

## Assertiveness Skills

Assertiveness skills are important for kids to learn — it helps them know how to set and communicate personal boundaries. Learning assertiveness skills helps kids communicate their own needs and comfort levels. These skills help increase personal safety.

Assertiveness skills include:

- Making eye contact
- Sending clear, decisive messages such as “No,” “Stop,” etc.
- Using serious facial expressions
- Using a steady, confident voice
- Standing tall
- Leaving the situation promptly
- Telling a safe adult

We communicate messages with both verbal and nonverbal language. It is actually the nonverbal (body language) that carries the majority of our messages.



**Role play the following scenarios with your child (each person should take a role and then switch roles);**

- 1. Sam is walking home from school. A man with a broken leg gets out of his car and asks Sam if he can help him carry some boxes. The man says it is hard for him to do it by himself. Is this safe?**

Answer: No, remind your child that s/he should never go anywhere with anyone without first checking with her/his parents and getting permission. Remember the safety strategy – If Asked to Go and Your Parents Don't Know, SHOUT NO!

*\* Ask your child to show you a response that shows s/he means business (i.e. using assertive behaviour).*

- 2. Kris is playing soccer with a group of friends. A man walks up and calls Kris' name. Kris has her name on the back of her jersey. The man walks up and tells Kris that he is a friend of her parents. He says he is there to pick her up and take her home. Kris does not have permission from her parents to go with this man. Is this safe?**

Answer: No, remind your child that s/he should never go anywhere with anyone without first checking with her/his parents and getting permission. Remember the safety strategy – If Asked to Go and Your Parents Don't Know, SHOUT NO!

*\* Ask your child to show you a response that shows s/he means business (i.e. using assertive behaviour).*

- 3. Keiko wants a new bike. Her parents told her that she needs to save her money to help pay for it. One of Keiko's neighbours asks Keiko if she would like to rake his yard to make some money. He tells Keiko not to tell her parents that he is going to pay her. Is this okay?**

Answer: No, this is a SPEAK Secret that should be told to a safe adult. All secrets should have endings. A child needs to tell a safe adult about secrets that don't have endings and that they are told not to tell anyone about.

*\* Ask your child to show you a response that shows s/he means business (i.e. using assertive behaviour).*

- 4. Gabriel's parents had a pool party. At the pool party, Gabriel played with an adult in the pool. When they were playing, the adult touched Gabriel's private areas. Is this okay?**

Answer: No, this is a SPEAK Secret that should be told to a safe adult. All secrets about touching or anyone who touches a child's private parts must be told to a safe adult.).

*\* Ask your child to show you a response that shows s/he means business (i.e. using assertive behaviour).*

- 5. Riley likes playing games online. One day when he is playing a game online, someone starts chatting with him. The person gives him tips to help him play the game. The person asks Riley "weird" questions. Is this safe?**

Answer: No, it isn't safe to chat with people online without permission from your parents. Children always need to check first with their parents before they start chatting with someone online. Remember the safety strategy: If Asked to Share and Your Parents Aren't Aware, SAY NO!