Discussion for use with Parents of Toddlers and Older Children

(22-27 minutes)

1. Discussion: Talking to your child about being safe (15-20 minutes).

Say: “It’s never too early to start talking with your child about safety. Teach your child how to be safe by talking about how to be safe and by showing your child how to be safe. Remember that you’re a model for your child. Model good safety behaviors for your children, and they are more likely to be safe as well.”

Ask: “What are some safety issues that you might talk with your child about?”

Sample responses:
- Car safety
- Bicycle safety
- Water safety
- Looking both ways before crossing a street
- Safety around strangers
- Fire safety

Share some information about the safety issues discussed below. Refer participants to the “Keeping Your Child Safe” handout in participant packets.

Note: As you go through each topic, ask participants for other tips they would like to share with the group.

Car safety:

- Always wear your seatbelt and make sure your child is safely buckled in before the vehicle begins moving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your child is:</th>
<th>Your child should be in a:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newborn – 1 year old and at least 20 lbs</td>
<td>Rear-facing seat</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 year old and at least 20 lbs  – 4 years old, and at least 40 lbs</td>
<td>Forward-facing child safety seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years old, and at least 40 lbs  – 8 years old and at least 4’9” tall</td>
<td>Booster seat in the backseat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 years and at least 4’9” – 13 years old</td>
<td>Back seat with a securely fastened seat belt</td>
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</table>
• Never leave a child alone in a car, even for a minute.
• Never let a child sit on someone’s lap while the vehicle is moving. Every adult and child should be fastened securely in a seatbelt.
• Safety seat laws:

Wheels safety: (Tricycles, Bicycles, Scooters, Skates, Skateboards, etc.)
• Children should always wear a helmet with a good fit. The helmet should fit securely, cover the forehead, and the chin strap should be securely fastened.
• Teach your child to obey all traffic signs and lights.
• Have your child wear bright or reflective clothing so that others can see him or her when it is dark out. Dusk and dawn are very dangerous times for children to be riding, but if they must, encourage your child to be extra careful.
• Teach your child to ride only in safe, level, well-lit areas. Teach your child to stay out of streets and off of busy sidewalks.

Water safety:
• Never leave a child unattended in or around water. This includes a bathtub, bucket of water, swimming pool, lake, or other body of water.
• If your child is missing and you are near water, look there first.
• Read and obey all posted signs and swim only in designated swimming areas.
• Pay attention to the weather conditions. At the first sign of bad weather, immediately get out of the water.
• Be a good role model around your children and know that they are watching and learning from you. Be safe and responsible around water to show your child how you want him or her to behave.
• The American Red Cross offers swimming classes for all ages. Call 1-800-RED-CROSS to find your local Red Cross chapter.

Walking safely: Teach your child how to safely cross streets and parking lots.
• Teach your child to obey all traffic signs and signals.
• Hold your child’s hand while crossing the street, walking across parking lots, or on sidewalks.
• Always use a sidewalk or path away from traffic.
• Teach your child to walk facing traffic so that you can see cars coming in your direction.
• Make sure your child knows that just because you can see a driver, doesn’t mean that the driver can see you.
• Have your child wear bright or reflective clothing when it is dark or hard to see.
• Teach your child to be extra careful in parking lots and to never walk or run between parked cars.
• Model and teach safe walking practices including crossing streets and walking on sidewalks.
• Use caution when crossing the street. Children should only cross the street at designated crossings. Here are some steps to follow from the National Center for Safe Routes to School.
  1. Stop at the curb or edge of the street.
  2. Look all directions for traffic.
  3. Cross only when no traffic is coming.
  4. Keep watching out for traffic as you are crossing the street.
  5. Walk, don’t run across the street.

**Stranger safety:** Teach children how to be safe around strangers.

• Teach your child what a stranger is. A stranger is someone your child does not know, even if your child has seen or talked to the person before, or if the person knows your child’s name.
• Teach your child to never go with someone they do not know and to never give personal information (such as your name, phone number, or address) to a stranger.
• Teach your child some common tricks that strangers may use and what they should do if they are in that situation.
  o **Assistance:** When a stranger asks for help carrying something or finding a lost animal. Explain to your child that an adult stranger should never ask for help from a child.
  o **Emergency:** When a stranger tells a child that his or her parent is sick or has been in an accident and that the child is supposed to go with the stranger.
• **Bribe:** When a stranger gives a child something such as candy or a game to get the child to go with the stranger. Teach your child to never take anything from a stranger.
• When you are in public with your child, keep a close eye on your child. Teach your child what to do if he or she does happen to get lost in a store or other public place. Tell your child to find a cashier or someone else who works at the store and ask for help. If no one is around, tell your child to yell if they need help.

• Read books to your child about how to deal with strangers. Contact your local library for suggested books.

**Fire safety:**

• Teach children that fire is not a toy and that it is very dangerous.

• Keep matches and lighters out of your child’s reach.

• Be a good role model for your child.

• Make sure smoke alarms are installed on each level of your home and test them each month to make sure the batteries are still working.

• Never leave children unattended with lit candles in a room.

• Store candles and lighters out of your child’s sight and reach.

• Have an escape plan. Every family member in your home should know the escape plan in case there is a fire.

2. **Activity: Family escape plan** (5 minutes).

   o Have participants think about an escape plan for their own home using the “Safety: My Family Escape Plan” worksheet.

   o Have them draw a simple drawing of the floor plan of their home, including all windows and doors and plan how family members could get out of the home as quickly and safely as possible, in case of a fire.

   o Encourage participants to talk with their children about the plan and to practice the plan at home.

   ❭ Say: “Keeping your child safe requires talking to your child about how to be safe as well as modeling safety behaviors, such as wearing your own seatbelt and looking both ways before crossing a street.”

Refer back to the Safety and Health lesson plan and the activity, “To childproof or not to childproof.”