

Circle of Safe Adults

A Circle of Safe Adults are the special Grown-ups in a child's life to whom the child would go if they had a something important to share both positive exciting things as well as the scary sad things that children experience. In this lesson, we discussed the types of Grown-ups that might be in the children's Circle of Safe Adults, such as mom, dad, stepparent, grandparent, adult sibling, aunt, uncle, teacher, and mom or dad of their close friend. Children were encouraged to talk to a Grown-up in their **Circle of Safe Adults**, when they have any kind of problem; worrying about a sick relative, a bad day at school, a fight with a friend, or a touch that made them feel uncomfortable. Each child was asked to draw a picture of their own three Grown-ups that they feel comfortable talking to about anything. This is their individual **Circle of Safe Adults**. It was emphasized that sometimes the Grown-up they want to talk to may not be available when they need them. The children were taught to go to another Grown-up in their Circle of Safe Adults until someone listens. The children understand that some problems they can solve on their own. But for issues that are too big the Safe and Smart Choice is to use your Safety Voice and talk to a Grown-up in their **Circle of Safe Adults**.

Continue the KidSafe Conversation at Home

- Reinforce with your children that you will be there for them at all times, for the little everyday issues and for the BIG, more problematic issues that may arise.
- Tell your children you will **NOT** be angry at them no matter what they tell you.
- Ask your children to show you their picture of their **Circle of Safe Adults**. Review with them who they chose. We also encourage you to call the people your children have chosen and let them know they have been chosen for this very special role.
- Play the **What if?** game. Ask, "What if you go to a person in your **Circle of Safe Adults** to talk about something important and they don't listen? What would you **say**? What would you **do**?" (Answer: Use your Safety Voice to try again and if the Grown-up doesn't listen go to the next person in your Circle of Safe Adults. Keep on reporting until someone listens.)
- Set the tone early of being an accessible, approachable parent. Ask your children. "What can you say to your Grown-up to let them know you want to share something important with them?" (Mom, Dad, When can I talk to you about something important? Can we sit together?)
- Practice **Active Listening** by giving your children 100% of your attention. Active listening builds a relationship of trust and caring that is essential to healthy social and emotional development. Active Listening Tips:
 - Look at the child, and put aside all distractions including phones and other screens.
 - Listen not merely to the words, but the feeling the child is trying to convey.
 - Be sincerely interested in what your child is talking about.
 - Reflect back to your child.
 - Be aware of your own feelings and existing opinions.
 - Sometimes just being heard is all that is needed in the moment.