

Called to Protect™
for Young Children

Parent Resources



Building Boundaries: Called to Protect for Young Children

Information for Parents

Called to Protect for Young Children has been specifically developed to teach children from pre-school through fifth grade skills how to help keep safe. Child molesters are skilled at “grooming” children, making friends with them, finding ways to be alone with them, and convincing them that the molester really cares for them.

We can teach children how to interrupt these behaviors. Praesidium has reviewed hundreds of cases where, by their own actions, children were able to protect themselves. Called to Protect for Young Children is designed to teach children the skills they need to recognize boundary violations that precede abuse, to remove themselves from uncomfortable situations, and to tell a trusted adult when someone has crossed a boundary with them.

Of course, adults cannot hold children solely responsible for their own safety, but we can train them to play an active role in keeping themselves, their friends, and their activities safe.

Development of the Program

As with all of our educational programs, Praesidium conducted extensive research to identify the most important skills children can learn to protect themselves from abuse. Praesidium then reviewed research on the efficacy of child safety programs and on what children are capable of learning at different ages. Because the concept of healthy boundaries can be complex for children, Praesidium worked with educational and child development experts to create the most effective tools to teach age-appropriate boundary skills at each grade level. Additionally, Praesidium asked catechetical experts to review the program to ensure it aligns with Catholic teachings.



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Lesson Plans for Grades K-5

Call To Protect for Young Children provides teachers and/or catechists that work with school age children with brief lesson plans that include hands-on activities for each grade level. The lessons are designed to teach children appropriate boundaries and how to protect their boundaries. The lessons are sequenced such that the information from one grade prepares students for subsequent lessons. Yet the lessons are also independent enough to allow children to enter the program at any time.



Called to Protect for Young Children teaches age-specific skill development goals to each grade level:

- Kindergarten – Rules about the Body
- Grade 1 – Rules for Interacting with Others (includes information on bullying)
- Grade 2 – Listening to Your Intuition
- Grade 3 – Secrets: Those You Keep and Those You Share
- Grade 4 – Healthy Friendships (includes information on peer to peer abuse)
- Grade 5 – Healthy Privacy (includes information on Internet safety)

Previewing the Lesson Plans

Brief descriptions of the lessons for your child's grade level are available. Please take the time to view these materials so that you can be acquainted with the skills and principles your child will learn. Reviewing this material may make it easier for you to talk to your child about safe boundaries and the right to defend them. Further, it may prompt open discussions with your child that will be informative and helpful to both of you.

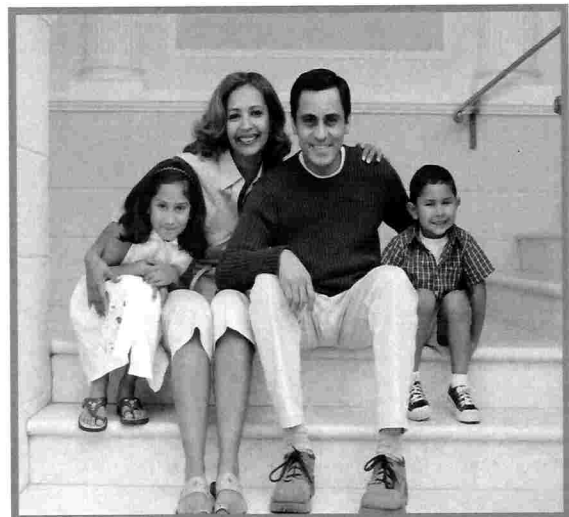


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Conclusion

Thank you for allowing your child to participate in the Called to Protect for Young Children program. Your diocese has chosen this program in an ongoing effort to keep children safe.

Learning these lessons along with your children allows you to partner with them in preventing abuse. Parents should always be the first protectors and best educators of their children. Called to Protect for Young Children will supplement the teaching you do at home and help you in your efforts to guide and protect those most precious to you.



Thank you for answering the call to protect God's children!



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Safety Tips for Parents

1. Practice active parenting.

Your presence, participation, and constant interaction with your child make him/her a difficult target for child molesters who are usually looking for a child without strong family support.



2. Talk to your child.

This seems simple enough, but it isn't. Many parents shy away from talking to their children about anything related to sex and about anything that parents, themselves, find scary, such as child sexual abuse. Have ongoing discussions about the body and about rules regarding the body. These discussions make it easier for your child to approach you with questions or with their own concerns and experiences.

3. Listen to your child.

As before, listening isn't as easy as it sounds, either. Children do not always emphasize what is important information from what is purely conversational or even just mindless echoing of TV commercials. Listen carefully, though, for the names of adults and older children who seem to play a significant role in your child's life. Listen also to the emotional content of your child's communications. Does s/he frequently sound sad, angry, or anxious? All of these are normal feelings, but children should be expressing a full range of emotions not just those indicating distress.

4. Listen to your intuition.

No one knows your child better than you. If you see behaviors or hear comments from your child that disturb you, don't ignore your concerns. If you see unusual practices at school or any other program or if an adult's behavior is suspicious, respect your own insight. Don't be afraid to give voice to your intuition. Tell the school, etc. Never let someone make you think that your concerns are silly or over reactive.



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Safety Tips for Parents, Cont'd

5. When you suspect something is wrong, take action.

You can take action in several ways.

A. Talk to your child. Keep it simple and direct. For example, you can say, "I notice that you no longer want to play with Jason. What happened between you and him?"

B. Talk to the director of the program where you have concerns. Again, keep it simple. But be prepared to provide concrete examples of incidents or staff/child behaviors that raise your concern.

C. Follow up. Keep the communication open with your child. Check back with the program director to see that your concerns have been addressed.



6. If your child discloses an incident of abuse to you, stay calm.

Incidents of false allegations of abuse from typical children are rare. Only about five percent of all allegations of abuse are false. If this information comes to you, of course you will be alarmed. Even so, you must accomplish several things at this critical moment.

- A. Reassure your child that telling you is the right thing to do.
- B. Ask if the child is hurt. If so, get medical help immediately.
- C. If the child is not in a state of emergency, ask only questions that will help you understand exactly what has happened. (e.g., "Did this happen when you saw him yesterday?" or "Where were the two of you when this happened?")
- D. Be sure that your child is safe. Convey to the child that you will not allow this to happen again.
- E. Tell your child that the abuse is not his/her fault, no matter what s/he has been told by the molester.
- F. Promise that you are going to take charge of the matter. Do not promise to keep the abuse secret. But do promise to keep your child safe and appropriately informed.
- G. Notify the authorities in your state, the police or child protective services.



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Recommended Reading for You and Your Child

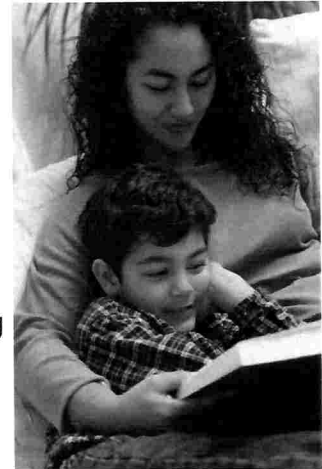
The following books may help to facilitate discussions with your child about sensitive topics.

If Only I had a Green Nose, by Max Lucado

Theme: Self-esteem, self acceptance, peer pressure, bullying

Age range: K-8th

Summary: Punchinello is a Wemmick who falls into the trap of peer pressure. Once he stops visiting his maker, he becomes desperate to get a green nose like everyone else. The popular green nose then changed to red, then blue, and so on. Punchinello becomes tired of trying to fit in and becomes sad. His friend, Lucia, lets him know that his maker asks about him everyday. He decides to go back to see his master, Eli, and he helps Punchinello be the Wemmick that he made him to be.



Franklin Fibs, by Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda Clark

Theme: The damage a lie can cause and self-image

Age range: 3rd -5th

Summary: Franklin lies to his friends because they can do cool things. He cannot think of anything that he could do that his friends cannot, so he made up a story that he could "eat 76 flies in the blink of an eye." Through the course of the book, Franklin realizes that lying to his friends was not very smart and that it only causes more problems. He learns to appreciate his own capabilities more and to avoid lying to make himself seem like something he is not.

A Safe Place to Live, by Michelle Harrison

Theme: Domestic violence

Age range: K-2nd

Summary: This book was written to help professionals and parents open up communication lines with children who have experienced or witnessed domestic violence. It is told from a little girl's perspective. This book may be helpful for young children who may or may not know how to describe events.

Impatient Pamela Calls 9-1-1, by Mary Koski

Theme: Calling for help, patience, and knowing important information

Age range: 1st-4th

Summary: This book teaches a very important lesson about when to call 911 for help. It also stresses the importance of learning pertinent information such as your home address. Throughout, the book stresses the importance of being patient and waiting to call 911 until there is truly an emergency.



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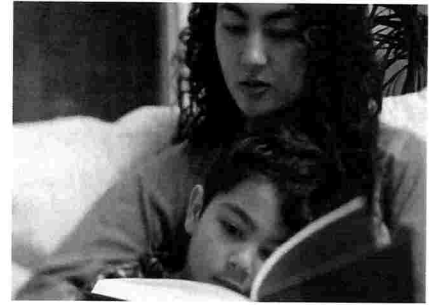
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Little Monkey's One Safe Place, by Richard Edwards

Theme: A safe place for children

Age range: K-3rd

Summary: Little monkey searches through the jungle for the one place where he can be safe. He found his one safe place in his mother's arms. This book can help you talk with children about safety, whether it is in the arms of a parent or in the arms of someone else. This book helps adults work with kids on helping them locate a place where someone makes them feel secure and loved.



Something Happened and I'm Scared to Tell, by Patricia Kehoe

Theme: Sexual Abuse

Age range: 1st- 4th

Summary: This book takes an honest approach to the subject and, more importantly, emphasizes that the blame for sexual abuse belongs to the perpetrator not the victim. Many victims have been groomed to believe the opposite and need this message. This book is a good resource for school counselors and for parents.

My Body is Private, by Linda Girard

Theme: Appropriate touching

Age range: 1st- 5th

Summary: A mother-child conversation introduces the topic of sexual abuse and ways to keep one's body private. The book respects readers' intelligence by using the proper terminology for genitalia and the generic term "bottom" to mean the buttocks. This book is a good teaching tool for discussion of a serious topic. It is one that all ages would find beneficial. Gray areas such as tickling are explored. Tickling can be fun, but it can also go too far where the one being tickled is not enjoying it. That is another example of when to demand that a certain "touch" or tactile activity be stopped. The children are well within their rights to do so at any time. Hugs and kisses are described as generally being welcome and acceptable, but children should not be forced to kiss or endure being kissed by someone who makes them feel uncomfortable.

The Trouble with Secrets, by Karen Johnson

Theme: Secrets/ Follow up to discussing good touch/bad touch

Age range: 1st-4th

Summary: This book uses concrete examples to help children learn how to decide which secrets should be kept and which should be told. This is an appropriate book to read with young children, who need to understand the difference between a good secret and a toxic secret. It helps children realize they are not alone, and that not all secrets are fun, and that some even need to be shared with a trusted adult.



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The Right Touch, by Sandy Kleven

Theme: Appropriate touching

Age range: 1st-4th

Summary: This book gives tools for parents to facilitate discussions with their children. The book addresses bad touch and good touch, private parts, and telling parents or other trusted adults if someone makes children feel uncomfortable. Be aware that the book includes an illustration of the mom and son looking at a book and their book has a picture of a little boy and girl naked so that they can identify "private parts".



Your Body Belongs to You, by Cornelia Spelman

Theme: Touching

Age range: K-2nd

Summary: This is an introduction to talking about physical boundaries with children. The kids start to learn about touching without having to hear about "bad" people or scary things. Additionally, it gives the parent and child a common vocabulary to use in their early discussions. The book encourages children not to keep secrets if they are approached and touched inappropriately or made to touch someone else against their will. Private parts are rightfully defined as the parts of the body one's underwear and bathing suits cover. The book stresses what to do if the touch is neither wanted nor welcome and that it is perfectly all right not to want to be touched in certain ways.

Who Is a Stranger and What Should I Do?, by Linda Walvoord Girard

Theme: Strangers and what children should do in different situations

Age range: 3rd-6th

Summary: This book discusses both strangers that do not pose a threat and those who may make children feel uncomfortable. More importantly, the book describes specific steps that children can take in various situations such as when children are approached by a stranger, when children see strangers in playgrounds, when strangers call by phone or ring the doorbell. In addition, the book describes some "tricks" that strangers may use to lure children into talking with them or going somewhere with them. In all situations, children receive specific advice for keeping themselves safe. For younger children, this book will be best received, and its suggestions best reinforced, if read with a parent.



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Information about the Internet

Current Research

Current research shows that young children are seldom the victims of online predators. In fact, one of the latest studies (The National Juvenile Online Victimization Study) revealed that 99% of Internet-initiated sex crimes involved youth 13-years-old or older. This and other studies are revealing a different profile of online molesters than that of pedophiles who prey on younger children.



Of course, it's still important for you to monitor the online behavior of your young children, just as you monitor any of their activities. Also, teaching children appropriate use of the Internet while they are young may discourage online behaviors that will put them at risk later on. For example, we are learning that having an account through a personal networking site such as MY Space is not, in itself, a high risk behavior. However, youth who "chat" or interact with strangers, who visit x-rated websites, and who use the Internet to embarrass or harass others are more likely to be contacted by an Internet molester.

In Called to Protect for Young Children, fifth graders learn the following rules for online safety. You may want to read over these with your child and reinforce them as rules in your own home.

Rules for Online Safety

1. I will not give out personal information such as my name, address, telephone or cell number to a stranger on the Internet.
2. I will not put my parents' names or work addresses or cell phone numbers on the Internet.
3. If an adult or stranger IM's or emails or wants to be on my personal "friends" list, I will tell my parents.
4. I will not agree to meet in person with someone I have met on the Internet. If someone asks me to meet them, I will tell my parents.
5. I will not send any pictures on the Internet without my parents' permission.
6. I will not respond to any messages that are mean or make me feel uncomfortable.
7. I will show my parents any message that says mean things about me or other people I know.
8. I will follow the "Golden Rule" when I am on the Internet. I will not make rude or nasty comments to others.
9. If someone gives me a bad secret on the Internet, I will tell a trusted adult.
10. If someone I meet on the Internet sends me a gift, I will tell my parents immediately.
11. I will not tell my password to anyone except my parents, not even my best friend.
12. I will not download images or install any software onto the computer without my parents' approval.
13. I am aware that my actions on the Internet could possibly corrupt our computer or could even hurt me or my family.

