

Make use of Resources

There are many organizations and agencies dedicated to the safety of children. Many are right here in your community. Take time to find out who they are and how they can help. They can be valuable resources in keeping your child safe.

The Child Protection Office of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Grand Island is one such resource. If you would like additional information on Safe Environment Strategies for Child / Youth Organizations, Signs of Abuse, Qualities of Right Relationships, or where to go for help if you believe your child has been abused / exploited please call:

Diocese of Grand Island
Child Protection Office
(308)382-6565
cpo@gidiocese.org



Diocese of Grand Island
Child Protection Office

2708 Old Fair Road
Grand Island, Nebraska 68802

You are **Separated** from parents
...in a store ...in a crowd ...at an event

a **strange
adult** asks you

- to leave with them
- to do them a favor
- to help them

SOMEONE OFFERS YOU
... A GIFT... A TREAT
...MONEY

YOU ARE
**HOME
ALONE**

- CALLS
- KNOCKS ON
THE DOOR
- INVITES
YOU TO PLAY

Something
makes you
Feel
...scared
...hurt
...uneasy

**DO
YOU
KNOW
THE
DRILL?**

For the same reasons we practice fire and tornado drills with our children, we need to rehearse plans for personal safety. Help your children identify and practice a plan for situations they may have to face independently.

Someone
wants to give
you a
Ride
...in a car
...on a
motorcycle
...on their
bike

Someone
invites
you to go
...inside their
home
...outside to
play
...out of town

Someone **violates** your
physical, emotional, or behavioral
Boundaries

Know the Drill

As a society, and as parents, we have clear ideas about how to protect our children from some dangers. We take measures to make our households, schools, and communities physically safe. We know that children learn through repetition and we want our children to be prepared in the face of danger, so we educate our children on things like fire safety. We make a fire escape plan, and we practice fire drills. We make sure our children know how to call for help.

It's not always as clear how to protect our children from dangers like abuse and exploitation by others. It can be hard to know where to start.

Be Informed

An important place to start is by becoming informed. As parents and concerned adults it is important that we seek information about:

- Signs of abuse.
- Qualities of right relationships versus

abusive ones.

- How to intervene if we suspect a child is at risk.
- Where to go for help.
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Share the Knowledge

Just as we teach our children that fire burns, and it's dangerous to play with matches, it is important to teach them about right relationships and what to do if a relationship isn't right. We can share this knowledge by enrolling children in a formal personal safety course or completing one together, discussing right relationships and potential risks, and modeling right relationship qualities in our interactions with our children and others.

Make a Plan for Safety

Few of us would hesitate to talk to the children in our lives about the danger of fire and how to escape. Child abuse is a more difficult subject to address. Abuse is an interpersonal danger. We wish our children could be shielded from the awareness that such evil exists. We want our children to love

and trust others and we don't want them to be fearful or anxious. But just as with fire, we risk our children being hurt if we don't provide them a plan for safety. Fortunately, identifying a safety plan is one very effective strategy for reducing anxiety. Children take great comfort in knowing that there is a plan and the mere act of formulating a plan increases the likelihood that they will know what to do to be safe in the face of danger.

Take some time to help the children in your life identify a plan for safety in risky situations. Make use of general safety principles like "safety in numbers;" "when in doubt, check it out (with parents or a trusted adult);" "**BOLT** – **B**e aware of danger signs, **O**bject to hurtful actions and inappropriate requests, **L**eave dangerous situations, **T**ell a parent or trusted adult;" and "**N**o (say no if someone hurts you, threatens you, or pressures you to break the rules), **G**o (get away), **T**ell (tell a

trusted adult / get help.)"

To get started, make a plan for each of the scenarios listed on the front page of this brochure. Then think about other situations your child may be involved in (your child may have some ideas.)

Learn the Drill

Children learn through repetition and we all know "practice makes perfect." As you enter new situations with a child, rehearse safety plans. Make sure they "know the drill." Whenever possible point out concrete aspects of each safety plan within the environment (for example; "There's a police officer, they'd be a good person to go to for help," "That's a very tall flag pole – that would be a good place for us to meet if we get separated," "That looked like a dangerous situation, let me know if something like that ever happens to you.")

Practice personal safety plans just as you would a fire drill.