



Protecting Children in the
Catholic Church

The Safeguarding Project is child-focused and informed by a fundamental belief that children have the right to physical and psychological safety at all times and we, the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth, must play our part in protecting all children and vulnerable individuals.

The Safeguarding Project, whilst working towards providing safety and protection for children, is focused on the prevention and detection of abuse and harm to children .

Recognising that there is no fool-proof system for the complete prevention of all forms of abuse, the Project incorporates elements of public health interventions to increase the personal safety of children and young people.

Proudly supported by



Government of Western Australia
Department for Child Protection
and Family Support

During National Child Protection Week the importance for all of us to play our part in protecting children is highlighted. The Safeguarding Project has prepared these 10 Tips to assist parents and carers to play their part in increasing their children's safety.

It is also recommended that parents and carers attend a Protective Behaviours Parent Workshop where the 10 Tips will be expanded and taught in greater depth.

For more information on these workshops speak to your Parish Safeguarding Officer or go to the Perth Catholic Archdiocese Safeguarding website www.perthcatholic.org.au

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**A PARENTS'
HELPER**
ON **KEEPING
KIDS SAFE**



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1

“WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE AT ALL TIMES”

Teach your child that if they don't feel safe they have the right to do something about it.

The other tips will guide your child on what to do.



2

LET CHILDREN ‘TAKE RISKS’...

so that they will understand risks when adults are not around. Let children experience ‘real life’ play not just ‘life-like’ electronic play! A little bit of risk helps with problem-solving and conflict management, it develops independence and leadership skills and helps develop resilient children.

ENCOURAGE

YOUR CHILDREN TO DISCUSS AND EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS.

Children's emotions are real and need to be expressed and accepted by adults. Avoid telling a child they are “silly” to feel scared – instead help them to problem solve the situation so they feel safe again. Help to develop empathy – people in your family may feel differently in the same situation but that's OK!

ROLE MODEL BY DISCUSSING YOUR FEELINGS. EXPAND THEIR FEELINGS VOCABULARY.

3

5

DEVELOP A SHARED LANGUAGE AROUND SAFETY.

Safety = choice + control + time limit.

Help your children to identify how they feel when they get their Early Warning Signs – do they have choice and control?

If yes, then they may be; Safe, Feeling Fun to feel scared or Risking on Purpose. If they don't, they may be feeling Unsafe (go to tip #1!).

HELP YOUR CHILDREN TO IDENTIFY THEIR BODIES EARLY WARNING SIGNS

Teach your children that when they feel scared or unsafe their bodies will alert them. Explain what Early Warning Signs are, such as butterflies in the tummy, heart beating fast or sweaty palms. Then teach your children to listen to their Early Warning Signs and speak to an adult about them.

4

PRACTICE “WHAT IF...” SCENARIOS.

Ask “What could a child do to feel safe if they got lost at the shops?” “What could a child do if someone gave them a present and told them to keep it a secret?” etc... Also encourage your child to persist in asking for help if they are feeling unsafe.

For older children talk to them about choices and make it clear to them that they may make bad choices from time to time and even engage in behaviours that are not appropriate. Explain to them that they can always talk to you about the choices they have made especially if those choices give them their Early Warning Signs or make them feel unsafe.

7

6

HELP YOUR CHILD DEVELOP A NETWORK...

Help your children develop a network of 5 trusted adults that they could speak with if they have their Early Warning Signs or weren't feeling safe. Encourage them to include family members and other adults outside of the family. It is always advisable to have a professional person on your child's network such as their teacher or sports coach.

8

DEVELOP AN EXPECTATION THAT SECRETS CAN ALWAYS BE SHARED WITH AN ADULT THEY TRUST.

Discuss the difference between safe and unsafe secrets with your children. Also explain that if a secret gives them their Early Warning Signs then they can share the secret with someone on their Network. You may wish to explain that a safe secret is a secret that does not have to be a secret forever and that an unsafe secret is a secret that someone makes you keep forever. For older children explain that bad choices that are kept secret can also be shared with their Network.

PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS ENCOURAGES THE CORRECT TERMINOLOGY FOR ALL BODY PARTS.

This will make them more at ease and less embarrassed if they need to tell you about a touch that has made them feel uncomfortable. Teaching children ‘nicknames’ or ‘cute’ names for the private parts of their body can delay a disclosure. Private body parts are the parts of the body that are covered by bathers/underwear (including their mouth). Reinforce that children own the whole of their body and no-one should touch the private parts of their body and they shouldn't touch anyone else's private parts. Teach children to respect the privacy of others, if they learn to respect the privacy of others they may be more likely to recognise that an invasion of their privacy could be a red flag meaning danger.

10

TEACH CHILDREN ABOUT PERSONAL SPACE...

and let children decide themselves how they want to express physical affection. Children should not be forced to hug or kiss anyone. This will empower children.

NO means NO!
Teach children it's ok to say **NO**, even to an adult, if they are in your personal space, touching your body in a way you don't like, or

touching the private parts of your body.

Then **GO** and **TELL** someone on your network.

