

Keeping our kids safe at school



These days, drugs, bullying and school violence have changed from being topics of concern to news. Safety is a realistic worry for parents, teachers, students and communities.

As a parent, you're not helpless when it comes to your kids' safety. There are actions you can take to help. Here are just a few examples:

- 1. Read your school's handbook to learn about policies and procedures.** Every school should have a school handbook. It should include information on how the school deals with bullying, campus visitors and emergencies. Read this information and, if you have questions, call your school's principal.
- 2. Keep your child's personal information up-to-date.** If you change jobs or phone numbers, make sure the school gets the new contact details. If your child develops a new health concern or allergy, notify the school too. Also make sure your child's emergency contacts are accessible and you've listed the most current ways to reach them. Be sure your children and the school know who's authorized to pick them up from school if you're not available.

- 3. Communicate.** Talk with your kids every single day. Ask what they learned at school, how things went on the playground and anything else they'll share.
- 4. "See something, say something."** Teach your kids to be aware of changes in others' behaviors or anything that makes them uncomfortable. Let them know they can tell you. Remind them it's your job to help them feel and stay safe.
- 5. Speak up.** There's no concern too small to bring to a school's attention today. Never feel "funny" about calling the school to let them know something you or your student have heard or observed.

Keeping our kids secure is a group effort. And we're all part of the safety net we need to put around our children so they can learn, grow and succeed in school.

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