



LESSON 7

Learning About Personal Safety

Student Learning Objectives:	National Health Standards:
1. Recognize that everyone has personal space and boundaries and that these should be respected.	• Core Concepts
2. Identify appropriate and inappropriate touch.	• Core Concepts
3. Explain that a child is never at fault if someone touches him or her in an inappropriate way.	• Core Concepts
4. Explain strategies to try to avoid personally unsafe situations.	• Self Management
5. Identify who to ask for help.	• Core Concepts
6. Demonstrate strategies to get away in cases of inappropriate touching or abduction.	• Self Management



Lesson Synopsis

Review the previous safety lesson. Talk about touch, personal space, and secrets. Watch a video that explains personal safety strategies. Explain how to avoid unsafe situations. Review safety strategies. Discuss examples of good touch and bad touch. Practice saying “no.” Identify helpful adults. Review examples of good touch and strategies for avoiding bad touch.

Activity	Time in Minutes	Materials Needed
Introduction	3	• None
Teacher Input	24	<p>Health Education Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: <i>Now I Can Tell You My Secret</i>, Disney Educational Productions (15 minutes) • Book: <i>My Body Is Private</i>, by Linda Walvoord Girard (Extension Activity) <p>Teacher Manual Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Reference: “Teaching Personal Safety” • Teacher Reference: “What to Do If a Student Discloses Abuse” <p>Supplied by the Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VCR and monitor • Pens or pencils (Extension Activity) • Writing paper and/or art supplies (Extension Activity)
Application or Skill Practice	11	<p>Teacher Manual Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Worksheet: “Keep Yourself Safe” • Teacher Key: “Keep Yourself Safe” • Teacher Reference—Assessment: “Assessment Rubric for Skill Development: Personal Safety” • Teacher Reference—Assessment: “Assessment Checklist for Skill Development: Personal Safety” • Student Self-Assessment Checklist: “Personal Safety” <p>Supplied by the Teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pencils or pens

Closure	2	Teacher Manual Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Reference: "Sample Family Letter Following the Personal Safety Lesson" • Family Resource Sheet: "Child Sexual Abuse: What Every Family Should Know" • Family Resource Sheet: "What You Can Do to Protect Your Child From Sexual Abuse"
TOTAL	40	

Preparation

Prior to the Lesson:

- **Decide if you want to assess** student skill development. A rubric and a checklist, "Assessment Rubric for Skill Development: Personal Safety" and "Assessment Checklist for Skill Development: Personal Safety," are provided for you to use at the end of this lesson.
- **Decide if you want students to assess** their own progress. Duplicate the checklist, "Personal Safety," for students if you plan to have them use it.
- **Send a letter to parents two weeks before** teaching this lesson notifying them of the plans for this lesson and giving them the opportunity to preview the video if they wish. A sample letter is located in Lesson 1 of this unit.
- **Read** the teacher references, "Teaching Personal Safety" and "What to Do If a Student Discloses Abuse."
- **Preview** the video.

For Application or Skill Practice:

- **Duplicate** the student worksheet, "Keep Yourself Safe," for each student.
- **Read** the teacher key.

For Closure:

- **Personalize and then duplicate** the teacher reference, "Sample Family Letter Following the Personal Safety Lesson," for students to take home.
- **Duplicate** the family resource sheets, "Child Sexual Abuse: What Every Family Should Know" and "What You Can Do to Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse," for students to take home.

LESSON PROCEDURE

Introduction: Review the previous safety lesson. Introduce the topic of personal safety.

Approximately 3 minutes

Instructional Steps	Script & Detailed Directions	Extensions & Suggestions
Review strategies for Internet safety.	<i>In our last health lesson, we talked about Internet safety. Stand up by your desk. Stretch your arms toward the ceiling if you want to describe one safety strategy you learned.</i>	

	<p>Answers: Allow two or three students to describe Internet safety strategies such as the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid Internet hazards by practicing safe behaviors such as the ones described in Lesson 6. • Always follow your family's Internet safety rules. • Limit your time online to whatever amount your family agrees is okay. In general, try to limit your time to two hours of watching television, using the computer, and playing video games each day. • Tell a trusted adult if something doesn't feel "right." • Tell a trusted adult if you break an Internet safety rule, and make a plan to stay safe in the future. <p>Hop on one foot if you remember a different strategy.</p> <p>Call on a few more students.</p> <p><i>If you have been remembering to follow these and other safety rules we have talked about in our recent health lessons, smile at me. I'm very glad to see you are doing what you can to keep yourself safe.</i></p>	
<p>State the focus of the lesson.</p>	<p><i>Today we are going to learn how we can keep ourselves safe from another kind of harm, which we call "bad touch."</i></p> <p><i>When you were a baby, your parents and family watched out for your safety. Now that you are older, you can take more responsibility for your own safety. You are very important! Because you are so important, we want to make sure you can help yourself stay as safe as possible. Personal safety means:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Following safety rules.</i> • <i>Being aware of what is going on around you.</i> • <i>Taking safe action in situations that could be dangerous, destructive, or disturbing.</i> • <i>Asking for help when it is needed.</i> <p><i>If we know about personal safety, we can usually feel pretty safe. It is like bicycle safety or water safety. When we know the rules, we feel safer.</i></p>	 <p>As a classroom teacher, you are a resource and support for students on a daily basis and the best person to teach this lesson. If you are uncomfortable teaching this topic, see if the counselor or another teacher would help you. Children need this information and will respond best if it is presented in a reassuring manner.</p>

Teacher Input: Talk about touch, personal space, and secrets. Watch and discuss a video that explains safety strategies, including the importance of saying "no" and telling a trusted adult. Explain how to avoid unsafe situations, including abduction.

Approximately 24 minutes

Instructional Steps	Script & Detailed Directions	Extensions & Suggestions
<p>Reassure students that most adults care about children.</p>	<p><i>As you are growing up, you depend on adults to help you when you need help and to teach you the things you need to know in order to be healthy. Most adults care a lot about children and want to help them.</i></p>	

<p>Talk about bad touch.</p> <p>Talk about respecting personal space.</p> <p>Talk about secrets.</p>	<p><i>However, some people are unkind. They may do things that are not good for children, like hurting children or touching them in a harmful way.</i></p> <p><i>Sometimes bad touch is clearly harmful, like hitting or slapping. Other times, bad touch may seem confusing. You may feel wrong or uncomfortable about how someone is touching you, but you may not know why. The other person might say it's okay, but still it doesn't feel right to you.</i></p> <p><i>Your body belongs to you. You have the right to decide when and how someone else will touch you. Each of you also has what we call "personal space," the area around your body. People who are kind and caring respect your right to control your body and your personal space. For example, someone who insists on sitting uncomfortably close to you is not respecting your personal space.</i></p> <p><i>Some places on your body are especially private, like the places a bathing suit covers. No one should touch you there, except for a doctor or nurse who is helping you while a parent or guardian is in the room.</i></p> <p><i>People who touch children in a harmful way need help. They may seem nice sometimes, but they have a serious problem. Because they know what they're doing is wrong, they may tell a child to keep their bad touch a secret.</i></p> <p><i>Never keep secrets about bad touch or other things that hurt you or make you feel uncomfortable. It can be hard to tell a secret about something that feels bad and scary, but it's important to tell a trusted adult so everyone can get help to stop the hurting. If you tell someone and they don't believe you, keep telling trusted adults until someone helps you.</i></p>	 <p>Ask students to draw pictures of all the ways caring adults and older children express love and affection to younger children using touch. Compile the pictures into a book to be presented to a younger classroom.</p>  <p><i>My Body Is Private</i> is a wonderful book about privacy and personal safety. Read it to your class to reinforce the message in this lesson.</p>  <p>Some students may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. Acknowledge that many people feel uncomfortable when talking about their bodies and touching. While their feelings are normal, the topic is an important one to discuss.</p>
<p>Show the video, <i>Now I Can Tell You My Secret</i>.</p> <p>Discuss the video.</p>	<p><i>I have a video to show you that tells the story of Andrew, a boy about your age who had a secret involving bad touch. Two other students on the video had similar secrets. Let's watch the video and see how Andrew and his friends, Cindy and Jennifer, got help to stop the hurting. We'll talk after the video.</i></p> <p>Show the video.</p> <p><i>Let's talk about this video and what it taught us. What was Andrew's secret?</i></p> <p>Answer: His neighbor, Mr. Blain, was inviting Andrew inside his house and helping Andrew take off his clothes in front of him. It is implied that Mr. Blain was touching him in ways that felt bad.</p>	 <p>Using a video for this content area is often the most comfortable approach for students and the teacher. However, finding an appropriate video is challenging. An extensive search was conducted for recent videos that met our criteria prior to the revision of the <i>Michigan Model</i>®. This video was selected. If you know of media that you would like us to consider, please review the criteria on the EMC website and respond to the webmaster with your suggestion.</p> <p>www.emc.cmich.edu/videos</p>

Emphasize telling trusted adults the secret.

Explain that abusers are more often someone the child knows, rather than a stranger.

Reinforce that bad touch is not the child's fault.

Continue discussing the video.

Explain how to avoid abduction.

Mr. Blain told Andrew not to tell his mother. He told him that they were friends and friends don't want to get one another in trouble by telling secrets. Even if the person makes you promise not to tell or threatens you in some way, tell anyway. This is a secret you should tell because it's more important to get help than to keep a bad secret. You need to keep telling until someone helps you.

Was the adult who was touching Andrew in an uncomfortable way a stranger?

Answer: No, Andrew knew him. He had played ball with his neighbor.

We often think that adults who hurt children are strangers, and strangers can hurt children. However, often an adult who touches a child in a harmful way is someone the child knows, such as a neighbor or a family member.

No matter who a person is, if he or she touches you in a way that feels bad or uncomfortable, tell an adult you trust so you can get help and keep telling until someone helps.

Andrew felt bad and wondered if what his neighbor did was his fault. But it was the neighbor who was doing something wrong, not Andrew.

Remember that if someone touches you in a way that feels bad or uncomfortable, it is never your fault. The other person has a problem. If he or she says it's your fault or that you're bad, don't believe him or her. It's not true.

*Andrew's teacher said that touching someone's private parts was one example of bad touch. **How did she explain "private parts"?***

Answer: the parts of the body covered by a bathing suit

What happened to Cindy?

Answer: A stranger tried to get her to go with him by telling her that her mother had sent him and they could get an ice cream cone.

What did Cindy do?

Answers: She said "no," yelled, and ran all the way home. Then, she told her mom.

Never get into a car with someone you don't know or trust, no matter what he or she says.



It is unlikely a child will disclose abuse during a classroom presentation. However, if this occurs, remain calm, acknowledge the disclosure, resume the lesson, and follow up with the student after the lesson. See the teacher reference, "What to Do If a Student Discloses Abuse," for more information.



Emphasize the importance of telling a trusted adult.

To stay safer, use these ideas:

- Don't play in deserted areas like empty playgrounds, parks, or woods.
- Stay with a parent, trusted adult, or buddy when you're in public.
- If you get lost or separated from people you trust, ask someone for help right away. Look for a family with children or someone like a police officer, security guard, or store worker.
- Don't get too close to strangers who try to talk to you or to cars that are stopped with someone who wants to talk to you. Stay out of their reach.

If someone tries to grab you, yell as loud as you can, "No! I don't know you! Let me go!" Kick or punch them as hard as you can, and run toward where other people will be.

If someone does manage to get you into his or her car, don't put on your seatbelt. Keep making as much noise as you can. Keep yelling, "No! I don't know you. Let me go." Notice how to unlock the door on your side if the person has locked it. Be ready to jump out of the car when you see people and the car has to stop, for example, at a traffic light. Tell people, "Help! This person is hurting me!"

Remember, if you can't get away or stop the abuse, it isn't ever your fault. You tried your best. If something bad happens, it's important to tell a trusted adult as soon as you can afterward. If this has happened to you and you were too scared to do anything, tell someone about what happened.

What was Jennifer's secret?

Answer: Her father was touching her in ways she didn't like.

What did all three children do to get help?

Answer: They told adults they trusted about what was happening.

If anyone ever touches you in a way that feels bad or uncomfortable, tell an adult you trust right away. Explain what the other person did and how you felt. You'll probably need to answer some questions that might feel uncomfortable. But telling an adult the truth is much better than continuing to hurt without help.

Sometimes adults don't know what to do or say if you tell them about bad touch. This is because a secret like this hurts them, too. **What should you do if you tell an adult about bad touch but he or she doesn't get help for you?**

Answers: Tell another adult. Keep telling until you find an adult who can help you.

Who are adults you might tell?

Answers: parents, other family members, teacher, counselor, neighbor, etc.

<p>Explain how to avoid personally unsafe situations.</p>	<p><i>In the video, Andrew's teacher said that your feelings can tell you when you are in danger. How might you feel if you were in danger?</i></p> <p>Answers: feeling bad, feeling sick, feeling scared, having a stomach ache or racing heart, feeling clammy or sweaty, feeling mad, body feels "weird"</p> <p><i>If you feel like this around someone who gets too close to you, talks to you, or touches you, trust your feelings. Avoid being alone with this person. If he or she comes into a room when you're alone, leave and try to find another trusted adult to be with. Make an excuse to get away if you have to. If there's no other adult at home, call an adult on the phone. If you're outdoors, run toward where you think other people will be, such as a house, a store, an office building, or even the side of a road.</i></p>	 <p>Ask students to also describe how they feel when they are safe and loved.</p>  <p>Tell students safe behaviors are the best ways to avoid being hurt, but unfortunately they don't work every time. It is still important to keep saying, "no!" and trying to get away. Afterward, students should tell a trusted adult about what happened.</p>
<p>Explain what to do if students can't get away.</p>	<p><i>If you can't get away from someone who starts touching you in a bad way, loudly say, "No! I don't like that!" Tell him or her you don't want to be touched. Keep saying, "no!" and trying to get away.</i></p>	 <p>Have students write a paper about what they would tell a friend about personal safety if the friend missed this lesson.</p>
<p>Explain the right to privacy.</p>	<p><i>Andrew's teacher also talked about your right to privacy in the bathroom. We all have this right. There may be times when an adult needs to help us with something we can't do for ourselves, such as a doctor or nurse or a family member who helps us stay clean and healthy.</i></p>	

Application or Skill Practice: Use a worksheet to review the safety rule and list examples of good touch and bad touch. Identify specific adults who would help students resolve personal safety problems. Practice saying "no."

Approximately 11 minutes

Instructional Steps	Script & Detailed Directions	Extensions & Suggestions
<p>Distribute copies of the student worksheet, "Keeping Yourself Safe." Review personal safety strategies.</p> 	<p><i>In words or pictures, write the most important part of this lesson: the safety rule that will help you stay safe from bad touch.</i></p> <p>Allow students time to write their responses.</p> <p>Ask questions such as the following to test students' understanding of the strategies.</p> <p><i>What would you do if someone tried to touch you or grab you in a bad or uncomfortable way?</i></p> <p>Answers: Say "no!" Yell. Get away. Find a trusted adult and tell what happened. If in public without a parent or guardian, look for a helper adult such as a police officer, store worker, librarian, or parent with children. Ask for help.</p>	 <p>Use the rubric or checklists provided at the end of the lesson if you want to assess students' skill development.</p>  

Discuss examples of good touch and bad touch. Use the teacher key, "Keep Yourself Safe," to guide the discussion.



Practice saying "no!" loudly and clearly.

Identify adults who would help with personal safety problems.

What would you do if someone you don't trust takes you away in a car?

Answers: Keep saying "no!" Yell, kick, or punch the person as much as you can. Be ready to jump out of the car at a stop sign or traffic light where you see people. Tell people, "Help! This person is hurting me!"

We have been talking a lot about bad touch. Of course, not all touch is bad. The video gave you some examples of good touch.

What are one or two examples of good touch?

Answers: Any of the responses listed on the teacher key and similar examples

What are one or two examples of bad touch?

Answers: Any of the responses listed on the teacher key and similar examples

List examples of good and bad touch on your worksheet.

Sometimes it may feel strange to say "no" to an adult. However, the rules you have learned about being polite don't apply if someone is trying to hurt you. You need to say "no!" and get help from a trusted adult.

Let's practice saying "no!" right now. Stand up straight and tall. Now let's hear your strong, clear "no!"

Praise students for their efforts.

Please sit down now and finish the last question on the worksheet. Each of you knows adults who care about you and would like to help you if you needed help with a problem like the ones we've discussed today. Think of who those adults are. Write their names on your worksheet.

Remember that if one adult isn't able to help you with a problem, keep telling another adult until someone gives you the help you need.

Allow students time to complete the worksheet.



If time allows, have students stand up in smaller groups to practice saying "no!" Or do short role plays, with you playing the part of an adult trying to get a child to follow you into the woods or trying to get a child into a car and similar situations. Have students practice saying "no!" and leaving.



It's best if children tell a trusted adult in person so that the reporting process can be done with the help of familiar adults. However, they can also phone 911 to report that they are being hurt or touched in an inappropriate way.

Closure: Review examples of good touch and safety strategies to avoid bad touch. Encourage students to practice safety skills learned in this unit.

Approximately 2 minutes

Instructional Steps	Script & Detailed Directions	Extensions & Suggestions
<p>Review the main points of the lesson.</p>	<p><i>Today we learned about good touch and bad touch. Turn to someone near you and tell him or her an example of good touch.</i></p> <p><i>Now stand up straight and tall. What would you say if someone was trying to touch you in a harmful way?</i></p> <p>Answer: No!</p> <p><i>Then what would you do?</i></p> <p>Answers: Keep saying "no" and yell if needed. Get away. Tell a trusted adult what happened. Keep telling until someone can help.</p>	
<p>Distribute copies of the teacher reference, "Sample Family Letter Following the Personal Safety Lesson," and the family resource sheets, "Child Sexual Abuse: What Every Family Should Know" and "What You Can Do to Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse."</p>  	<p><i>Here is some information for you to take home to your family, including a letter from our principal. Please share with your family what you have learned today about good touch and bad touch.</i></p> <p>It is critical to send home the family letter and resources to inform families of the content of this lesson in case a child wishes to discuss the lesson at home.</p>	 <p>If you suspect a child in your classroom is being abused or if a student discloses abuse, including sexual abuse, you are responsible for reporting it to Child Protective Services. Review your legal obligations on the teacher reference, "What to Do If a Student Discloses Abuse."</p>
<p>Reassure students.</p>	<p><i>Most of the time situations like the ones we talked about today won't happen. But it's good to be prepared so you know what to do in case something does happen.</i></p>	
<p>Encourage students to practice all the safety skills they have learned in recent lessons.</p>	<p><i>In our recent health lessons, we have talked a lot about how to keep yourselves safe from hazards that might harm you. I encourage you to keep practicing all of the safe behaviors you have learned.</i></p>	



Teaching Personal Safety

The Extent of the Problem

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, reported that 45.9 per 1,000 children, or 3,353,000, received an investigation or assessment for possible abuse or neglect in 2003. An estimated 906,000 children, or 31.7% of those investigated, were found to be victims. The national rate of victimization is 12.4 per 1,000 children. These figures include all forms of abuse and neglect. Child sexual abuse represents 10% of the total number of abused children. Clearly, this problem needs to be addressed.

The Department of Health and Human Services also reported that the number of investigations had increased since 1990 while the rate of victimization had decreased. This represents a positive trend in responsiveness to complaints of child abuse and the rate of reported abuse. Research indicates these trends may be due to changes in reporting procedures, the heightened awareness of the problem, and the number of prevention programs available to young people.

To update these statistics, visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway at www.childwelfare.gov/.

Despite increases in reporting, prevention programs, and the availability of treatment services for survivors of sexual abuse, many abused children do not reveal their victimization. When they do, families are often reluctant to seek assistance. The statistics may reveal only the tip of the iceberg.

While the reported trends are positive, the numbers of children and adults who pay prices for this form of victimization must continue to be reduced. Educators, families, and communities must remain vigilant in their efforts to address the problem through prevention and treatment.

Prevention Works

Programs to prevent the sexual exploitation of children are increasingly being incorporated into health and safety curricula across the country. The rationale for prevention programs rests on a number of realities about child sexual abuse.

- The incidence and prevalence of child sexual abuse remains alarmingly high.
- Adults who were victimized as children often report they could have been spared if they had been provided with basic information on how to reject and report the perpetrator's inappropriate behaviors.
- Prevention programs are a contributing factor to the increase in reporting suspected cases and to the decrease of the rate of victimization.
- Research indicates that children are able to discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate touches and can use safety rules in an abuse situation, such as saying "no," getting away, and telling adults.
- Schools, with their consistent and longitudinal contact with children and their families, are the most promising institution for the delivery of preventive efforts.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children states that if we can improve the knowledge,



self-confidence, and assertiveness skills of children:

- They will be safer because they will be better able to recognize danger and resist potential offenders.
- We will be able to deter many offenders who look for and prey on vulnerable children.
- We can break the “cycle of victimization” in which some of those who have been victimized later become offenders.

The goals for any personal safety program should include:

- To enhance a child’s ability to avoid victimization.
- To enhance a child’s self-esteem.
- To reduce feelings of guilt and blame that often are associated with victimization.
- To promote disclosure of abuse and victimization.
- To enhance and coordinate community response.
- To enhance communication between parents and children about personal safety.
- To reinforce adult supervision and protection.
- To deter offender behavior.

In order for sexual abuse to occur, Finkelhor (1984) suggests that four preconditions must be met.

1. The potential perpetrator must have some motivation to sexually abuse a child.
2. The potential perpetrator must overcome internal inhibitions against acting on such motivations.
3. The potential perpetrator must overcome external inhibitions to sexually abuse a child.
4. The potential perpetrator must overcome the child’s possible resistance to be sexually abused.

Sexual abuse prevention programs address the fourth precondition. One key variable in preventing abuse is the child’s capacity to avoid or resist sexual exploitation. Children who lack knowledge about inappropriate contact and who are deficient in personal safety skills would likely be at high risk for sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse prevention programs are designed to teach children three basic safety skills:

1. How to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touch
2. How to assertively say “no” and get away
3. To tell parents or other trusted individuals if they have been abused

Main Concepts to Be Taught

The following concepts are the heart of this personal safety lesson and are reinforced at each grade level that covers this topic.

1. Everyone needs to be touched. We all need warmth and affection.
2. Sexual abuse prevention is not something children need to worry about 24 hours a day. It is another area of safety, like bicycle or water safety.
3. Some touches are not positive. These touches can scare, confuse, or hurt a child. If anyone is touching a child in a way she or he doesn’t like or understand, the child should talk to a trusted adult.
4. Children have a right to their own bodies and their own feelings. Children also have a right not to be inappropriately touched on the private parts of their bodies.



5. Children need to trust their senses. If their feelings tell them something or someone is not okay, they need to talk to a trusted adult about what they are feeling.
6. Children have a right to **say “no,” get away, and tell someone** they trust if anyone is touching them in ways they don't understand or ways that make them feel uncomfortable.
7. Children should keep telling until someone believes them and takes some action. It is never too late to tell.
8. Children are not to blame if someone touches them inappropriately. The person who touched them is responsible.
9. Children need to know who to tell. It is helpful to have students identify several people to whom they could turn for help. Generally, these people include family members, school personnel, and other trusted individuals.
10. Sexual abuse happens to many boys and girls. There is help for families where sexual abuse is occurring.
11. This is teaching personal body safety, not sex education.

Suggestions for Teaching

The following guidelines will help you present the material of the personal safety lesson in the most helpful way for your students.

1. **Set a comfortable tone for discussion.**

- Present the topic and lesson in a calm, reassuring manner. While child sexual abuse tends to be an emotional topic for most people, remind yourself that you are teaching young people how to keep their bodies safe just as you do when you teach them how to ride a bicycle safely.
- Expect some students to be uncomfortable or embarrassed. Acknowledge that many people, children and adults, are uncomfortable talking about their bodies. Reassure them that their feelings are normal and that the topic is important to discuss.
- Reinforce respectful interaction during the discussion and enforce classroom rules related to listening and avoiding teasing or ridicule.
- Conduct the lesson in a comfortable setting. You may want to have younger children sit in a circle, on a rug, or in whatever structure you feel is comfortable and will encourage discussion.

2. **Clearly introduce the topic.**

- The script in the lesson will help you.

3. **Define all terms.**

- Do not assume students understand all of the words, such as “private parts” means the body parts covered by a swim suit.

4. **Answer all questions clearly and simply.**

- Take the time you need to think through an appropriate response to a question. Tell the class, “That’s a good question. Let me think about it for a while and we can talk about it later.”
- Be sure you return to the question and provide an answer.



5. During presentation and discussion, follow these guidelines:

- Balance discussions of “not okay” or hurtful touch with discussions of positive, nurturing touch.
- Keep students focused on the personal body safety objective.
- Be sure to give information in a way that fits the developmental level of your students.
- Repeat material in different ways so all concepts are understood.

6. Be aware of students’ behaviors.

- You may observe signals of problems or possible abuse. Pay particular attention to students who act out, avoid eye contact after the discussion, sink down in their chairs, or become ill midway through the discussion. Also note those who ask specific questions or give specific answers that indicate more knowledge than typical for their age.
- You may want to talk with these students privately or consult with the principal about them. While these behaviors don’t necessarily signal abuse, they should be taken seriously and followed up.

7. Be aware of your feelings.

- Your feelings will affect the way you present the material. Feelings of anger, guilt, denial, and confusion are normal reactions to this topic, especially when a child discloses abuse to you.
- Reactions of those closest to the child set the tone for how quickly the child recovers. Children can experience trauma from both the sexual abuse and the subsequent investigation.
- You may need to talk to someone about your feelings regarding what a child has shared, but be aware of the child’s right to confidentiality.

Portions of this teacher reference were adapted from
Personal Safety Curriculum for Prevention of Child Abuse,
Marlyn Olson, Ed.D., Tacoma School District, Tacoma, Washington

Resources

Crimes against Children Research Center: www.unh.edu/ccrc/.

Finkelhor, D. *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory and Research*. New York: Free Press, 1984.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: www.missingkids.com

Child Welfare Information Gateway: www.childwelfare.gov/

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families:
www.acf.hhs.gov.



What to Do If a Student Discloses Abuse

Handling Disclosures During or After a Lesson

Teachers are frequently concerned that a student may disclose abuse during a classroom presentation. Most abused children will talk to you about it privately, not in front of others. Rather than fear disclosures, view them as a positive step in the direction of getting help for abused children. You are not responsible for investigation, intervention or therapy, but you are required by law to report any disclosures about abuse.

If a disclosure occurs during a lesson or privately, the following tips will help you handle the situation.

1. Remain calm.

- Remember that your reaction will have an impact on how the student feels about what he or she has disclosed.

2. Acknowledge the comment and resume the lesson.

- If the disclosure occurs during a lesson, resume the lesson after acknowledging the comment.
- Be sure to tell the student, "It's good that you told me. I'd like to talk with you more about that privately." Set a time that is realistic, and be sure to follow up.
- Keep the lesson moving along, still allowing for questions and answers but redirecting story-telling.

3. Talk with the student.

- Find a place to talk privately.

This helps remove distractions and gives the child a feeling of safety and confidentiality.

- Show respect and understanding.

Invite the student to speak. You can begin the conversation like this:

- "Now we can talk privately. Tell me more about. . ."
- "I'm not sure what you meant by [use child's words or phrase]. I want to listen if you would like to talk about it."

While the student talks, maintain eye contact and an open, understanding facial expression. Do not show shock, disapproval, or disbelief.

- Ask open-ended questions.

Ask open-ended questions as needed to help the child share his or her ideas, feelings and concerns. For example, ask, "What did you want to tell me about today's lesson?" rather than "Did someone in your family do something bad to you?"

Get just enough information from the child to determine whether you need to make a report.

Remember what the child says so you can include that information if a report is necessary.



- Reassure the student.

The student needs your support while telling you about the abuse and afterward.

- Tell the student you believe him or her. Experience in treatment and reporting indicates that children seldom make up such stories.
- Emphasize that this problem is not the student's fault and that he or she is not to blame for what happened or will happen as a result of the abuse.
- Reassure the student that you will assist him or her with this problem and get help.

4. Report as required.

Once you feel you have enough information to file a report, tell the student, "We need to get more help." If the student expresses concern that someone he or she cares about might get into trouble because of the report, explain that the person needs help to stop hurting children. Explain that it is important to keep children safe, and reporting problems like the one the student described is one way to do that. Immediately follow the school's procedure for reporting abuse. It is your responsibility to make sure the report is made.

Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect in Michigan

School teachers, counselors, and administrators are among the professionals required to report actual or suspected child abuse and neglect, as specified in Michigan's Child Protection Law. **If a child tells you of abuse or neglect, or if you have good reason to suspect such a problem, you must report the disclosure or suspicion immediately** to Children's Protective Services (CPS) by phone and then follow up with a written report within 72 hours.

Remember that your role as a mandated reporter is just to report your concerns, not to investigate them. The reporting form requires you to describe why you suspect abuse or neglect, for example, because of suspicious physical or behavioral indicators or because the child told you about abuse. You have no responsibility for proving what may have happened or who may have harmed the child. If you have suspicions but aren't sure whether they're solid enough to warrant reporting, you can call a CPS office for consultation or talk with a school administrator or counselor.

If you have any questions about your school's procedure for reporting abuse, ask the appropriate people for clarification. They can also help you complete the oral and written reports.

You may find it helpful to read the "Mandated Reporter's Resource Guide," which the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) published in May 2005 to help professionals understand their reporting responsibilities. Your school might have copies of the guide, or you can download its PDF file from the DHS website at www.michigan.gov/dhs. Enter the guide title in the Search box to find the correct link for the file download.

You may also participate in an online Mandated Reporter Training course at www.carehouse.org. This course is sponsored by the Child Abuse and Neglect Council of Oakland County.

If you would like to read the Child Protection Law (Public Act 238 of 1975), contact a local office of the Michigan Department of Human Services, or visit www.michigan.gov/dhs to search for the law's text online or request a copy. Below are excerpts of some of the parts pertinent to educational professionals.



Excerpts of Michigan Child Protection Law: Public Act 238 of 1975

Definitions [Section 722.622]

“Child” means a person under 18 years of age.

“Child Abuse” means harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare that occurs through nonaccidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment, by a parent, a legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare or by a teacher, a teacher's aide, or a member of the clergy.

“Child Neglect” means harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a parent, legal guardian, or any person responsible for the child's health or welfare which occurs through either of the following:

- (i) Negligent treatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.
- (ii) Placing a child at an unreasonable risk to the child's health or welfare by failure of the parent, legal guardian, or any other person responsible for the child's health or welfare to intervene to eliminate that risk when that person is able to do so and has, or should have, knowledge of this risk.

“Department” means the family independent agency (recently changed to the department of human services).

“Sexual Abuse” means engaging in sexual contact or sexual penetration as those terms are defined in section 520a of the Michigan penal code, 1931 PA 328, MCL 750.520a, with a child.

“Sexual Exploitation” includes allowing, permitting, or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution, or allowing, permitting, encouraging or engaging in photographing, filming, or depicting of a child engaged in a listed sexual act as defined in section 145c of the Michigan penal code, 1931 PA 328, MCL 750.145c.

Reporting [Section 722.623]

(1) An individual is required to report under this act as follows:

(a) A physician, coroner, medical examiner, nurse, a person licensed to provide emergency medical care, audiologist, psychologist, family therapist, certified social worker, social worker, social work technician, school administrator, school counselor or teacher, law enforcement officer, or regulated child care provider, who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect shall make immediately, by telephone or otherwise, an oral report, or cause an oral report to be made, of the suspected child abuse or neglect to the department. Within 72 hours after making the oral report, the reporting person shall file a written report as required in this act. If the reporting person is a member of the staff of a hospital, agency, or school, the reporting person shall notify the person in charge of the hospital, agency, or school of his or her finding and that the report has been made, and shall make a copy of the written report available to the person in charge. A notification to the person in charge of a hospital, agency, or school does not relieve the member of the staff of the hospital, agency, or school of the obligation of reporting to the department as required by this section. One report from a hospital, agency, or school shall be considered adequate to meet the reporting requirement. A member of the staff of a hospital,



agency, or school shall not be dismissed or otherwise penalized for making a report required by this act or for cooperating in an investigation

- (8) For purpose of this act, the pregnancy of a child less than 12 years of age or the presence of a venereal disease in a child who is over one month of age but less than 12 years of age, shall be reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect have occurred.

In addition to those persons required to report child abuse or neglect under section three (3), any person, including a child, who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect may report the matter to the department of law enforcement agency.

Protection for the Reporting Person [Section 722.625]

Except for records available under section 7(2)(a), (b), and (n), the identity of a reporting person shall be confidential subject to disclosure only with the consent of that person or by judicial process. A person acting in good faith who makes a report, cooperates in an investigation, or assists in any other requirement of this act shall be immune from civil or criminal liability which might otherwise be incurred thereby. A person making a report or assisting in any other requirement of this act shall be presumed to have acted in good faith. This immunity from civil or criminal liability extends only to acts done pursuant to this act and does not extend to negligent act which causes personal injury or death or to the malpractice of a physician which results in a personal injury or death.

[Section 722.623]

A member of the staff of a hospital, agency, or school shall not be dismissed or otherwise penalized for making a report required by this act or for cooperating in an investigation.

Failure to Report [Section 722.633]

- (1) A person, required to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect, who is required to report under this act and who fails to do so, is civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by the failure.
- (2) A person, required to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect, who is required to report under this act and who knowingly fails to do so, is guilty of misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 93 days or a fine of not more than \$500.00, or both.

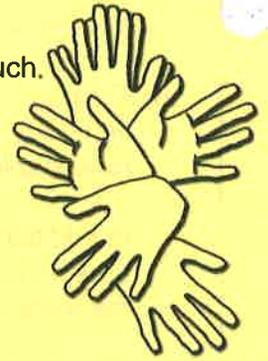
False Reporting [Section 722.633]

- (5) A person who intentionally makes a false report of child abuse or neglect under this act knowing that the report is false is guilty of a crime as follows:
 - (a) If the child abuse or neglect reported would not constitute a crime or would constitute a misdemeanor if the report were true, the person is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 93 days or a fine of not more than \$100.00, or both.
 - (b) If the child abuse or neglect reported would constitute a felony if the report were true, the person is guilty of a felony punishable by the lesser of the following:
 - (i) The penalty for the child abuse or neglect falsely reported.
 - (ii) Imprisonment for not more than 4 years or a fine of not more than \$2,000.00, or both.



Keep Yourself Safe

In words or pictures, write the rule we have learned so that we can stay safer from bad touch.



It's not your fault!

Not all touch is bad. Fill in this chart with some examples of good and bad touches.

Good Touch	Bad Touch

List three people you could tell if someone touched you in a bad way.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Stay safe by following the rules!

Keep Yourself Safe



Keep Yourself Safe

In words or pictures, write the rule we have learned so that we can stay safer from bad touch.

Say "no!" Yell. Get away. Find a trusted adult and tell what happened.

If in public without a parent or guardian, look for a helper adult such as a police officer, store worker, librarian, or parent with children. Don't get into a car with someone I don't know or trust. Yell, kick, or punch the person if I get abducted. Be ready to jump out of the car at a stop sign or traffic light where I see people. Tell people, "Help! This person is hurting me!"



It's not your fault!

Not all touch is bad. Fill in this chart with some examples of good and bad touches.

Good Touch	Bad Touch
Hugs	Hugs that are too tight or from someone I don't like
Holding a pet	Tickling that won't stop when I've had enough
Kisses from mom and dad at bedtime and for hellos and good-byes	Being hit
Pats on the back or head when I do a good job	Kisses from someone I don't like or don't feel comfortable with
Shaking hands	Someone touching my private parts or making me touch theirs
Gentle tickles that stop when I ask	Having my hand squeezed too hard
My friend's arm across my shoulder	Being sat on so hard that I can't breathe

List three people you could tell if someone touched you in a bad way.

1. Mom or Dad
2. Teacher or school counselor
3. Grandmother or Grandfather

[Students will list a variety of individuals.]

Stay safe by following the rules!

Keep Yourself Safe



Sample Family Letter Following the Personal Safety Lesson

[ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD]

[DATE]

Dear Parent:

Today your child learned about personal safety. This lesson is part of our school's health program called the *Michigan Model for Health*[®].

Sadly, sexual abuse of children takes place more often than we would like to believe. School programs help children learn to stay safe from abuse. The lessons in the *Michigan Model* present material on the children's level. The skills needed to prevent abuse are taught in a safe and simple way. Through these lessons, students will learn:

- How to judge between safe and unsafe touch
- How to protect themselves
- Who to go to for help

We hope you will take a minute to read the materials sent home today. Please discuss personal safety with your child.

Sincerely,

[Principal's Name]

Child Sexual Abuse: What Every Family Should Know

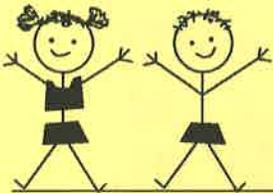


Basic Information Helps Prevent Abuse

Child sexual abuse is any act of a sexual nature done to or with a child. Most of these harmful acts are committed by someone the child knows. This could be a family member, a friend, a neighbor, or a babysitter. Very few children are molested by strangers.

Sexual touches often confuse young children. They may have trouble telling the difference between sexual abuse and healthy touch. Abusers may confuse children more by saying what they're doing is okay but secret. Today, your child learned to tell the difference between good touch and bad touch, as shown in this list.

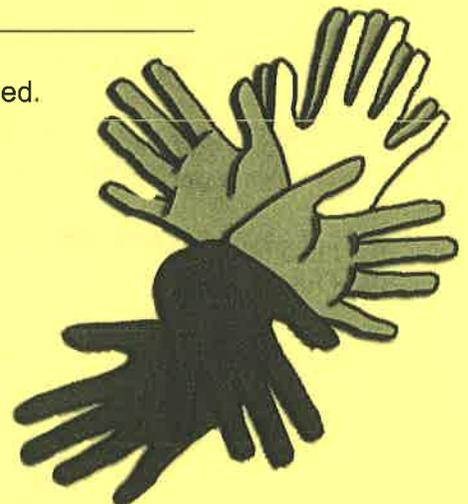
Good Touch	Bad Touch
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hugs that feel warm and safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hugs that are too tight
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentle tickling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tickling that won't stop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kisses from caring adults at bedtime and for hellos and good-byes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kisses from someone a child doesn't like or doesn't feel comfortable with
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playful and soft touches from pets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slaps, kicks, punches, pinches, and other hurts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handshakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard squeezing or grabbing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pats on the head, arm, shoulder, or back when someone does a good job or wants comfort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touches on the private parts of a child or someone else in a child's presence



In class, we defined "private parts" as the parts of the body covered by a bathing suit. Students learned they have the right to decide if someone can touch them. No one should touch a child's private parts, except as needed for health care in the presence of a parent or trusted adult.

Children who are taught to protect themselves are less likely to be abused. In class, students learned these safety rules.

- Avoid being alone with someone you don't trust. If you feel bad or sick around someone, trust your instincts. Get away. Make an excuse if needed.
- If you can't get away from someone touching you in a bad way, loudly say, "No! I don't like that!" Tell him or her you don't want to be touched. Keep saying, "no!" and trying to get away.
- If someone touches you in a way that feels bad, tell a trusted adult right away. Keep telling until you find an adult who can help you. If someone tries to grab you or get you into a car, yell, "No! I don't trust you! Let me go!" Kick or punch as hard as you can. Run toward where other people will be, such as a house, a store, an office building, or the side of a road.



Safety Rules

Child Abuse Causes Many Problems

Sexual abuse causes both physical and emotional problems. Children often feel guilty and responsible for the abuse. They often think the abuse happened because they are “bad” or “dirty,” partly because abusers may say this. *Sexual abuse is never the fault of the child being abused.*

Abused children show a wide range of symptoms. The signs of abuse vary with age. However, most abused children complain of various physical problems and show mistrust of adults. Other signs may include depression, suicidal actions, withdrawal, or self-destructive or delinquent acts. Any sudden, unexplained change in behavior may be a sign of sexual abuse.

Even when children have learned that sexual abuse is not their fault and should not be kept secret, they may hesitate to get help. A child may fear the results of reporting abuse, especially if the abuser is a family member. Children need to know that abusers have a serious problem and need to get help to prevent harming children. Children’s safety is more important.

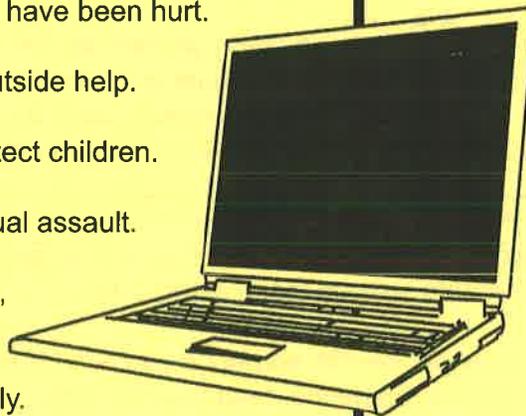


Children Need Adults to Help Resolve These Problems

Sexual abuse affects everyone, even if our own children are not assaulted. All of us can help deal with this social problem.

- Provide understanding and care to those who have been hurt.
- Know that offenders do not change without outside help.
- Organize neighborhood programs to help protect children.
- Ask schools to provide information about sexual assault.
- Form community groups to support education, treatment, and law enforcement programs.

If a child tells you about sexual abuse, take it seriously. Find help for him or her.



For more information visit the
National Center for Missing and
Exploited Children’s website:
www.missingkids.com

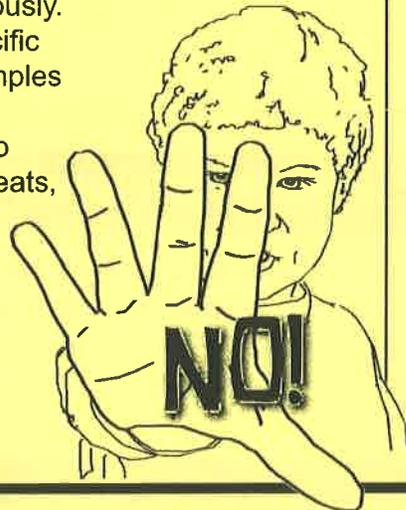
What You Can Do to Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse



To help prevent child sexual abuse, we can prepare children for what they might face if someone tries to abuse them. We can protect them from dangerous situations. And if a child says he or she has been abused, there are ways we can help.

Preparing Children for the Possibility of Abuse

- Children need lots of loving words and physical affection. Help your child feel secure in your love so he or she will be less likely to accept the unhealthy attention of an abuser.
- Remind your child that most people protect children and would never hurt them. However, some people seem nice but may do mean things. Encourage your child not to keep any secrets about someone like this.
- Help your child understand he or she should disobey anyone, even an adult, who tells him or her to do something wrong. Staying safe is more important than concerns about rudeness or authority.
- Teach your child how to say “no” in words and body language. Help him or her learn to get away and tell you if anyone tries to touch him or her in a bad way.
- Make it easy for your child to talk with you. Spend time listening and observing. Take what your child says seriously.
- Give your child specific definitions and examples of sexual abuse.
- Prepare your child to deal with bribes, threats, and physical force. Play “What if?” or “Let’s pretend” games to help your child learn how to react to different situations.



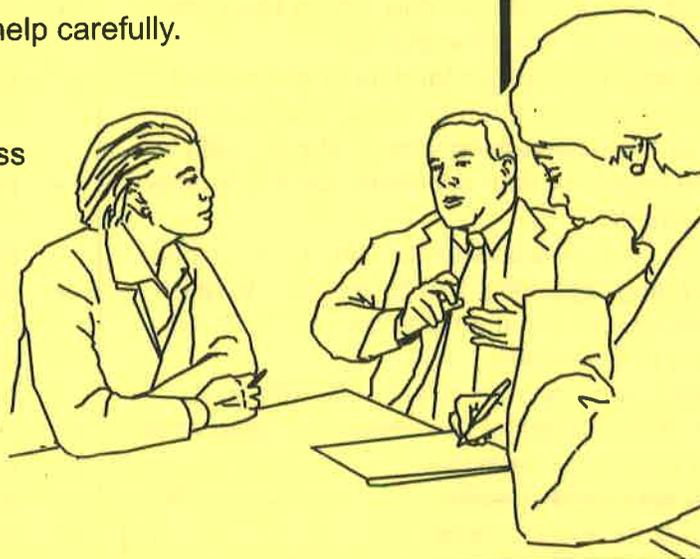
Protecting Children From Dangerous Situations

- Be aware of who spends time with your child. Unwanted touch may come from someone you like and trust. Get to know the adults and older children who are close to your child.
- Check references, talk with other parents, and trust your feelings when choosing babysitters and day care providers.
- Refuse to leave your child in the company of anyone you do not trust. Pay attention to what your child says and does around people, especially if he or she talks about feeling uncomfortable or unsafe.
- Make sure your child can identify signs of trouble and get away before something happens.
- Set up a “password” for you and your child to use as a secret clue. If it is safe for your child to go with someone, tell that person the password. Tell your child to ask for the password before he or she agrees to ride with someone. Instruct your child not to go with any stranger or friend who doesn’t know the password.
- Know where your child is at all times. If you allow him or her to go some places in public without you, ask him or her to stay with a buddy.
- Teach your child to never play in deserted areas.
- Talk with your child about safe Internet behaviors. Children should never give out information about themselves in chat rooms or e-mail. Tell your child to let you know right away if someone he or she “met” online asks to see him or her in person.

Say “no!” Yell. Get Away. Tell an adult.

Helping Children Who Have Been Harmed

- Children seldom lie about sexual abuse. They find it very hard to tell someone. If a child tells you about abuse, you need to listen carefully and believe what he or she says. Talk about it in a safe, private place.
- Reassure the child that the abuse isn't his or her fault and that telling you was the right thing to do.
- Don't blame the child for what happened.
- Don't over-react or minimize the incident. The effects of sexual abuse are different for each child.
- Understand that it may take time to figure out the problem.
- Know local resources, and choose help carefully.
- Let the child talk about the assault whenever he or she needs to express feelings.
- If you learn that your child has been abused, be willing to talk with experts or counselors as a family.
- Report any abuse to the authorities immediately.



Children's Protective Services Can Help!

Call Protective Services if you have questions or concerns about child abuse. You can find the phone number of your Children's Protective Services agency in the government section of your phone book. For example in Michigan, look under Michigan State of, Department of Human Services.



Assessment Rubric for Skill Development: Personal Safety

The following rubric can be used for assessing student skill development. The student has demonstrated the following elements of this skill through role play, written assignments, or classroom activities.

Elements in the Lesson

- Say “no”
- Yell
- Get away
- Find a trusted adult
- Tell what happened

1	2	3	4	Comments
Included few of the elements of the skill.	Included most of the elements of the skill, but not clearly.	Included all of the elements of the skill, clearly.	Included all of the elements of the skill clearly and convincingly.	



Assessment Checklist for Skill Development: Personal Safety

The following table can be used as a checklist for assessing student skill development. The checklist can also be used as an analytic rubric for scoring student work by assigning a numeric value to the skill levels: Not evident, Emerging, and Evident.

If you assign a numeric score value to the student's skill level, you can use it in a variety of ways.

- You can assign the same weight to each element of the skill. For example, in a skill having three elements, the student would receive 5 points for each element performed correctly. The student could receive a total score of 15 points.
- You could weight the elements of the skill differently. For example, the student could earn up to 5 points for the first element, up to 9 points for the second element, and one point for the third element, for a maximum total of 15 points.

The student has demonstrated the following elements of this skill through role play, written assignments, or classroom activities.

	Not evident	Emerging	Evident	Comments
Said, "no."				
Yelled.				
Got away.				
Found a trusted adult.				
Told what happened.				



Personal Safety

Directions:

Think about each action in the left-hand column. Place an "x" in the row after each action under the statement that best describes what you did and how easy or hard it was to do. Write any ideas or thoughts you have in the column titled "Comments."

	I did not do this step.	I did this step, but it was sort of hard.	I did this step, and it was sort of easy.	I did this step, and it was very easy.	Comments
I said "no."					
I yelled.					
I got away.					
I found a trusted adult.					
I told what happened.					

