



## SAFE GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

- ABC's of Safety at Home
- ABC's of Babysitting
- ABC's of Camp Safety
- ABC's of Asking for Help
- A Safe Shabbos
- 6 Stages of Grooming

# The ABC's of Safety at Home

## A

### Awareness and Observation

- Know and be comfortable with your children's friends, as well as when and how they spend time together.
- Is your child's behavior age-appropriate regarding their:
  - physical contact with others?
  - knowledge about bodies, physical touch and boundaries?

## B

### Boundaries

- Leave doors open when your children play with each other or with friends. Check in on them regularly.
- Monitor your children when they use technology such as phones, iPads, iPods, computers, etc.
- Teach your children about Safe Touch. Touching private areas of the body is never a game and never a secret.

## C

### Communicate

- Set aside time each day to talk to your children. Demonstrate that it is safe and okay to talk with you about sensitive issues.
- Be willing and prepared to talk about your children's body and physical growth. Your pediatrician might have advice about what is age-appropriate to discuss.
- Your children need to feel comfortable telling you if someone makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable in any way.

## D

### Do Tell

Teach your children:

- They are in charge of their bodies and should always say NO to anyone who wants to touch, look at, or talk about the private areas of their bodies.
- They can say NO to ANYONE when it comes to their bodies and personal boundaries.
- The NO-RUN-TELL rule. Children should yell NO if someone wants to touch them inappropriately, RUN to a parent or adult in charge, and then TELL.
- Inappropriate touch is never allowed to be a secret from a parent.



# The ABC's of Babysitting

## A

### Ask for references and recommendations

Ask the person who recommended the babysitter:

- "How much experience has this babysitter had?"
- "How did your children and the babysitter relate to each other?"
- "Do you have any concerns?"

## B

### Be aware and observant

- When using a babysitter for the first time, consider having her come a few minutes early so that you can get to know her a bit better and facilitate a smooth transition.
- Pay attention to how your children and the babysitter interact together.
- Are you confident that the babysitter can handle difficult situations such as crying, frustration, sibling rivalry and anything unexpected?

## C

### Contact Information

- Have you shown your babysitter where your list of emergency numbers is? Include parents' phone numbers and any other important contacts.
- Does the babysitter know the names and ages of your children, your address, medications and medical conditions, as well as special instructions?

## D

### Discussion Topics

Have you discussed the following topics with your babysitter?

- What time you plan to return?
- Whether you are expecting additional visitors?
- Your policy on answering the phone and door?
- Other special instructions?
- Have you communicated your expectations to your babysitter and children about homework, bed times, use of electronics (television, iPod, iPad, computer, phone)?
- Have you been clear about your expectations of the babysitter's use of technology in your home?

## E

### Evaluate

- Check with your babysitter afterwards: How was her experience? Did everything go according to plan?
- Check with your children: How was their experience?
- If you discover worrisome behavior (alcohol use, friends coming over without permission from you, excessive use of technology etc...) talk to the babysitter and then notify her parents.



# The ABC's of Camp Safety

## A

### Acquire Information about the Camp

- Have family members, friends, or schoolmates attended the camp? Ask them for information about it.
- How long has the camp been in business? Has the camp had any previous problems, complaints or lawsuits filed against them? Is the camp accredited or licensed?
- How are the staff/counselors hired? What is the screening process? What is their age requirement? Do they inquire about past work experiences and check references? Is the staff trained in CPR and first aid? Does the camp provide a counselor training program that educates counselors about child abuse and inappropriate touch?
- What are the camp guidelines regarding overall safety? Are there clear behavioral guidelines that need to be signed by each counselor and staff member? Are these guidelines available to parents? Are the counselors aware that they need to follow and implement the safety guidelines?
- Physical safety- What precautions are taken during activities in camp, during off-campus trips, and in case of an emergency?
- Emotional safety- How are campers disciplined if there is bullying? What is the protocol if a child is homesick, depressed or anxious? Is there a camp mom or therapist on staff to communicate with during camp operating months?
- Medical safety- Have you been honest with the camp regarding your child's physical and mental health? Have you been clear with the camp regarding allergies, as well as dosage and frequency of any medications that need to be dispensed?

## B

### Bring a Buddy

- Your child needs to know they should remain in public places where they can be seen by other campers.
- Remind them not to go off alone or leave camp grounds alone with older staff members or peers.

## C

### Communicate ahead of time

- Have a pre-camp conversation with your child. Explain to your child what to expect, how to handle feelings of homesickness, and how to introduce themselves to new friends.
- Role-play different scenarios with your child to familiarize them with topics such as: how to find a Trusted Adult, selecting Safe Helpers, and what to do when social conflict arises.
- Talk to your child about personal safety. Remind your child that touching, looking at, or talking about private areas of the body is never a game and should never be kept secret.

## D

### Do stand up for yourself

- Before your child heads to camp, help them identify a Trusted Adult. They should be ready to go to that person if they ever feel uncomfortable, frightened, fearful of being inappropriately touched or have been told an uncomfortable secret.
- Make sure your child knows they always have the right to say no to a friend, relative, counselor, teacher or any adult who makes them uncomfortable or wants to touch them inappropriately.
- How can your child let you know there's a problem? Consider having a family code word that lets you know when they need help (i.e. "I have a headache," or "This is a 911 call."). Explain that when you hear that code, you will not ask questions. You will know they are uncomfortable, and you will come and get them.

## E

### Encourage Discussion

- When your child comes home from camp, encourage discussion about their experience.
- Look for signs of possible trouble: anxiety, difficulty sleeping, bedwetting, or dramatic differences in behavior.



# The ABC's of Asking for Help

## Teach your children how to handle getting lost

- 1** If your child gets lost, your child should:
- STOP!** Remain in the same place they lost sight of you.
  - LOOK** all around to see whether they can find you.
  - YELL** your name loudly if they do not see you.
  - LISTEN** quietly so they can hear if you are responding.
- 2** If, after step 1, your child has not found you, teach your child to use the ABCs of asking for help.

## A Ask for Help

- Safe Helpers are mothers with children, cashiers, store employees, and people in uniforms such as security guards or policemen.
- When asking for help, your children should instruct the Safe Helper to call their parent's cell phone or page them overhead. Make sure your children know your cell number!
- Teach your children to always remain in a public area, even with a Safe Helper. They should never go into a car, private office, parking lot or leave the location where you last saw them.

*\*Safety Kid Special Tip: When initially entering a public or crowded place, help your children identify Safe Helpers.*

## B Bring a Friend

- Children should always go places with a friend, sibling, classmate or adult.
- Buddies can help your children make safe choices when caught off-guard, unsure or uncomfortable.

## C Check First

- Children are always safest when their parents know where they are, who they are with and when they will be coming home.
- Teach your children to notify you if there is any change of plans on their end. Let your children know that you will always notify them if there are any changes in your plans.

## D Dos and Don'ts

- Do make sure your children know their home address, parents' numbers and contact information of anyone else in charge.
- Do teach your children to trust themselves! If someone makes them uncomfortable or tells them to break the ABCs of safety, they should run away immediately and tell a trusted adult.
- Do make sure your children know that adults should not ask children for directions, help, or other information.

# A Gut Shabbos is a Safe Shabbos!

## Create a Safety Plan Before Your Children Go to Shul & Ensure a Safe Shul Experience

Before you go to shul, make sure you have a plan! Discuss it with your children & check that they understand it. Here is a checklist of items to include in your discussion:

- Who is your child walking to shul with?**  
Always make sure that your child has a walking partner. This can be a parent, an older sibling, or a friend, but this person must be selected with a parent's approval before leaving the house.
- Who is responsible for supervising your child while in shul?**  
It is the responsibility of the parent or Trusted Adult to know the whereabouts of his/her child at all times.
- Where in the shul building is your child permitted to be?**  
Instruct your child to check first before going outside to play or going to a different part of the shul. By simply checking in with one another, a parent should never need to go looking for a child.
- Does your child know how to identify a Safe Helper in the event that they cannot find their own parent?**  
It is the parent's responsibility to tell the child in advance who to go to if ever the child and parent are separated. Just because someone attends your shul, does not make that person a Safe Helper. This must be someone the parent selects and the child feels comfortable with.  
NOTE: Always encourage your children to let you know if anyone does anything to make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
- Are you expecting an older child to supervise a younger one?**  
Make sure that the expectation is fair and age-appropriate and that the plan is clear and agreed upon by all before the children leave the house. If the older child is not willing to follow your rules or cannot handle their sibling calmly, then they may not be ready for this responsibility.
- At what age should a child be permitted to go into the bathroom alone?**  
Did you know that incidents where children abuse other children in private places like bathrooms are on the rise, even in our own communities? Younger children should always bring a Trusted Adult with them to the bathroom, and should be instructed to tell their parents if anything inappropriate or uncomfortable ever occurs. Remind your children that their bodies belong to them and that if anyone ever asks them to show or touch their private parts, they need to refuse and to tell their parents without delay!
- Does your shul have a candyman?**  
Children need to be told not take treats or gifts from anyone they do not know. Children may accept treats from the shul candyman or another parent, but only with the knowledge and permission of their parents. Talk to your children and let them know that an adult should never give your child something that is meant to be kept a secret from you!



## CAUTION: The SIX STAGES OF GROOMING

"Grooming is a gradual, calculated process by which the offender draws a victim into a relationship and maintains that relationship in secrecy. The grooming offender works to separate the victim from peers, [whilst] giving a kind of love to the child that the child needs." - Dr. Michael Welner

1

### Stage 1: Targeting the victim

The offender seeks out children that show emotional neediness, isolation and lower self-confidence. Children with less parental oversight, family conflict, or dysfunction are more likely to be targeted.

2

### Stage 2: Gaining the victim's trust

The grooming offender first observes the child he is interested in, getting to know him and his needs. He then moves to make contact with his victim. Offenders often blend in effortlessly into the community and are well liked by both adults and children.

3

### Stage 3: Filling a need

By filling the child's needs through special gifts or extra attention the offender assumes increased importance in the child's life. He may become idealized. The family may appreciate his role in their child's life.

4

### Stage 4: Isolation of the child

The offender and child start spending more time with each other, often alone. This special relationship, which has many secret elements to it, isolates the child making that special connection even more unique. Steadily, children feel that this special adult loves and appreciates them more than even parents. Babysitting, tutoring, coaching and special trips deepen this relationship.

5

### Stage 5: Sexualizing the relationship

At a stage of sufficient emotional dependence and trust, the offender progressively sexualizes the relationship. Desensitization occurs through talking, pictures, even creating situations (like going swimming) in which both offender and victim may be undressed. At that point, the adult exploits the child's natural curiosity, using feelings of stimulation to advance the relationship.

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### Stage 6: Maintaining control

Once the abuse is occurring, offenders commonly use secrecy and blame to maintain the child's continued participation and silence – particularly because the activity may cause the child to withdraw from the relationship.

Children in these entangled relationships confront threats to blame them, to end the relationship and to end the emotional and material needs they associate with the relationship, whether it be the dirt bikes the child gets to ride, the coaching one receives, special outings or other gifts. The child may feel that the loss of the relationship and the consequences of exposing it will humiliate and render them even more unwanted.

(Adapted from Michael Welner)

## Grooming: Tools for Parental Prevention

- Be aware and pay attention to the people in your child's life and their relationships with your children.
- Ask questions about your child's whereabouts and remain involved in all adult-child relationships in your child's life.
- Create a safe environment for your child to share with you **any time** they are uncomfortable with anyone so that they know you will believe them and trust them.

Teach your children:

- Never to accept gifts from adults or older children without checking with you first.
- Safe touch applies to **ALL** adults in their life.
- Adults should "play" with adults and children should "play" with children.
- Children should never be told to keep secrets from their parents. If anyone ever tells them to keep a secret from a parent...they should immediately tell their parents...even if they were threatened against it.

