

Educator Guide

Australia's Biggest Child Safety Lesson

Early Childhood and Junior Primary 2020

The Early Childhood and Junior Primary version of *Australia's Biggest Child Safety Lesson* is suitable for children aged 4 to 7 years old. It will teach children key personal safety concepts in a fun and interactive way. It can be viewed in large or small groups at early childhood centres or in schools. It is also suitable for watching at home.

Key learning objectives

To **RECOGNISE** when we might be in an unsafe situation.

To **REACT** to keep ourselves safe.

To **REPORT** unsafe situations.

Contents of lesson

Introduction	The theme of safety is established, along with some guidelines for creating a safe learning environment.
Feeling safe	A series of body clues are identified as possible physical responses the body has when a person feels unsafe.
Surprises and secrets	<p>It is clearly stated that, whilst a child may need some assistance to look after themselves, it would be an unsafe secret if anyone asked to see their underwear or touch their private parts. It is also established that no one can ask a child to touch their private parts or show them pictures of private parts.</p> <p>Children are reassured that it would never be their fault if someone asked them to keep an unsafe secret. Similarly, it is never too late to report to a safety helper.</p>
Safety helpers and resilience in help-seeking	A range of safe adults are identified as possibilities for a child's safety helper hand. Children are reminded to keep talking to a safety helper until someone listens to them and believes them.
Conclusion	The lesson finishes by encouraging children to make their own safety helper hand.

Creating a safe learning environment

When talking about personal safety it is important to ensure you have adequately prepared yourself, parents, carers, and children.



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This includes:

- Informing parents and carers that your school or centre is participating in the lesson. Share the '[Parent and Carer Guide](#)' with them.
- Preparing children to participate by letting them know about the lesson in advance.
- Respecting the diversity of all family units and children.
- Understanding your Student or Child Protection Policy.
- Be ready to respond, if necessary, to disclosures from children. The *Daniel Morcombe Foundation* guide to 'Responding to Disclosures of Abuse' is available at www.DanielMorcombe.com.au/fact-sheets/.

One step removed

Endeavour to utilise the 'one step removed' strategy. This strategy removes the use of first person when posing questions or presenting hypothetical scenarios. Instead, where possible, utilise third person.

For example, instead of saying: 'You have an unsafe secret,' say, 'Someone you know tells you they have an unsafe secret'. This strategy allows for the exploration of sensitive topics whilst reducing the possibility that students might be personally confronted.

Avoid 'should' statements

Where possible, avoid using 'should' statements when talking about child safety.

Children have the right to be safe and it is important to impart the key message that they are allowed to react when they are unsafe; however, it is not uncommon for a child to be in an unsafe situation where it is difficult to do anything at the time. When children are unsafe, or at risk of harm, they may experience a 'freeze' response. Similarly, they may have been trapped, overpowered, or threatened, so reacting does not present as a safe or possible option.

Many victims of abuse carry guilt or shame for not reacting at the time. This effect can be reduced if children receive the message that they are allowed to react, but it's okay if they didn't or couldn't. Replacing 'should' with 'could' assists with this messaging.

It is important to acknowledge that it is adults' responsibility for keeping children safe. Children are never responsible for abuse. Tricky situations are not their fault.

Protective interrupting

It is possible that involvement in a safety lesson may prompt a student to be ready to make a disclosure of abuse. Whilst a group of children may have been advised to save personal stories for later, it is possible a student may begin to disclose, or a teacher might sense that a student is about to make a disclosure. In such a situation, protective interrupting validates the importance of the disclosure, whilst protecting the individual from revealing personal abuse which may increase their own vulnerability. This strategy also protects other children from vicarious trauma which can be experienced due to hearing a disclosure.

If such a situation occurs, a teacher should endeavour to postpone the divulging of further details until they have a safe and private context – using phrases such as, 'I really want to hear what you have to say, but...' The teacher could gently suggest the child talks privately with them after the lesson. Where possible, if staff are available to continue the lesson and supervise the remaining group, the teacher should request that the child goes out of the classroom with them to continue the conversation.



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This strategy for managing disclosures is not meant to dissuade the child from disclosing harm. It is very important that teachers are prepared to respond sensitively to any disclosures of abuse. If any protective interrupting has been necessary, it is essential the teacher subsequently creates a safe situation for a follow-up conversation with the child. They should be ready to facilitate the disclosure as soon as possible after the protective interrupting.

Each Australian state and territory has its own specific requirements relating to the reporting of abuse, so it is important to understand what this means for individuals.

For further information on mandatory reporting visit: www.aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect

Consultation with parents and carers of student(s) with a history of abuse

It is important teachers are aware that this lesson incorporates content which may be confronting or upsetting for some students. It is recommended that in circumstances where a history of abuse is known, teachers engage with significant people in the child's life (such as a parent or carer) prior to the commencement of the lesson. Parents, carers and teachers should collaborate to devise strategies to respond to the individual student's needs.

Prior to the lesson discuss the following safety guidelines with children:

1. No put downs – be nice to each other.
2. Respect others and value their individual contributions.
3. Try to join in with the songs or activities, but it is okay if you just want to watch.
4. If you have a private story to tell, talk to a safe adult after the lesson.
5. It is okay to ask questions.

Educators will need:

- Access to lesson via www.DanielMorcombe.com.au
- Internet connection and audio enabled
- Interactive whiteboard or screen to display lesson

Children may need:

- Printed copies of relevant activity sheets from the 'Keeping Kids Safe' resources suite
- Pen or pencil
- Desk or hard surface (floor)

Personal safety education should not be taught as a one-off lesson but integrated into learning activities throughout the year. If your school or centre is already doing this – congratulations! If not, this lesson could be a starting point.

Pre-lesson

While our Early Childhood and Junior Primary iteration of *Australia's Biggest Child Safety Lesson* will work effectively as a stand-alone lesson, you may also wish to view the 2018 ABCSL with your students.

This lesson is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1i7HoGwSejs>



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The 2020 lesson builds on some key concepts covered in the 2018 lesson, including the distinction between private and public body parts, as well as the correct anatomical names for private body parts, although these are not used in the lesson. Similarly, the 2018 lesson explores feelings in greater depth and establishes a foundation for the understanding of feeling safe.

Activities

Feelings

Show your students a feelings chart. Talk about the fact that our feelings can change all the time. Point out some of the more easily deciphered emotions such as happy, sad, angry, or silly.

Try role playing a few of these feelings. See if the children can work out what you are feeling, based on your body language and gestures. Point out the different things they may have noticed such as clenched fists, a frown, a turned down mouth, stamping feet, or crossed arms.

Older students might be able to complete the 'What feeling is that?' activity sheet:

www.DanielMorcombefoundation.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DMF_Name_Feelings.pdf

Consider completing a feelings activity such as paper plate emotion masks:

<https://www.notimeforflashcards.com/2011/05/paper-plate-emotion-masks.html>

Body Clues

Ask the children if they know what a clue is. You might like to use the prop of a magnifying glass and the analogy of a detective. Explain that clues are hints, which help us to work things out. We have to look at things closely to find clues.

You might be able to tell a story of a cat being chased by a dog. Ask the children to imagine what the cat might look like if it were scared. Talk about things such as hissing, hair standing on end etc. Explain that these are the cat's body clues. Ask the children to think about what body clues a child might get when they feel scared. Explain that our bodies are very good at giving us clues to help us work out how we are feeling – we can call these body clues.

After the lesson

Ask children to identify who they can talk to if they have questions or want to talk about the lesson.

Discussion questions

After you have watched *Australia's Biggest Child Safety Lesson* with children, use the questions below to guide a focused discussion. Remind children of the safety rules.

- Why do our bodies give us clues that we might be unsafe?
- Why is it important to tell someone if you do not feel safe?
- Can you think of a Safety Helper for each finger on your hand?
- What is the difference between safe and unsafe secrets?



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Curriculum links

The Daniel Morcombe Foundation's 'Keeping Kids Safe' resources are best used as part of a comprehensive whole school approach to personal safety education and is aligned with the following:

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

- Health and Physical Education (HPE) subject area <https://www.acara.edu.au/curriculum/foundation-year-10/learning-areas-subjects/health-and-physical-education>
- Personal and Social Capability <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/personal-and-social-capability/>
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capability <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/information-and-communication-technology-ict-capability/>

Daniel Morcombe Child Safety Curriculum: Developed to support Queensland schools to deliver key safety messages to students in prep to year 9. Available to all teachers in Australia https://www.danielmorcombe.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Daniel_Morcombe_Child_Safety_Curriculum_Access.pdf

Health Promoting Schools Framework: Encourages a whole school approach to respond to health and wellbeing issues, including relationships and sexual health education www.gdhr.wa.gov.au/-/health-promoting-schools-framework

Respectful Relationships Education: Across Australia a variety of respectful relationships programs have been developed and are endorsed by state and territory governments. Learn more about respectful relationships education www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/Respectful-relationships-education/Whole-School-Approach-Toolkit

Extension Activities



'Keeping Kids Safe' Resources

If you visit the *Daniel Morcombe Foundation* website you can access a variety of age-appropriate resources from the suite of 'Keeping Kids Safe' resources at www.DanielMorcombe.com.au/keeping-kids-safe-resources

When using the 'Keeping Kids Safe' resources, children can practise the key safety skills of RECOGNISE, REACT, REPORT.

RECOGNISE activity instructions

Utilise the RECOGNISE activity, 'Recognise: My body clues':

- Reinforce that body clues are the physical signs our bodies give us that we might be happy, sad, or possibly in an unsafe situation.
- Using colouring pencils or pens, ask the children to draw the body clues onto the body. They may be able to think of some extra body clues that are not included on the activity sheet like quick breathing, eyes wide open or shut, shaking or shivering.

REACT activity instructions

Utilise the REACT activity, 'React: If I feel unsafe I can...'

- Discuss each of the possible actions suggested and ask questions about what the children could do if they feel unsafe in different places like at school, a friend's house or at Mum or Dad's place.
- Using the activity sheet, ask children to draw and label their own example to show what they can do if they feel unsafe.
- You might like to talk about the concept of breaking a rule to keep safe. This may include examples such as:
 - breaking a promise and telling someone about an unsafe secret
 - breaking a window to get out of a building in the event of emergency (such as a fire)
 - saying 'No' to an adult when the adult is unsafe.
- These could be displayed around your classroom as reminders of strategies for keeping safe.

Although we are allowed to REACT to keep ourselves safe, it's often not easy to do. It's important to clarify that if someone couldn't - or didn't - react in an unsafe situation, that's okay. Tricky situations are NEVER a child's fault. It's also never too late to talk to a safety helper.

REPORT activity instructions

Utilise the REPORT activity, 'Report: My safety network'

- Ask the children to list their safety helpers. They must be adults and should include someone who lives at home, males and females, as well as people who live outside the home. Suggestions: mum, dad, carer, grandparent, uncle/aunty, teacher, principal, friend's mum or dad, police.
- Ask the children to write the names of five safety helpers onto their safety hand – one for each finger on their hand. Then prompt students to colour in their safety hand and cut it out.
- Encourage the children to take their safety hand home and show them to the adults they wrote on their list.



Extension Activities



Safe vs Unsafe Secrets

Talk with children about the examples of surprises, safe and unsafe secrets provided in the lesson. If your school or centre has a 'no secrets' policy, you could focus on the distinction between secrets and surprises.

Try to help children understand the following key points:

- Surprises will eventually be found out
- With safe secrets no one gets hurt
- Unsafe secrets should be reported to an adult

Older children can complete the 'Safe vs Unsafe' secrets worksheet

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