

Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum

Concept summary – Early Years: Ages 3–5

Focus Area 1: Right to be safe

Topics: Feelings; Being safe; Warning signs

- Everyday experiences provide learning opportunities for children to develop awareness of feelings, body language and the associated vocabulary. If a child expresses feelings such as fear, sadness or worry, it is useful to help them explore the cause of the feelings and ways of reacting.
- Children explore safe and unsafe through role-play, picture books, social stories, drama and songs. They look at behaviour and rules of safety and are introduced to emergencies and relaxation techniques.
- Children explore the body's responses associated with feeling unsafe – the physiological warning signs. It is acknowledged that not all children experience warning signs, potentially as a result of abuse, neglect, trauma, illness or disability. It is therefore important to discuss other methods or recognising unsafe or risky situations.

Focus Area 2: Relationships

Topics: Rights and responsibilities; Identity and relationships; Trust and networks

- Children explore rights and responsibilities and the meaning on the terms needs and wants, and fair and unfair. They begin to develop a sense of their own power to deal with various situations and assertive communication skills.
- When children develop a sense of their own identity, they discover their physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social needs and rights. They begin to understand the connections they have with their family and friends and explore these relationships.
- Children develop an understanding of trust and trusted networks to consider who will listen to them and help them when they feel unsafe. They are introduced to the concept of persistence – to keep telling until someone listens and takes action to help them feel safe.

Focus Area 3: Recognising and reporting abuse

Topics: Privacy and the body; Touching; Recognising abuse; Secrets

- It is important that children use anatomical names for parts of the body, including sexual body parts, and understand that their whole body is private.
- Children need to understand that they have rights regarding their bodies and that they need to respect the rights of other children not to be touched. They need to be able to recognise the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touching, as well as the concept of necessary but uncomfortable touch. Communication strategies to tell someone 'no' or 'stop' if they feel unsafe are also explored.
- A range of developmentally appropriate situations are presented to children to help them identify forms of abuse and the difference between accidental and deliberate injury. Children explore a range of people who they may not know, but who may be able to help them if needed.
- Children develop an understanding that while many secrets can be fun and exciting, some secrets are unsafe to keep. The difference between OK and not OK secrets, together with the concept of threats, are explicitly taught so that children can identify unsafe secrets, or secrets they are not sure about, and seek help from a trusted adult.

Focus Area 4: Protective strategies

Topic: Strategies for keeping safe

- Young children are extremely vulnerable so it is important to provide them with strategies to help them keep safe. Children are given the opportunity to practise assertive communication and persistence and are introduced to a range of problem-solving strategies. Emergencies and trusted networks are reviewed from Focus Areas 1 and 2.