

# Safety in the Community

Your toddler needs fresh air and outdoor space where they can run and play, get dirty and make noise. Being with them means you can share their fun and help keep them safe.



### KEY TAKEAWAY

You can help your toddler learn to be cautious, but they're too young to protect themselves. You must take responsibility for their safety:

- ✓ Always know where they are.
- ✓ Only leave them with people you trust.
- ✓ Be aware of the dangers in your community.

## Developing Your Toddler's Skills

### Use the "check with me first" approach

When young children are harmed, it's usually by people they know. So it's not enough just to tell your toddler not to talk to strangers.

Help your child learn trust while staying safe by teaching them to check with you or another caregiver before:

- going anywhere with anyone
- taking a gift or treat

## Streetproof your toddler

### What is streetproofing?

Helping your toddler learn and practise the skills they'll need if they're in traffic, around strangers or lost.

You can help streetproof your toddler by teaching them:

- their first and last names
- your first and last names
- the name of your street
- your phone number
- the proper names for genitals (see [Sexual Development](#))
- how to use their "big voice" when they need help

### What is your child's "big voice"?

The loud, powerful voice your child can use to express important boundaries (like "Don't touch me!") and get help when they need it ("I've lost my mom!").



### TRY THIS

Sing your phone number as a little song to make it easier for your child to remember.

## Keep instructions simple

Be as clear as possible by:

- stating your rules and the reasons in simple words
- using the same words and ideas over and over
- being specific – "look up the driveway when you ride," for example, instead of "be careful on the tricycle"
- reminding them of the instructions often

## Show your toddler what to do

Don't just use words. Clearly show your toddler what they need to know. Try:

- showing them around the neighbourhood, showing them neighbours' houses and landmarks
- pointing out who to ask for help if they need it (like another parent with a child, police officers, or firefighters)
- acting out situations and letting them practise using their "big voice"
- physically pointing out the limits. In the yard, for example, say, "You can play anywhere in front of this big tree, but you can't go past it."

## Set a good example

Your toddler learns by copying you. Teach them by:

- acting how you want them to act – always using a crosswalk, for example
- talking to them as you do things together – "we're carefully looking both ways before we cross," for example

## Child Sexual Abuse

### What is child sexual abuse?

Abuse that may include intercourse, fondling, touching, exposing genitals, inappropriate watching of a naked child or showing pornography to a child. Child sexual abuse is a crime. Normal experimenting between children of the same age is not sexual abuse (see [Sexual Development](#)).

You can help keep your toddler safe by:

- ✓ always knowing where they are
- ✓ carefully screening all caregivers
- ✓ being aware of any other people who may be around your child when they're in someone else's care
- ✓ teaching your child the correct names for body parts, and that some body parts are private
- ✓ telling them to talk to you if someone has touched their private parts
- ✓ encouraging your child to trust their feelings and to tell you if they're not comfortable with someone
- ✓ teaching your child healthy boundaries
- ✓ letting your child know that some secrets aren't good, and that they won't be in trouble for telling them to you



### DID YOU KNOW?

Most sexual abuse of children is by someone they know.



### TRY THIS

Help your toddler develop personal boundaries by letting them refuse kisses, hugs, tickling and other physical contact. This will give them the confidence to say no to inappropriate touching.



### EMERGENCY

If you believe your child has been sexually abused, contact the police and call Child Protection Services at 1-800-663-9122.

