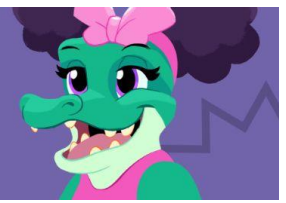


LESSON 4

SAFE & UNSAFE SECRETS



Today's Lesson: Lesson 4

In today's lesson, your child witnessed someone being asked to keep a secret and learned what to do when their **P.L.A.N.** changes. The **Secrets Gauge** was introduced as a new safety tool that helps students determine if a secret is safe or unsafe. A **safe secret** is one that is eventually told and that makes everyone happy – like a surprise party or a best friend's handshake. An **unsafe secret** is one that makes you feel confused, “icky,” or bad, and you are told not to tell. Your child learned that their **Secrets Gauge** is always with them, and it helps them decide if a secret is safe or unsafe. Your child also learned that it is never safe to keep an **unsafe secret**, no matter who asks or tells them to keep it. When faced with being asked to keep a secret, your child learned to use **Think, Feel, Act** to help them process how the secret makes them feel. If it makes them feel confused or icky, that means it's an **unsafe secret**, and they must tell their **Grown-Up Buddy** or someone in their **Trusted Triangle**.



Human Trafficking Prevention

The concept of safe secrets and **unsafe secrets** will be extended to include types of **unsafe secrets**. If someone is forced to keep an **unsafe secret** because they fear what might happen if they tell, it is a **threat**. If someone is keeping an **unsafe secret** because they've been told something good will happen if they do, it's an **unsafe promise**. Sometimes, someone is manipulated by a **trick** to keep an **unsafe secret** from being told. This knowledge will help students become safer and smarter.



Caregiver Connection

To further your child's understanding of these concepts, we recommend you talk with your child about the difference between **safe** and **unsafe secrets**. Keep the lines of communication open, and make sure your child knows that it's okay to come to you with any information and that they should never keep a secret from you. The most important thing a parent or caregiver can do when a child discloses a secret is to believe what they are saying and validate their feelings. Children who feel like they can talk to their parents or caregivers about anything are much less susceptible to victimization by a sexual predator.

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 Secret Gauge and Safe & Unsafe Secrets Scenarios](#)



Tips to Further Today's Lesson

Children are more likely to disclose information when they feel safe and secure with their **Grown-Up Buddy** or someone in their **Trusted Triangle**. When speaking with a child, remember the **S.A.F.E.** acronym:

S – Be **SENSITIVE**. Remember that body language and tone of voice are important to foster a good relationship. Consider coming down to their level or not crossing your arms when speaking with them.

A – Be **APPROACHABLE**. Notice and listen when your child is trying to tell you something. Continue to follow up with them, making yourself accessible to meet your child's needs.

F – Be **FAIR**. No matter what situation your child talks about with you, take their concern seriously and believe them. By not downplaying their feelings, you continue to build a trusting relationship with your child.

E - Be **ENCOURAGING**. Always remember that your child needs continual affirmation and encouragement to build self-confidence.

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.

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