

Dear Third Grade Parent/Guardian,

Our class will soon begin a personal safety program called **KIDS AND COMPANY: Together for Safety®**. Through specially designed activities, games, songs, and skill rehearsals, your child will be learning how to protect himself/herself from abduction and sexual exploitation. This program was selected by our school because it empowers children with the information, skills, and support they need to keep safe, without frightening them. The curriculum has received the support of leading national educational organizations.

This letter provides information and concepts to use at home with your child to reinforce the safety messages learned at school. Below is a list of the safety concepts being taught in Grade 3:

LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE CALLS AND ADDRESS - knowing how to call long distance, call collect and make operator-assisted calls will help children if there is an emergency away from home. Review your 11 digit phone number and the geographical area of your neighborhood, county, and state.

NEIGHBORHOOD AWARENESS - review your neighborhood landmarks, street signs, and local community. An awareness of one's surroundings and familiarity with the community help broaden the child's self-assurance and ability to access help.

USE THE PHONE BOOK TO ACCESS HELP - discuss emergency telephone numbers and the importance of keeping them available. If you don't have a list, make one and post it by your phone, and include one in their backpack.

SAFETY FIRST - inner feelings and instincts can warn children of danger. It is smart to "make a scene," to be noisy, or to be disobedient if a child feels their personal safety is threatened. The **NO-GO-TELL** rule can also be used to thwart victimization attempts.

TRUSTED ADULT HELPERS - many children find it difficult to speak up for themselves or seek help. Your child has begun to identify "low risk" helpers and qualities of a trusted helper. Discuss this with your child and identify people and qualities of trusted helpers. Add neighbors and friends to your child's list of helpers.

IN CHARGE AT HOME - children left "in-charge" need to be equipped with safety skills. The home alone safety rules include **CHECK FIRST** and **NO, GO, TELL** rules along with keeping the doors and windows closed and locked; having emergency numbers posted by the phone; answering the phone as though an adult is home; phoning a trusted adult for help or advice; keeping the TV or music turned low so they can hear unfamiliar sounds; avoiding watching or reading scary stories; and not "advertising" that they are home alone.

Many of the lessons include Activity Sheets which you can review and sign. Take the time to discuss these with your child.

The **KIDS AND COMPANY®** booklet for parents, "Partners in Protection", is available at school as a resource for you. Additional safety resources are also available from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. To order free pamphlets call 1-800-843-5678 or visit the National Center's website at www.missingkids.com. (Use this same number or the website to report a missing child, concerns about child pornography on the Internet, or to report a tip or lead regarding a missing child.)

Parents across the country have participated in **KIDS AND COMPANY: Together for Safety®** with their children and have enjoyed the opportunity to learn how to talk to their child about these crucial topics. Please accept this opportunity to work with your child. There is no one more effective in teaching and reinforcing your child's safety than you!

Activity 1:

Many children travel outside their home state. If your child became separated from you while traveling, or if your child were taken out of the state illegally, he/she might need to be able to call home.

Your child has been taught how to call home from out-of-state. Ask your child to recite his/her long distance home phone number for you.

Have your child practice using pay phones when he/she is away from home. Give your child the opportunity to call home from different types of pay phones so he/she will feel confident in this skill.

Remind your child if he/she ever has difficulty making a call, he/she can dial the OPERATOR "0" for help. Reassure your child that he/she can call home COLLECT with the OPERATOR'S help in any emergency. Explain that he/she would not even need any money to dial the OPERATOR on many new pay phones. Tell your child that you would accept the charges for an emergency long distance call.

The ability to make emergency phone calls is an important safety skill. Please rehearse these phone procedures with your child, often.

Activity 3:

Your child has learned that it is O.K. to say "NO" to someone who tries to touch him/her in a way that makes him/her feel uncomfortable, confused, embarrassed or frightened.

We have also discussed people that they can go to for help if they have a problem that is too big for them to handle on their own.

Sometimes, children are tricked into keeping inappropriate touching a secret. Children may not confide in adults because they do not want to "tattle" or because they are afraid their parents will be angry or will not believe them.

Please let your child know that you will listen if he/she ever needs to tell you about a touch that made him/her feel uncomfortable. Sometimes, children are more sensitive than adults and pick up early warning signals of potential danger. Please do not dismiss these feelings as foolish or unwarranted without investigation.

NO, GO, TELL Poem*

<i>NO, GO and TELL!</i>	<i>I don't behave, sometimes.</i>
<i>NO, GO and TELL!</i>	<i>And sure, I make mistakes.</i>
<i>It is my body, and I have a</i>	<i>But I'm a good-type person</i>
<i>warning bell.</i>	<i>And deserve to feel safe.</i>
<i>If touching bothers me,</i>	<i>If touching bothers me,</i>
<i>I don't keep it locked inside.</i>	<i>I know I'm not to blame.</i>
<i>I say "NO" and then</i>	<i>I'll GO and TELL someone</i>
<i>I GO and TELL.</i>	<i>And YOU SHOULD DO THE SAME!</i>

*"NO, GO, TELL" Poem is © copyrighted by Stephanie Meegan. All Rights Reserved. Permission granted for use in KIDS AND COMPANY: Together for Safety.

Activity 2:

We encourage children to be polite and obedient, and to treat others with respect. It is *also important* to teach children to trust their inner feelings and instincts that can warn them of danger.

Please explain to your child that her/his safety always comes first. If she/he feels uncomfortable or frightened, it is smart to "make a scene." Sometimes, children need to hear from you that it is O.K. to be noisy and disobedient if someone older bothers him/her or if someone tries to touch her/him in an inappropriate way.

Some children are comfortable being assertive in defense of their personal safety. Other children are more shy and need a lot of encouragement and practice.

As children get older, they are more likely to be home unsupervised for short or extended periods of time. Children who are going to be left "in charge" in the future need to begin developing safety skills that can be used at home.

Our class has begun learning these skills. The children have played a puzzle game which identified the following "In Charge at Home" rules:

- KEEP DOORS AND WINDOWS CLOSED AND LOCKED.
- KEEP YOUR EMERGENCY NUMBERS BY THE PHONE.
- ANSWER THE PHONE AS THOUGH AN ADULT IS HOME.
- PHONE A TRUSTED NEIGHBOR FOR HELP OR ADVICE IF YOU ARE UNSURE OR CONCERNED ABOUT ANYTHING.
- OTHER HELPFUL TIPS:

Keep T.V. or music turned low.

Keep phone conversations with friends short.

Avoid watching or reading scary stories.

Do not "advertise" that you will be home alone.

