



## TEACHING PERSONAL SAFETY

It's extremely important to teach children about personal safety, emotions, and personal boundaries.

### LISTEN AND OBSERVE:

**Listen** to what children tell you, especially if they seem uncomfortable

**Be aware** of any changes in behavior or emotions

**Pay attention** to any increases in self stimulating, self-injurious, or repetitive behaviors, or development of new behaviors

### RIGHTS:

Talk to children about their rights, including the right to be safe

Explain that parents, teachers, and other adults make choices for children, but children can also make choices to keep themselves safe

Provide opportunities every day for **children to make choices**

Allow children to be independent

### COMMUNICATION:

If child is nonverbal – decide on **words and symbols** to communicate personal safety

Provide a **whistle or alarm** device to signal emergencies

### INTERNET:

Have conversations about what is safe to share and what is not

Learn about cyber safety. For additional resources visit [bit.ly/2Me363v](http://bit.ly/2Me363v)

Make sure safety features are activated on children's devices

### DISCUSS FEELINGS:

Assess child's ability to **identify and label** feelings. Use photos/pictures or icons when needed.

Practice **labeling feelings** in different situations and telling adults about feelings. Use photos/pictures or icons when needed.

### TOUCHES:

Talk about "okay" and "not okay" touches

**Okay touches:** high five with friends, goodnight kiss or hug from parents

**Not okay touches:** hitting, pulling hair, or touching private parts

### SAFETY PLANNING:

Talk about what to do in uncomfortable, hurtful, or dangerous situations: **LEAVE** the situation, **IGNORE** comments, **YELL** for help, **TELL** the person to stop, say **NO**, **TELL** a trusted adult

**NAME ADULTS** who the child can ask for help in various settings

Have a **CONCRETE PLAN** in place for what to do and how to tell someone if they feel uncomfortable and **ROLE PLAY** and practice talking to trusted adults

### MODELING:

Use **positive** discipline

**Do not shame** or make children feel bad about themselves

### PERSONAL CARE:

Make sure that the **bathroom is private** and that the child is **comfortable with the adult** that is responsible for hygiene by asking them first

Before helping child use the toilet or clean themselves, **tell them what you are doing and ask permission**

### SUPPORT:

If a child has been abused, learn about **counseling options** for the child and family

### SECRETS:

Define what a secret is: Someone tells you something and says not to tell anyone else

Explain that secrets can sometimes hurt people

Tell a trusted adult if someone tells them to keep a secret or says they will hurt them if they tell anyone their secret

[www.paautism.org/BeSafe](http://www.paautism.org/BeSafe)