



SAFETY PLAN FOR CHILDREN

A safety plan for children is designed to help victims teach their children some basic safety planning. It is based on the belief that *the most important thing that children can do is to get away from the area of violence*. They cannot stop the abuse, although they often try by distracting the abuser or directly interfering in the abusive episode.

What to teach children

There are several ways to help you develop a safety plan with your children:

- Stress the importance of being safe, and that it is not the child's responsibility to make sure that their parents are safe.
- Have your child pick a safe room/place in the house, preferably with a lock on the door and a phone. The first step of any plan is for the children to get out of the room where the abuse is occurring.
- Teach your children how to call for help. It is important that children know that they should not use a phone that is in view of the abuser. This puts them at risk. Talk to your children about using a neighbour's phone or a pay phone if they are unable to use a phone at home. If you have a cell phone, teach your children how to use it. Instruct children not to hang-up the cell phone to ensure police can locate them.
- Teach your children about Neighbourhood Block Parents (if available) and how to use them.
- Teach them how to contact police at the emergency number.
- Ensure that children know their full name and address.
- rehearse what your child/children will say when they call for help.

For example:

Dial 911.

An operator will answer,

"Police, fire, ambulance"

Your child says,

"Police."

Then your child says,

"My name is _____."

I am ____ years old.

I need help. Send the police.

Someone is hurting my mom/dad.

The address here is _____."

The phone number here is _____.";

Teach your children the safest route to the planned place of safety for them. Pick a safe place to meet your children, out of the home, after the situation is safe for you and for them.