

# LESSON 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFETY RULES



## Today's Lesson: Lesson 1

Today, students had their first **Safer, Smarter Kids** lesson. The students brainstormed rules to help keep them safe. Here are the core rules developed:

1. Use your **Safety Stop Sign** when a situation makes you feel unsafe.
2. Always stay with a **Grown-Up Buddy** when you are out in public.
3. Respect your **Personal Space** and respect others' **Personal Space**.
4. Tell a **Grown-Up Buddy** if a safety rule has been broken.



## Human Trafficking Prevention

Did you know that each year, more than 300,000 school-aged children are lured into a type of exploitation called human trafficking? Human trafficking occurs when someone is recruited, hidden, or transported against their will for services and the financial gain of another person. Though you may think of trafficking as a danger that only threatens children in other countries, it is a real problem in all 50 states, and any child can become a victim – no matter their location, socioeconomic status, race, or religion.

Children are inherently vulnerable, and traffickers are skilled at targeting kids in person and online. That's why schools around the country choose to include developmentally appropriate human trafficking prevention in a comprehensive personal safety education curriculum. Human traffickers use psychological manipulation to gain and maintain control by identifying children's vulnerabilities and working to fill whatever need they may have. This could be a need for belonging, material items, or basic necessities like protection, food, or shelter.

To help your child avoid exploitation and the traps traffickers set, we have extended the safety concepts they are learning in each lesson of the **Kindergarten Safer, Smarter Kids** curriculum to encompass protective principles specific to trafficking prevention – while continuing our commitment to present information in a manner that is age-appropriate for your kindergartener.

People who prey upon children look for children who are vulnerable, quiet, naive, and trusting. While we don't want children to become suspicious or afraid, we do want them to be able to quickly identify situations that feel scary, threatening, or not quite right and react automatically. With a strong use of their **I Mean Business Voice**, they will let people know they are in an unsafe situation. Human trafficking prevention components in Lesson 1 are addressed by students practicing their **I Mean Business Voice** using their **Safety Stop Sign** to help them identify safe and unsafe situations.

## Know The Signs

Parents and community members must pay close attention and stay alert to the signs of human trafficking. A few warning signs that are indicators of human trafficking are listed below.

Does the child:

- Have unexplained absences from school?

- Suddenly change in usual attire, behavior, or relationships?
  - Suddenly have more (and/ or more expensive) material possessions?
  - Chronically run away from home?
  - Act fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense or nervous, and paranoid?
  - Defer to another person?
  - Describe an adult as a friend or boyfriend/girlfriend?
  - Show signs of physical and/ or sexual abuse, physical restraint, or other serious pain or suffering?
  - Have new branding/tattoos?
  - Appear to have been deprived of food, water, sleep, medical care, or other life necessities?
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## Student Disclosure

### How to Respond to Disclosure of Abuse

An adult's reaction to disclosure plays an important role in the beginning of the healing process for the child. Resist the urge to react strongly to the news or display anger toward the abuser. Instead, consider the following:

#### What to Say

- "I believe you."
- "I'm really glad that you told me. It took a lot of courage to tell me."
- "It's not your fault."
- "We will work together to get you help. I will need to tell some other people who help protect children."
- Be cautious with telling a child who has disclosed that "everything will be all right." There are many uncertainties that surround disclosure, emotions, and steps to recovery. Consider, instead, telling a child that they are important, people care about them and their safety, and that people will work to be with and support them moving forward.

#### Action Steps

- If you know or suspect a child has become the victim of sexual abuse, you must should make a report immediately. Find your [local reporting agency](#) or call **1-800-4-A-CHILD** (224453).
  - Access and share [The Guide to Hope and Healing](#) for guidance to recognize, report and respond to a child who discloses.
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## Caregiver Connection

The most important part of abuse prevention is open and honest communication between parent/caregiver and child. As caregivers, we often assume our children know we are there for them no matter what, but by providing them with ample individual attention, we give them support, guidance, and an outlet to tell us anything. This open forum will not only build trust but also will increase their self-confidence and self-worth.

## Activities to Try at Home

You are encouraged to use the following resources with your child at home. Each may be downloaded and printed.

- [Make a Safety Stop Sign & Practice "I Mean Business Voice"](#)
- [Steps to Safety: Is this a Safe or Unsafe Situation?](#)
- [Awareness of Surroundings Worksheet](#)



## Tips to Further Today's Lesson

- Ask your child to demonstrate their **I Mean Business Voice**.
- Ask your child what they should do after using their **Safety Stop Sign**. (**Answer:** Talk to a **Grown-Up Buddy**)
- Encourage your child to share their feelings with you, and when they do, support and validate them.

For more ways to talk to your child about staying safe, visit [Safer, Smarter Families](#). For additional resources, visit [Lauren's Kids](#). To report abuse, call the [ChildHelp National Child Abuse Hotline](#) at 1-800-422-4453, and you will be referred to your local reporting agency.

