



# FAMILY TIMES

## SPRING AHEAD



### April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Life is different for many people. How you were raised; and your day-to-day experiences can impact your perspective on life. While perspectives may be different, one thing we have in common, no matter the background, is wanting to keep children safe and healthy. Keeping children safe is the goal that unites us. During the month of April, we highlight what a lot of us do daily, protect children. Our shared goal is to keep children safe, but what is the plan of action to meet this goal? As an adult who cares for a child, you can teach them that they are in control of their bodies. It is vital children learn about consent, how to set boundaries, and express them clearly. This is an ongoing conversation that you as the adult should have with the child, it is a step in the direction of keeping them safe. Teaching your child to set boundaries entails conversations that may be embarrassing, but if it is an ongoing conversation it becomes less and less embarrassing. A skill they can work on is understanding their feelings and intuition, if something feels uncomfortable they should speak up to a parent or trusted adult. If they are not heard the first time, they should continue telling until someone listens. Remind the child, a person may act kind and still make the child feel uncomfortable. If this happens, they should be encouraged to listen to this feeling their body is giving them and tell a trusted adult. Teach them if someone asks to keep a secret about touching, a gift, or a friendship, they should tell a trusted adult. Remind them, body parts under a bathing suit should always be private. No one should touch them in private areas and no one should ask them to touch their private areas. No one should show them their private areas and no one should ask to see their private areas. No one should ever show them movies or pictures of private areas. If this happens, they should tell a trusted adult. A stressful situation can sometimes overwhelm children. Discuss a safety plan and safety team. Safety Teams are trusted adults who they can go to for help with a safety issue. Review a plan with them about who they should tell about their uncomfortable feeling, this should be an ongoing conversation.

### Book of the Month



#### BOOK DISCUSSION

This month's book is, *I Won't Go With Strangers*. This book allows parents to speak to their children and assess their knowledge of who a stranger is. This book allows the opportunity to discuss the difference between knowing someone personally and seeing them often. This may be a great opportunity to remind your child they should never go with **anyone** unless you have told them ahead of time or they have asked you. After reading/ listening to the book you can role play by having your child think of different ways to say NO!

- No.
- No thanks.
- Nope.
- No way.
- Sorry, but no.
- Absolutely not.

*Discuss who strangers are:*

- Someone they don't know or know very well.
- A woman or man can be a stranger
- A person who acts nice is a stranger

It is also a good idea to discuss the people who can help if ever a stranger approaches such as a police officer or a teacher. This conversation can begin at the age of 3 until they are teenagers. The discussion should be an age-appropriate and ongoing conversation with your child.

<https://youtu.be/VV2VXMphQr4>

**Tip:** Discuss with your child, are there people who are allowed to pick them up without asking Mom or Dad?

**Tip:** Discuss people they may see, but do not know and should never go with, without permission. Example: A friend's parent, a neighbor, etc.

**Tip:** Discuss facts; children should never get in the car with anyone. Adults should never ask a child to get in their car, only parents can give permission for that.

**Tip:** Practice with your child ways to say NO!

**Example:** *I don't know you, so I won't go with you!*  
*No thank you, I was told to wait.*

**Tip:** Role play different situations with your child.

**Tip:** Adults should never ask a child to go with them because of a mysterious emergency or leave to look for a pet.

**Tip:** Think over if you would like to pick a family code word for pick up. When the person provides the code word the child will feel safe. *Choosing a code word should be fun and easy to remember. Name of animals, silly words: Skinny Hippo, Super Cow, etc.*



SOCIAL ISSUES

The Digital World

The Pandemic changed the world in so many ways, one thing that happened was technology coming into most homes. Children needed to have the internet and a tablet to participate in school. This forced most parents to allow their younger aged children online in order to get their work done. Today, children are physically back in schools, but the remnants of the pandemic have stood around. With the trend of more children immersed into the digital world, an increase in digital education is needed, to keep children safe.

Children are often taught to not speak to strangers in the real world, but this education is also required online. Think of what is important for you and your family and set rules and boundaries before allowing your child online. Monitoring the digital world may be one of the biggest challenges parents have. Setting parental controls is a good place to start, but ongoing conversations between parents and the child are also beneficial in understanding how they are using the internet and ways to protect them. It is helpful when parents understand how to use parental controls, if you do not, there are many videos on how to manage user options and parental controls.

<https://youtu.be/3FRX46DuxO0>

Children will often play games online and have conversations with the people they are playing with through online gaming. It is easy to believe these people are your children’s age and are playing innocently, however, this person is a stranger. For this reason, parents should speak to their children about appropriate social interactions while playing online. Parents should always monitor what their children are playing and continue to discuss online safety. With open conversation and role-playing possible situations, your child will feel comfortable sharing potential safety concerns with you. There are many different games online that you can look up videos on how to protect your child from unwanted contact. A popular game among children is Roblox, attached is one of many video options. <https://youtu.be/a7N2EpBLysl>

It is always encouraged for parents to discuss what content they may encounter online and what they should do if this happens. There have been many stories in the media that highlight strangers who target children with sexual content, but this can also happen with same-aged peers. Other children may push sexual topics online and pressure your child to discuss sexual topics when they did not want to. It may feel embarrassing to have this discussion with your child, but it is important to know what is happening while they are online. They should be reminded if anyone asks them to participate in inappropriate sexual activity they should contact a trusted adult right away.

Lastly, personal information regarding full names, addresses, or anything that can identify the child or parent should never be shared. Photos and videos should never be shared online. Once a photo is shared, you can never get it back. Some predators will try and use a photo to blackmail a child. If someone sends pictures or videos of their body, this should be reported to your local law enforcement. New York state makes sending naked images or semi-naked images of a child a crime.

The internet can be an amazing place, but should always be monitored with constant conversations about how to stay safe.

Grades K-3

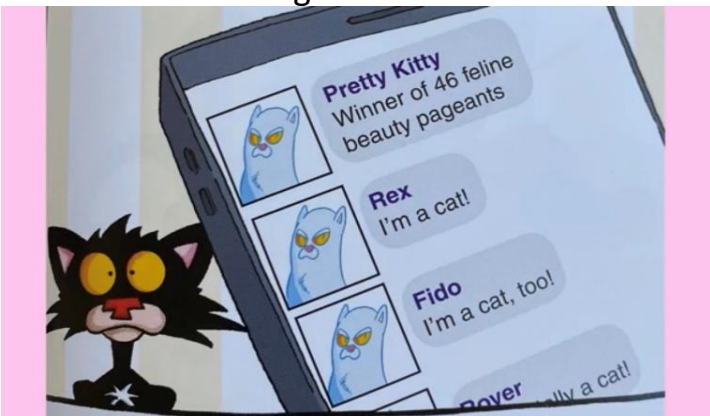
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxJX-porZtA>



CELL PHONE SAFETY

<https://youtu.be/EZX8D3uhDc>

Ages 5-10



When speaking to your children about cell phone safety you can use books and videos to help them understand the responsibility of having a cell phone. The video above, BAD KITTY GETS A PHONE, discusses some rules for the internet and cyberbullying. Some things you may want to think about before giving your child a cell phone:

- Is your child old enough to have a cell phone?
- Should your child have access to the internet?
- What do you think are reasonable limits for being online at their age?
- Will you allow your child to download apps?
- Will you put a limit on screen time?
- What responsibilities should come with the phone?
- Do you want to monitor who your child is communicating with?

SAFETY STRATEGIES



Who is your child’s safety team? Discuss with your child people they can turn to if ever something happens to them or are made to feel uncomfortable.

- ✓ Legal Guardian
- ✓ Parent
- ✓ Family member
- ✓ Teacher
- ✓ Guidance Counselor
- ✓ Doctor

DISCUSSING CONSENT:

<https://youtu.be/raxPKkIDF2k>



<https://youtu.be/h3nhM9UIjc>



SPRING INTO SELF CARE

Spring time is a great time to let go of your Winter worries. Create new goals for yourself and envision yourself doing them. Ideas of new things to do in the Spring.

- Plant seeds of your favorite flowers or herbs.
- Wake up every morning and think of something you are grateful for.
- Love yourself- accept your flaws.
- Focus on things that only add value to your life.
- Take walks outside and enjoy the sun.
- Do relaxing meditation



DAILY AFFIRMATIONS TO YOURSELF:  
*I am in charge of how I feel and I choose to feel happy.*



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