

PARENT NEWSLETTER *Lesson #3*

RULES KEEP US SAFE! WHEN WE USE THEM, WE ARE ALL STARS!



PARENT CONNECTION

In today's hectic climate we often overlook the value of the fact that children like to unload by sharing the day's events with their parent/caregiver, even about things that may seem silly. We teach children that TELL is a crucial part of staying safe. Reinforce this concept by taking a few minutes to actively listen to your child describe his/her day, whether it be about how school went, the trip that he/she took, or the play date at a friend's house.

Communication habits start early. It's hard to pay attention when you're doing too many tasks at once, but if you aren't really listening,

1. You miss an opportunity to learn about and teach your child.
2. Your child learns that you don't really listen, so there's no point in talking.

Listen to the little things and your child will trust you with the big things. The message you are conveying when you take the time to really listen is one of love and understanding. "I love you and therefore want to know what is going on in your life. I am interested in who you are as a person and the way you are feeling."

Today we continued by learning about what to do if a child gets separated/lost and needs to ask for help. Finding a SAFE STRANGER is crucial. Students were taught how to identify a Safe Stranger. Most children are under the misconception that a Stranger is a sinister looking person. We dealt with redefining the term stranger so that children are aware that ANYBODY that we don't know is considered a stranger. That means, not only doesn't a stranger need to look like a creepy scary person, but he/she could actually look like anyone. If a child needs help - whether they're lost, being threatened by a bully, or being followed -the safest thing for them to do is to ask a stranger for help. We differentiated between times that a child should NEVER speak to a stranger and times when the child will need to approach a Safe Stranger. We discussed having the confidence to approach a Safe Stranger and using a strong voice to ask for assistance.

We also learned that the safest action to take when lost is to stay in a public area, preferably the last place they remember being with their adult in charge, where there are lots of people, and to never go anywhere, especially into a back room or to the parking lot, even with the Safe Stranger.

Since children may feel uncomfortable talking to someone they do not know or asking for help it's important to role-play different scenarios with them and have them practice using a strong, confident voice. Some children, especially older ones, may also feel they can take care of themselves and are mature enough to figure things out. Use the Stop, Think, Act steps to reinforce reaching out for help when it's needed. Reiterate to your children, even older ones, that statistically the #1 Safe Stranger is a MOM WITH CHILDREN.

