

Speak Up Be Safe 4th Grade Curriculum: Major Topics and Key Terms

Personal safety means doing our best to stay away from danger and situations where we may get hurt.

Children have been taught safety rules to help keep them safe, and most of the time, we learn these rules from the adults in our lives. It is the job of adults to keep children safe. Children can help adults if they know and follow the safety rules. Safety rules and information that help keep us safe are part of our **safety net**.

When we **respect** something, it means we have a feeling or understanding that someone or something is important and should be treated in an appropriate way. It is important to show respect for our own and other people's bodies – both on the inside and the outside. One of the best ways to respect your body and stay safe is by following the safety rules that help keep children safe from being hurt or abused.

Abuse is when someone does something on purpose to harm or hurt someone else or says they are going to hurt someone else.

Physical Abuse is when someone, an adult or another child, hurts another person's body on purpose. This can happen from hitting, punching, kicking, or twisting an arm or leg, and it can leave bruises, broken bones, and scratches. Sometimes a parent or another adult at home might spank a child for discipline. A spanking should not leave lasting marks or a bruise. If it does, it might be physical abuse.

Private body parts are the parts of our body covered by a bathing suit. People should keep their private body parts to themselves.

Sometimes an adult, or even another child, might not respect a child's private body parts. They may try to touch a child's private body parts or ask a child to touch their private body parts. This is another type of abuse (abuse of private body parts), and that person is not safe. This type of abuse also includes someone who asks a child to tell them about or take pictures of his/her private body parts, or if they talk to a child about or show a child pictures of their private body parts. Showing pictures of private body parts can take place "in person", on a cell phone, or on the internet. These types of pictures threaten our safety even if they aren't pictures of ourselves or anyone we know.

Some types of touching and showing private body parts aren't abuse. Examples: a doctor checking a child's body for injuries and illness and a parent/caregiver is in the room, a child needs help washing and a parent/caregiver helps the child, or a child sees a picture of a body without clothes on in a science book. It is wrong when someone touches, talks about, or shows or takes pictures of private body parts not to help a child, but in a way that will harm or hurt a child.

Sometimes deciding what is and isn't abuse can be confusing. Sometimes a child may think a touch is OK at first, because the person touching the child's private body parts said it was OK, or the child may think the person touching them was just showing them love or special attention. Sometimes the person might say it is a game or secret, but what they are doing is wrong.

Safety Rule #1- "It's MY body." This rule means that you deserve to be safe, and your body also deserves to be respected and safe.

Safety Rule #2- "Ask an adult if I'm safe." You don't always have to know if something that has happened to you or someone else is safe or not. You can talk with a safe adult, and he or she will help you figure it out.

Emotional Abuse is when a child is told bad or mean things about themselves over and over again. It hurts feelings and the way the child feels about themselves. All children deserve to be respected and safe - not just their bodies, but their feelings too.

Neglect is when a child is not getting what is needed to be healthy and safe (e.g., a place to live, enough healthy food to eat, being left alone when they are too young, not getting needed medical care, not having proper clothes, etc.).

When you were younger, you were taught to avoid strangers. A stranger might try to approach a child at a park, on the street, on the way to school, at your front door, or even online. They can contact children through video games, social media, and apps. If a stranger tries to contact you, offers you a gift, or tries to get you to go somewhere with them, it is important to remember the safety rules.

Sometimes the person who abuses the child is a stranger, but many times it is someone the child knows, trusts, and loves. Sometimes adults and other children make bad decisions that hurt a child or make a child feel unsafe. This is why you need to know who your **safe adults** are. They can help and listen to you when you are confused, scared, in an unsafe situation, or are unsure. (The qualities of a safe adult are reviewed, and the children are asked to identify their safe adults.) It's important to have more than one safe adult. If your safe adult is unavailable or makes a mistake and doesn't listen when you ask for help, tell someone else. Keep talking to safe adults until someone helps you.

Force is making someone do something they don't want to do or don't understand, and they're not given a choice whether or not to do it. There may be times when an adult or another child might try to force you to do something wrong or dangerous. Usually people who use force have some sort of power over the child (i.e., they're bigger or stronger, or an authority figure). If someone is forcing you to do something unsafe, or something that might hurt you or another person, use the safety rules.

Safety Rule#3: "I have choices." - If you are in an unsafe or uncertain situation and can't get to a safe adult right away, there may be things you can do. There are six choices, or **resistance strategies**:

R- Run (if possible or as soon as possible. Run to some place that is safe.)

E- Escape (If you can't get away immediately, do so as soon as safely possible.)

S- Scream (Scream "no" or "stop" and threaten to tell.)

I- Ignore (If someone is trying to engage you in conversation or calling you over to a car or house, ignore them and move on.)

S- Stay Away (Avoid all future contact, or at least contact where you would be alone with the person.)

T- Tell (Tell a safe adult.)

A **bully** is someone who uses physical abuse or threats, teasing or name calling, or who hurts children on purpose over and over again. Bullies can be adults or children. Bullies sometimes use force by bullying children who are smaller or younger, or who they have authority over. When you see yourself or someone else in danger of being bullied, use the safety rules.

Anything you send through the internet, over a computer, or over a phone cannot be erased. Once it's sent, you no longer have control over who sees it or what they do with it. A good rule to follow when making decisions about sending messages or pictures is: If you wouldn't say it to someone's face or show them in person, you shouldn't send it.

Cyberbullying is when someone is texting or typing mean things on social media, in video games, or in chatting apps that hurt someone else. Being mean or hurtful to someone over the internet or on a cell phone or mobile device is still bullying, and it's wrong.

Safety Rule #4: "Tell someone." - It is important to tell a safe adult if you feel you or another child is in danger. It's an adult's responsibility to keep children safe, but sometimes they need your help to do their job.

Sometimes people who abuse or bully children use force, but most of the time they use tricks or bad bribes. A **trick** is when someone tells you something or does something to fool you. It might be a lie, it might be called a game, or it might be someone offering to give you something like candy, money, or a gift to get you to do something that breaks the safety rules. Tricks, gifts, or bribes that make children unsafe and lead to child abuse or bullying are wrong. Sometimes the trick can be special attention- like asking a child to come over to play with a new puppy or feed a horse.

If you're ever in a situation you think isn't safe that may be a trick or may lead to force, you need to listen to your feelings and talk to a safe adult outside of the situation.

Sometimes people who hurt children try to trick them by saying the abuse is their special **secret**, and they get the child to **promise** not to tell anyone. Sometimes they try to trick children into promising not to tell by making them feel guilty (e.g., "If you tell anyone about this, I'll get into trouble, and you'll never see me again.") Promises or secrets that hurt a child are wrong, and no one should keep a promise or secret about abuse or bullying. Even if the secret is about another child, you should find a safe adult to tell.

Sometimes it might be hard to tell someone, even a safe adult, about an unsafe situation or abuse:

- You might think you or someone else will get in trouble if you tell.
- You might feel embarrassed or ashamed about something that has happened.
- You might think someone might not trust or love you anymore.
- You might have been threatened (i.e., they would hurt you or someone you care about if you tell.)
- You were told it was a secret and you shouldn't tell anyone.
- You might have been in a place or doing something you weren't supposed to do when you got into an unsafe situation.

Even if it's difficult or uncomfortable to tell, it is VERY important to tell.

Safety Rule #5: "It's NEVER my fault." - Child abuse is never the child's fault. Children can try their best to make sure they and other children are safe, but sometimes things happen. It is never their fault if they are abused or bullied even if they could have told earlier, were tricked, took a gift, or were in a place they shouldn't have been when something hurtful happened or they saw something happen to someone else. Also, it is never too late to tell.