Trash Can Power
Put a hand on your hip and pretend the hole it makes is your personal trash can. Use your other hand to catch hurting words and throw them away.

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Taking in compliments

Compliments are nice words. They do not belong in the mouth unclean. We can take compliments into our hearts and say, "Thank you!"

Heart Power

Reach forward and then press your hands into your chest to signal scooping kind words into your heart, protecting your heart, and using your heart to be kind to others.
Checking First

Hi, Road. Come see my kittens!
neighbour "KITTENS!

If you are playing in
your front yard and your
neighbour wants to show
you her little kittens...

Move Away and Check First Before You Change Your Plan

I need to
CHECK FIRST!

Move away and Check First with the grownups in charge at your house. Your job is to Check First before you change your plan. Your grownups can tell you if it is okay for you to go to your neighbour’s house.

Check First and Think First Power

Check First Power
Clap your forearm with your other hand to signal checking first with the adults who care about you before you change your plan.

Think First Power
Pat your head gently to signal thinking first about what to do when the unexpected happens or someone is acting unsafely.
Yell “NO!”

Your voice can keep you safe. If someone scares you, yell “NO!” and run to get help.
*** Where is Safety? ***

My teacher is Safety!

Safety is where there is an adult who can help you. At school, my teacher or the principal is Safety.

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*** Get Help Power ***

Get Help Power (Find safety)
Put your hands out in front of you with your palms facing up to signal going to Safety and reaching out to someone in order to Get Help.

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*** Make a Safety Plan ***

If you get separated from your adult, stand tall like the trunk of a tree, and yell your adult's name in a loud, clear voice. If you still can't find them, go to the checkout counter and interrupt the cashier. Tell them that you are lost and need their help.
### Wait Power

![Wait Power illustration]

- Keep your hands hidden under your clothes so that people cannot see them.
- Look confident and in control.
- Keep your head up and your shoulders back.
- Keep your body relaxed and appear uninterested.

### Stay Together Power

![Stay Together Power illustration]

- Stand close together and face each other.
- Hold hands and look at each other.
- Keep your body relaxed and appear uninterested.

### Safety rules about private areas

- Private areas are the parts of your body that are covered by a bathing suit.
- For play or teasing, other people should not touch your private areas. They should not ask you to touch their private areas either.
Safety rules about private areas

Let's take off our clothes so we can play doctor!

That is against our safety rules. We can play doctor with our clothes on.

Touch for health and safety is not a choice

I need to get medicine on your sore.

Sometimes grownups have to touch a kid's private area to help them, even if the kid does not like it.

Touch should NEVER have to be a secret

Mom put medicine on my foot. It hurt today. I did not like it.

Thank you for telling me! I am sorry you didn't like it.

Touch of any kind should never EVER be a secret. You should always be able to talk about the things you don't like.
The Kidpower Protection Promise

"YOU are VERY important to me. If you have a Safety Problem, I want to know – even if I seem too busy, even if someone we care about will be upset, even if it is embarrassing, even if you promised not to tell, and even if you made a mistake. Please tell me, and I will do everything in my power to help you!"

Key Kidpower Skills to Stop Abuse

Kids need to learn and be able to safely practice how to:
• Recognize safe and unsafe behavior.
• Set boundaries in a powerful and respectful way to stop inappropriate or unsafe behavior.
• Leave a potentially dangerous situation.
• Protect themselves from hurtful words and behaviors.
• Resist emotional coercion and social pressure.
• Be persistent in getting attention of busy, distracted adults in order to get help.
• Defend themselves from an assault.

Be A Child Protection Advocate!

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