

What does 'safe' mean to children

A report for families on what children said



Children participating in this project gave valuable feedback and great insights into:

'What being safe means to me?'

37 children participated, 20 boys and 16 girls from 2 kindergartens in Logan.

As a parent, you were asked to provide your consent for your child to participate in the research. Children were also asked to say if they wanted to take part by marking on a form, no or yes

Children were asked to put a circle around the No or Yes symbol.



4 children did not want to participate, and their decision was respected.

Children saw themselves as having lots of people and rules that keep them safe.

Children spoke of:

- Protection and care from family and home
- Rules for safety at kindergarten
- Being kept safe in the community by people such as police.

Circles of Safety



My family and home

Children talked the most about their family keeping them safe, and home being a safe place. Children said that their family provided love and care and strong relationships:

- *I'm being safe in my house*
- *If I am scared, I can talk to my mum or my teacher*
- *My brother keeps me safe. He shows me his computer. He gives me cuddles*
- *So you don't get a broken heart...*

Family also provided adult advice to children on ways to be safe and this protected children from any unsafe things.

- *If you see a stranger you should go home to your Mum and your Dad*
- *You can shut the gate of your house*
- *No shaking hands with high school students so they don't take you away*
- *It means you have to stay home and not go in danger*

Rainbows featured in many of the children's drawings about family and home. Rainbows are a happy and protective symbol.

Safety rules at kindergarten

Rules keep us safe:

Most children had a good awareness of safety rules at kindy. The researchers explained this finding through children:

- Having contributed to making safety rules at kindy
- Discussed staying safe at kindy
- Heard discussions on staying safe at kindy
- Regularly having these rules reinforced.

This assisted the researchers in that children knew the word 'safe' and understood safety routines such as:

- Putting sunscreen on during the day
- Washing hands
- Walking in the classroom
- Counting the number of children during excursions or emergency drill procedures.

Where children come first

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Children demonstrated that they had internalised these rules, which is an important sign of self-regulation.

Children further demonstrated their understanding of applying the rules by saying:

- *If you see a snake, you should walk quietly away and tell the teacher*
- *Walking inside, not hitting, and not kicking*
- *You have to be careful with scissors*
- *Don't hit your friends, 'cause you might poke their eye*
- *You have to look out for cars and don't go on the road*
- *Hold an adult's hand when you are on the road*
- *Don't touch the hot oven in the kitchen*

People who help us:

Children understood that there were people in the wider community who also made them safe, and were available to help should they need this.

Police and emergency services were most often raised by children. Children had visited these services and knew to telephone 000 and the police will help you.

Children also said:

- *Life Savers or Life Guards at the beach are people who help us to feel and stay safe*
- *This is the fire truck that keeps us safe. They climb the ladder and use the hose and press the buttons*
- *When I am lost at the shops and I can't find my Mum or Dad, I have to find police. They have blue T-shirt and a gun, some people have guns and some people don't.*

Children also talked about being kept safe from strangers, sharks, and being run over when crossing the road.

Where to from here

Now that the research project is finished, C&K will

- Feedback the information to parents and children
- Provide this information to the Logan Child Friendly Community Consortium
- Take the learnings about 'what worked best in talking to children' and let other teachers know, so they can also gather children's views
- Use the safety circles model to use in teaching children about rules at kindy
- Develop tools for children participating in research.

C&K is committed to taking the views of children seriously so that our programs provide the best learning and play environment, and are continually improving.

This project has confirmed our values as a child safe organisation and that children in C&K services have heard messages about safety.

If you want to contact us:

Robyn Mercer Ph: 0488 373 794

Email: r.mercer@candk.asn.au OR

Meg Jones Ph: 0400 689 587

Email: m.jones@candk.asn.au



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