

7 steps to safety

...your guide

If you work with
parents, families, carers
or children, this
7 Steps to Safety guide
is for you.



The guide gives ideas
on how you can use
7 Steps to Safety to support families,
parents, carers, children and
communities to help kids **FEEL** and
BE safe at home.



Office of Children and Families



Northern Territory Government
Department of Health and Community Services

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7 Steps to Safety was developed in consultation with Northern Territory parents, children and service providers and from current Australian and overseas literature. Kit and guide developed by Meron Looney, Project Worker, "Family Safety Plan Kit".

7 Steps to Safety aims to promote the safety and wellbeing of children. Material contained in the kit is intended for information purposes and cannot be taken as legal or medical advice.

A free copy of the **7 Steps to Safety** resource kit can be downloaded at <http://www.families.nt.gov.au>

Why a 7 Steps to Safety GUIDE?



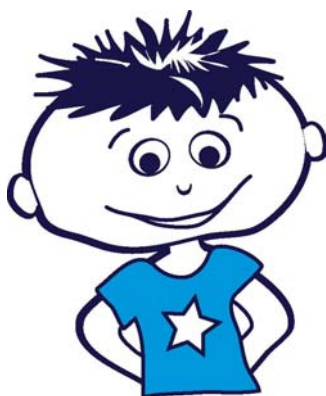
This **7 Steps to Safety** GUIDE is for people who want to use the **7 Steps to Safety** KIT in their work with parents, families, carers, children or communities.

The purpose of the guide is to outline how the **7 Steps to Safety** kit can be used to promote discussion and activity focussing on the safety of children in the home and family environment. People who work with families and children - such as family support workers, teachers, neighbourhood centre coordinators, health workers and police - or people who work with communities or community groups can use the guide, which has been developed by the Northern Territory Government's Office of Children and Families.

You can use **7 Steps to Safety** to assist *any* family to prepare and plan for the safety of their children as they grow up and become more independent. Some of you, however, may work with families facing particular challenges such as violence or substance abuse. Some families may have a member with a physical illness or disability or a mental health issue. In other families, a child could be at risk of harm or neglect. In any of these situations, the kit can be used to raise and explore a number of sensitive issues related to children's physical and emotional safety.

This guide gives you just a few suggestions about how you can use **7 Steps to Safety** in your work with families. Be creative! Your experience will no doubt generate many more ideas about how you can use the kit to enhance and promote the safety and wellbeing of children.

Why a 7 Steps to Safety KIT?



The idea to develop a family safety plan resource originated from people working with families whose circumstances placed their children at significant risk of harm. Workers saw a need for an evidence-based, standardised resource that could give greater consistency to safety planning and be adapted to meet specific risk needs of individual families. The Office of Children and Families subsequently took on the role to develop a Family Safety Plan Kit.

The process for developing the kit included research of Australian and overseas literature; consultations and focus groups with children, families and family-focussed service providers; and a trial of the kit in its draft form. The result of this process is the **7 Steps to Safety** kit.

7 Steps to Safety provides information, activities and tips to help families identify circumstances that could place children at risk of harm and to develop strategies to prevent or deal with risky situations. It aims to build resilience in children by helping them to gain skills and confidence in their ability to make decisions in a range of situations. It also aims to build on family strengths and to provide opportunities for families to work together in creating safe and positive environments for children.

The kit can be used by people in their work with vulnerable families, or by families independent of professional support. It is designed for use with children of any age, but may be particularly useful for families with children from preschool to teenage years. Each 'Step' in the kit focuses on a different area associated with safety for children at home.

The seven steps to safety are:

- Step 1:** Make Your Place Safe
- Step 2:** Cool Tools for Family Rules
- Step 3:** Feel Safe with People
- Step 4:** What's Special about Our Family?
- Step 5:** Emergency
- Step 6:** Ready Yet?
- Step 7:** Make a Care Plan

Further development of the kit

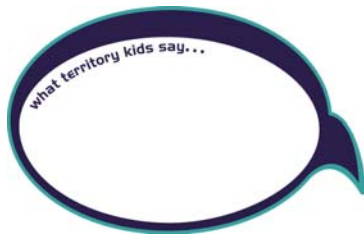
Although designed for all Northern Territory families, *7 Steps to Safety* has not been specifically trialed with families from culturally diverse backgrounds. The Office of Children and Families is keen to hear from people who have used the kit in a range of applications, with particular interest in how it might be further developed to meet the needs of people living in remote communities. Details about how you can provide feedback about the *7 Steps to Safety* kit, along with an evaluation form about this guide, are provided on page 45.

Please let us know of any ideas you have tried and would like to share with others.

Each Step in 7 Steps to Safety includes:

Each 7 *Steps to Safety* Step includes a number of elements. These are designed to provide families with information they can use to create safe family environments and build on each child's capacity to make safe decisions in challenging or potentially unsafe situations.

Each Step has comments from children




These are *real* statements from *real* children. They were acquired during school-based workshops with children and through more casual chats throughout the development of the kit.

As parents, carers and professionals we make decisions 'for' and 'about' children all the time, without always considering the impact of these decisions. Some of the statements in 'What Territory Kids Say ...' offer a powerful reminder of how our decisions can affect children. As children talked about their experiences and the things that worried them and made them feel safe or unsafe, their responses served to focus the kit on issues that were of genuine importance to children. Their statements give an insight into how children *feel* and what they *think* about a range of issues that can affect their safety and wellbeing. They can also be used to give a true voice to children and their experiences, even when children are not physically present. The statements from "What Territory Kids Say ..." and copies of the children's drawings in the kit can be used to make flash cards and prompt discussion.

Each Step asks **Why?**

These sections provide the rationale as to *why* it is important to consider the issues covered in each Step. They are founded on research as well as on the experiences of parents and children and those who work with them.

Each Step has Parent Tips



parent tips

The Parent Tips have been drawn from research, parents' experiences and input from people who work in a range of fields involved in community safety and children's physical, social, emotional and psychological safety and well-being. They provide practical ideas and guidelines to help families enhance the physical and emotional safety of their children, with a goal to increasing children's capacity to think and act safely. It's important to remember that parents will already have their own stories to tell and valuable tips for helping to work things out.

Most Steps have a Story



The stories explore common dilemmas for children and give examples of how children might think, feel and react in certain situations. They show families how they can use the information in the kit, along with family discussions and activities, to help create a home environment where children can *feel* and *be* safe.

Most Steps have a Family Activity



A strong family has family members who communicate openly and honestly, who listen to and respect each other and who sort out problems together. Children from supportive families who communicate in positive ways with each other are more likely to develop a secure sense of belonging and the self-esteem, confidence and self-control they need to make decisions independently and safely. Children also learn best by ‘doing’ – by being actively involved and having opportunities to practise what they learn.

The ‘Family Activities’ in *7 Steps to Safety* build on these factors to provide opportunities for families to work together in fun, practical ways to increase the ability and confidence of children to stay, and feel, safe. Four of the “Family Activities” provide guidelines for families to make their own Safety and Emergency Plans:

Step 2: Make Your Family Rules

Step 3: Make a Helper Plan

Step 5: Make an Emergency Contacts List

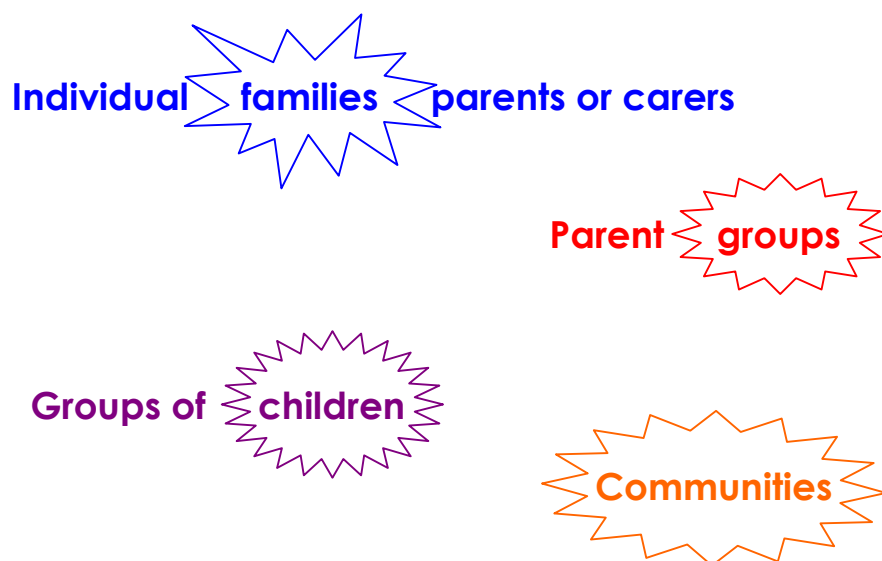
Step 7: Make a Care Plan

Printing out the Steps

Feel free to print out copies of each Step, or of any activities or safety plans you wish to use with parents. If you like, you can use the patterns and page numbers to help you join the pages of each Step, from left to right. You’ll end up with a long strip of pages for each Step that can be folded up, concertina style. It can be fun for children to help!

When working with families you can use all or parts of the Steps and adapt them to suit particular cultural and social needs.

Using the kit with different groups



This section gives a broad outline of how **7 Steps to Safety** can be used with different groups of people. A more detailed guide to each Step is provided in section 7: “Your Guide to Using Each Step” (page 10). Remember that families are not alone in effecting or planning for children’s safety and wellbeing. You can help families to keep in mind the many other individuals, groups, neighbours or services they can draw upon in their plans to help children be, and feel, safe.

It’s important that we know how effective the kit is in supporting families. If you would like to contribute to evaluating how useful the kit is for families, pre- and post- testing tools for use in individual counselling or groupwork are available from the Office of Children and Families: 1800 005 485.

Working with individual families parents or carers

If you are working with individual families, parents or carers, **7 Steps to Safety** can be used as:

- ▶ A general resource to build on existing family strengths
- ▶ A more specific tool to assist families facing particular issues that could affect children’s safety and wellbeing. (For example, if parents are looking for help in setting boundaries with their children, you could take a look at ‘Step 2: Cool Tools for Family Rules’ with them.)

Some parents might prefer to look through a Step alone and then ask you questions or talk about issues and strategies if necessary. Others might be better supported in understanding the concepts and activities if you go through a Step with them, talking about it along the way. You can then help them explore ways to use the information and activities from the Step with their children, and support them if required.

Whether you are handing out the kit to parents or working through it with them, please consider the following points:

- ▶ Parents do not need to read through entire Steps with their children. The Steps work best if parents have an understanding of the issues and then use the parts that are relevant to their children and situation. Younger children might not be ready for some of the activities or concepts. It may also be too overwhelming for some children to go through all activities or all Steps in quick succession. It may be easier for them to follow and digest if broken up into ‘manageable’ and relevant pieces.
- ▶ Encourage parents to choose the scenarios in the activities that apply to their own circumstances and to think up others that are relevant to their family’s situation.
- ▶ You can use your discussions about the kit with parents as a way to help them identify their specific areas of concern and to explore any underlying issues, values or beliefs.
- ▶ You can give families Steps or pages from the kit so they can ‘Try it out!’ at home. (They could talk to you later about how it went.)
- ▶ Encourage parents to use their own words when they talk with their children about the issues in the kit. This will help children to understand and relate to the issues.
- ▶ You can use the kit to help parents identify things they are *already* doing to build a safe family environment and strong relationships with their children. This is especially important if parents are feeling overwhelmed.

Working with parent groups

There are two main ways you can use *7 Steps to Safety* to generate discussion in groups run with parents:

- ▶ As a basis for seven individual sessions that cover a range of children’s safety issues.
- ▶ To elaborate or extend on your existing work with parent groups through using activities or sections from the kit.

A benefit of exploring the issues from *7 Steps to Safety* in a group setting like this is the enormous potential for parents to learn from each other and to recognise that they are not alone in experiencing the struggles and delights of parenting. Parents can also use the information in the kit to help them raise public awareness of the rights and needs of children and families in regard to physical and emotional safety. Once again, it’s important to recognise and draw on the experience and strengths of parents.

If you need to know more about running groups and ways to conduct group activities, a basic resource list is provided at the end of this guide. You can also visit your local public or university library, or check out the Internet. Where the guide suggests ‘Try it out!’ and parents practise an activity at home, remember to discuss how this went with group members at the beginning of the following session. The section “Your Guide to Using Each Step” (page 10) offers more specific ways that you can use *7 Steps to Safety* with groups of parents.

Working with groups of children

If you work with children, this guide will offer a range of ways you can use the Steps, stories and activities in the **7 Steps to Safety** kit.

Most of the ideas for group discussions and activities are for primary aged children (say five years and over). However the ideas and activities can be easily adapted for older or younger children. Teachers, Out of School Hours Care coordinators and facilitators of clubs for children can use **7 Steps to Safety** to create a comprehensive program aimed at enhancing children's capacity to make informed and safe decisions. Alternatively, you can use individual activities and sections of the kit to supplement existing areas of work or activity.

For some of you, **7 Steps to Safety** may provide opportunities for children with different skills or from differing age groups to work together to explore some of the issues covered in the kit. For example, secondary school media studies or drama students could explore some of the issues in the kit with primary school students, who could then act out skits designed to raise safety-focussed issues. The older students could then record these to produce audio-visual productions that could be used to facilitate further discussion in the classroom.

Please be aware that some activities have the potential to raise uncomfortable feelings in some children or may lead to a disclosure of past or present harm. It's good practice to be prepared for how to support a child in this case. Make sure you know the procedure for making a notification of suspected current child abuse to Family and Children's Services (FACS). Also, have a list of services or people who could offer support to children if necessary.

If you are going to use the kit with groups of children (in schools or clubs, for example), it's good practice to inform parents beforehand. This can also provide a good opportunity to promote or introduce the kit to families.

Working with communities

The ideas in this guide offer just a few ways you can use **7 Steps to Safety** with communities. A community can be any group of people who call themselves a 'community'. This can include neighbourhoods, sporting clubs, businesses and workplaces, cultural groups, religious groups, schools, social groups, friends, professional groups, internet groups, interest groups or whole towns.

As a professional or as a member of a community, you can use **7 Steps to Safety** to raise issues about children's safety and wellbeing or to add to existing knowledge and understanding of group members or the broader community. You could use each Step to run a community forum and invite guest speakers to talk to the topic. Or you could organise a family safety event and use the information in the kit to promote issues that are of concern to community members. Think about different ways you might be able to use the information in the kit to promote children's safety and wellbeing through, for example, preparing items for community newsletters such as Neighbourhood Watch or the local school, or for community radio. Are there other ways of presenting the kit that might make it more 'accessible' to families (e.g. through an audio-visual production)?

Step 1 Make Your Place Safe



Step 1 takes a look at some of the physical risks to children around the home and provides some tips on how parents can minimise the potential for harm. It also outlines a fire safety plan families can practise together.

The goals of Step 1 are:

For families and carers to:

- ▶ Have access to information that can help create a safe physical environment for their children
- ▶ Learn a fun way to practise a home fire-safety drill

Tips for working with individual families parents or carers

Here are some ideas on how you can use **Step 1** with individual families.

- ◆ Help families to identify the things they have already done at home to minimise the risk of harm to their children.
- ◆ Use the kit to help families identify areas or equipment that might *not* be safe at their place.
- ◆ Are there any things about their children that could increase the risk to their safety? These could include things like a child's chronological or developmental age or their personality – are they adventurous, a risk-taker, curious about how things work?
- ◆ What might families need to change around their place to make it safer for their children? How can they do this?
- ◆ Encourage families to practise the Family Activity 'Get your family together and pretend there is a fire in your home'. Discuss any issues or concerns.

Tips for working with parent groups

Here are some suggestions of how you could use

Step 1: Make Your Place Safe to help parent groups examine the safety of the physical environment at home. You could also invite someone from an organization such as Kidsafe NT to talk with parents about relevant home safety issues.

◆ Brainstorm. Write on the board/butchers paper responses to the question:

What are some things around people's houses and yards that can be risky or dangerous for children? (Refer to **Step 1** if necessary)

◆ Discuss as a group

How have risks changed since you were children?

What are some things about children (e.g. age, stage of development, personality) that can impact on safety issues?

◆ Discuss in pairs

What are some things about *your* children that might impact on their safety at home?

What are some things you are *already* doing to make your place safe for your children?

What could you change around your place to make it safer for your children?

Decide on and discuss two things you could do in the next week to make it safer for your children at home.

◆ Feedback to group. Write down on board/butchers paper and discuss:

Things people are already doing.

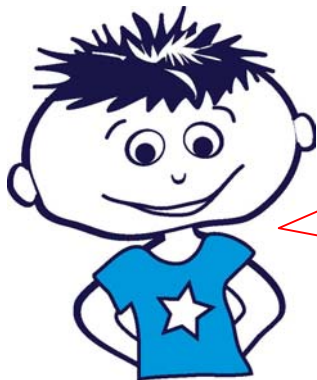
Things they can change.

◆ Discuss the Family Activity "Get your family together and pretend there is a fire in your home".

How could parents practise this with their children?

How do they think their children will respond to doing this activity?

Invite the group to explore any issues.



Try it out!

Ask parents to try out the things they chose to do to make it safer for their children at home. Suggest their family practises the fire drill together. Remember to talk about how it went in your next session. Any problems? How did everyone react? What was good about it?

Tips for working with groups of children

Here are a few ideas about different ways that you can use **Step 1** to help children think about the safety of their physical environment.

- ◆ Discuss as a group risks and safety strategies for children at home.

What are things you like to do at your house?

Is there anything risky/dangerous about what you like to do?

What are some things you and your family already do to make your place safe?

What are some extra things you and your family could do to make it even safer for children? Think about little kids too, even if you don't have any at your place. (Refer to **Step 1** if necessary.)

- ◆ As a group talk about fire safety plans.

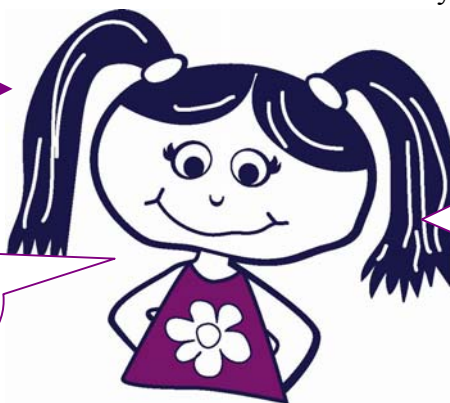
Does your family have a fire plan at home?

What should we do if there is a fire *here*? (Help children practise what to do.)

- ◆ Hand out **Step 1** for children to take home. Discuss any issues or concerns.

Fun Activities

Design a poster or newspaper/magazine ad that encourages families to make their place safe for children.



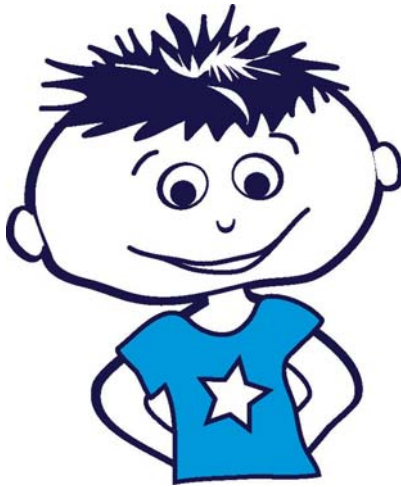
Make up a pretend 'family' who DON'T think about making their place safe for kids. Draw a picture or write a story about what could happen.

Tips for working with communities

Here are some ideas of questions that can help communities or community groups discuss safe physical environments for children.

- ◆ What strategies or equipment do you have in your community that are designed to keep children safe?
- ◆ Are there any things that make it unsafe for children?
- ◆ What fire safety measures are in place in your community/area?
- ◆ Are playgrounds and children's play areas safe for children in relation to fire and other hazards?
- ◆ If not, how could this be changed?
- ◆ Are there any things that could help or hinder making these changes?

Step 2 Cool Tools for Family Rules



Step 2 provides a guide to how families can develop rules or guidelines to help children to make safe decisions in the home or other settings. It includes examples of situations where children can face dilemmas in making choices that could affect their safety, and explains how ‘rules’ can help to guide children in these situations. A ‘Family Activity’ helps families to make their own family rules chart, with a focus on including all family members in the process. (Some people might not like the use of the word ‘rules’. You can discuss this and help them to identify a term or phrase they would prefer.)

The goals of Step 2 are:

For families and carers to:

- ▶ Enhance their ability to create behavioural guidelines for and *with* their children
- ▶ Develop some clear, well-defined family rules with their children

For children to:

- ▶ Work with their parents or carers to develop guidelines that will improve their capacity to make safe decisions in their home and in other settings
- ▶ Identify potential dilemmas and practise (with other family members) strategies to deal safely with them

Tips for working with individual families parents or carers

Here are some ideas for how you can use **Step 2** with individual families.

- ◆ Give **Step 2: Cool Tools for Family Rules** to parents who are seeking support to create guidelines for their children.
- ◆ Use the discussion points outlined in “Tips for working with parent groups” (page 14 of this guide) to help parents explore their own experiences and beliefs about rules, children’s behaviour and parenting. This can help parents identify how these beliefs might affect their own parenting style and techniques.
- ◆ Discuss with parents the type of relationship they want to have with their children and how different types of ‘discipline’ can help or hinder these relationships. You can use the story ‘Leaving the House’ (**Step 2**: page 2) to help you.

- ◆ Use the stories about George and Rosie (**Step 2: pages 2 , 3**) in discussion with parents and families about the types of situations where family rules could help children make safe decisions.
- ◆ Use the 'Parent Tips' to help families explore ways children can deal with these situations. If necessary, help parents practise scenarios with their children.
- ◆ Support parents in understanding the processes involved in using the 'cool tools' (**Step 2: page 1**) and how they can use these with their children. If they feel unsure, they could practise going through it with you so they can feel more confident in trying it with their children. Discuss their feelings and thoughts afterwards.
- ◆ Provide direct support to families as they have a go at using the 'cool tools' to make some family rules. Help parents or carers problem-solve how they will implement the rules – for example, by developing rewards and consequences with children. Discuss how it feels to make rules this way.
- ◆ Some families may prefer to use the tools alone and discuss it with you later.

Tips for working with parent groups

Following are examples of questions and activities you could use with a parent group:

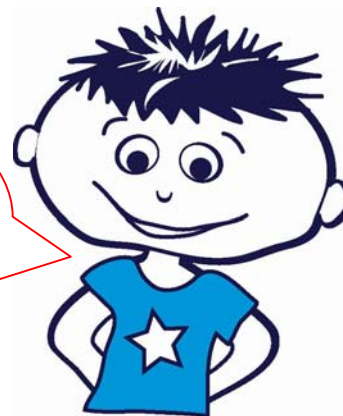
- ◆ Brainstorm.
Why do we have rules/guidelines in a family? (Write responses on board).
- ◆ Group discussion. To help parents understand their beliefs about rules you can ask questions such as:
When you were growing up, what sorts of rules did you have in your family?
How were they made and by whom?
How did you feel about this?
What role did your culture play in the types of rules you had and how they were made?
What happened if you 'broke' a rule?
How did you feel about this? What did it do for your relationship with your parent/carer/family/community?
What role does culture play in the rules your family has now?
- ◆ Discuss in pairs. Read George's story 'Leaving the house' (**Step 2: page 2**), then discuss:
Have you ever felt like 'angry' George?
Do you think your children have ever felt like 'angry' George?
How are rules or behavioural guidelines made in your family?
How do your children respond to this?

- ◆ Group discussion. To help parents look at rules and relationships, you can ask:
 - What sort of relationship do you want to have with your children? (Write on board/butcher's paper).
 - How does the way your family currently makes rules affect the relationship between you and your children?
 - What are some areas/issues that concern you regarding rules, safety and behaviour with your children?
 - How are you dealing with these issues, and how does that process affect your family relationships?
- ◆ Look through the 'Cool Tools for Family Rules'. Discuss each point then ask:
 - What do you think about this way of deciding on rules or guidelines for your children?
- ◆ Practise in pairs. To help parents learn the skill of developing rules with children, ask them to:
 - Choose one of the issues of concern you identified above.
 - Decide who will be the 'parent' and who will be the 'child'.
 - Use the 'Cool Tools' to help you and your 'child' develop a rule to deal with the identified issue/behaviour/concern.
 - Swap over roles, choose a different concern and repeat the process.
- ◆ Group discussion. Help parents to explore potential impacts of using 'Cool Tools':
 - What was it like to go through this process – as a parent and as a child? How did you feel? What did you think?
 - How (if at all) was it different from the way your family normally makes rules or sets guidelines?
 - If different from the usual way you make rules or set guidelines, how do you think making them this way might affect how the rules are followed?
 - How might it affect your children's safety?
 - How might making rules or deciding on guidelines this way affect the relationship between you and your children?

Try it out!

Suggest parents use the 'Cool Tools for Family Rules' to work out one or more rules with their child.

Remember to talk about how it went in your next session: How did it feel to use this process? How did your children respond? Has your child needed to refer to a rule? What happened?



Tips for working with groups of children

Here are some questions and activities to prompt discussion and facilitate understanding for children about rules and their potential role in helping people to stay safe.

◆ Group discussion. Here are some ideas of questions to ask children:

What are rules?

Think about and discuss some situations where we have rules, e.g. road safety. Are they necessary? Why or why not?

What might happen if we didn't have rules?

What are some rules you have at your place?

What do you think about them?

How do you feel about them?

Who made them and how were they made?

How do you feel about this?

How do you think rules should be made?

◆ Activities about 'Leaving the House' (**Step 2**: page 2)

Read out the first part of 'Leaving the House' (up to when George needs to decide what to do).

Ask children to tell you what they might do if they were George. Help them to identify any risks associated with their decisions by asking questions such as 'What if George went and took Stephanie, or left her at home?' 'What if Mum came home and couldn't find them?' Keep teasing out their responses to help them think about possible consequences of their decisions.

Read out 'angry' George's comments. Ask children if they have ever felt this way. Discuss. What would make a difference?

◆ Role-plays about 'Leaving the House' (**Step 2**: page 2)

Invite children to role-play someone being 'George', and his 'friends' coming around to ask him out. Following or during the role-plays discuss children's responses and help them work out 'safe' reactions that will not shame them with their 'friends'. Discuss in relation to peer pressure.

Make up different scenarios (as in Parent Tips **Step 2**: page 2) and take turns to role-play them. Help children work out and practise ways to say 'NO' that won't embarrass them or alienate their friends. Talk about how each type of interaction and response feels for the 'person' and their 'friends' and how it might affect their relationship.

◆ Activities about 'Answering the Door' (**Step 2**: page 3). Read out the first part of the story 'Answering the door' (but not the part about how Rosie feels). Ask children:

How might Rosie be feeling and thinking? Ask children - have they ever felt unsure about what to do, like Rosie? Discuss.

Ask children to talk about the possible risks for Rosie. Read out to them what Rosie was feeling and thinking. Discuss their answers.

Ask children to think of a rule/s that could help Rosie make a decision that will keep her safe.

- ◆ Use the 'Cool Tools for Family Rules' to help the children you're working with develop some rules for their classroom/club/home, especially regarding safety. Talk to them about each of the steps/tools and the importance of including everyone. Discuss how they feel about making rules this way.
- ◆ Discuss with children what it will be like to talk about this Step with their families. Hand out copies of **Step 2: Cool Tools for Family Rules** for children to take home. Follow up at a later date: how did it go?

Fun Activities

Write a story about a situation where following a rule helped someone to make a safe decision. (Maybe they make some potentially unsafe or risky decisions first!)

Write a story or draw a picture about what might happen if you *didn't* have rules at your place. Make it as crazy as you like!



Make up a new community of animals or people. They might live on a mountain, up a tree, at the bottom of the sea, on a dog – anywhere! Think about the rules they might need to develop so they can live safely together. Write a story about the community, describing who the people or animals are, where they live, the rules they have and why they have them. Maybe they need to make up a new rule because of something that happens.

Get together with some friends and make up a play that shows what could happen if kids didn't have any rules to follow at home, or didn't follow the rules (think about George's story to help you). Is there a 'moral' to your play? What characters are in it? Do you need any props? Practise your play then invite someone else to come and watch it.

Tips for working with communities

Following is a way you could use 'Cool Tools for Family Rules' with communities or community groups as a *process* for bringing people together to explore issues.

◆ You can use the process in 'Cool Tools for Family Rules' (**Step 2**: page 1) as a guide to help you involve community members in an inclusive decision-making process to develop some guidelines around creating a Child Friendly Community. For example:

1. Include children and young people when making rules or guidelines about their safety and wellbeing in your community. People are more likely to follow rules they have helped to make.
2. Keep your rules simple and clear so everyone understands them. Be as specific as possible when developing rules or guidelines. For example, 'Make sure young children are always supervised by a trusted adult'.
3. Make your rules positive. For example, turn 'Don't swear or yell at others' into 'Speak respectfully to others'.
4. Give good reasons for each rule. People are more likely to follow rules that have good reasons.
5. Have just a few rules and stick to them. Too many rules can be confusing.
6. Be clear about what will happen if people do or do not follow a rule. Your community can make decisions about rewards or consequences when the rule is being made.
7. Make sure your community rules are well publicised. Find ways to ensure everyone in your community – especially newcomers – knows about the rules or guidelines and why they were developed.

You can visit the Northern Territory Government's 'Families' website to see how Binjari Community developed their 'Community Children's Plan':

<http://www.families.nt.gov.au/>

(For more information and support in creating a Child Friendly Community go to the NAPCAN website <http://www.napcan.org.au/>, or to

<http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/> or <http://www.community.gov.au/>

Step 3 Feel Safe with People



Step 3 is designed to help parents teach their children about personal safety. It aims to help families think about the need for children to ‘tune in’ to their feelings, especially when they feel unsafe with people, and to act on these feelings. It includes scenarios that can help children to identify situations that could place them at risk with others and to help families consider strategies to deal with these. Children can make a ‘Helper Plan’ of people they can talk to if they feel frightened or worried.

Some of the issues addressed in this Step could bring up memories and feelings for adults and children with current or past experiences of abuse or bullying. Try to be sensitive to this, for example, by noticing if someone does not want to talk about an issue or join group discussions. If that person wishes, you can discuss any issues with them privately, or refer them on to someone who can offer professional support if necessary. Be prepared with contact details of services that could offer support. Know what to do if you need to report an incident of suspected child abuse to Family and Children’s Services (FACS).

The goals of Step 3 are:

For parents/carers to:

- ▶ Talk with their children around issues of potential child abuse (including sexual) and bullying
- ▶ Help children learn to identify when they feel scared or unsafe
- ▶ Teach their children skills and strategies to identify, avoid or respond to risky or harmful situations

For children to:

- ▶ Understand their right to feel safe with others
- ▶ Learn skills and strategies to identify, avoid or respond to risky or harmful situations
- ▶ Identify trusted people they can call on for support if they feel scared or worried

Tips for working with individual families parents or carers

Here are some ideas for how you can use **Step 3** in your work with individual families, parents or carers.

- ◆ You can use the comments in ‘What Territory Kids Say’ to help parents think about situations where children might not feel safe. If you are working with families influenced by issues such as violence, drugs or alcohol, these comments can help parents to identify and understand how their own children might be affected by situations in their home environment. Discuss why it is important that children feel safe.
- ◆ Once parents have looked through this Step (with or without your assistance) discuss how they feel about talking with their children about the issues and the activities, keeping in mind there could be sensitive issues in this Step for some parents.
- ◆ If necessary, help parents to plan how they will to talk with their children about the issues raised in the Step, as well as do the activities. (This could include the types of scenarios they think would be appropriate to cover with each of their children.)
- ◆ Identify and discuss any things that parents believe could make it easier or more difficult for them to talk about the issues with their children.
- ◆ Talk with parents about the support networks their children already have, or might need to have, if they feel scared or upset.
- ◆ If necessary, support parents in helping their children make a ‘Helper Plan’ or in allowing children to make their own.
- ◆ If parents carry out the activities with their children at home, talk with them later about how it went for everyone.
- ◆ Find out about local services that can support families in relation to past, present or suspected abuse. Have their contact details ready to hand out if required.

Tips for working with parent groups

Here are some ideas of how you could help parents prepare for working through this Step with their children.

- ◆ Group discussion. Write on the board or butchers’ paper the heading ‘Teach your children they have a right to feel safe with people’. Underneath this write the comments from ‘What Territory Kids Say’ (**Step 3**: page 1), then:
 - Discuss the children’s statements.
 - What other situations can make children feel scared or unsafe?
 - Why is it important for children to feel safe?

◆ 'Feelings' activity. Provide coloured pencils and ask parents to:

1. Draw a body outline on an A4 piece of paper (or give parents a sheet with a body outline already drawn - a 'gingerbread man' outline will do fine).
2. Close your eyes and try to think of a time when you felt frightened (perhaps as a child).
3. Use the coloured pencils to write down or draw your feelings on the body outline. (Note that each person's response may be unique.)
4. Tell or show the group about what you have drawn or written (Note that parents do not need to talk about the scenario they thought of – just where and how on their bodies they felt frightened.)
5. Discuss similarities and differences.

Talk about how different people experience the feeling of fear in different ways and places in their bodies, but that it is a physical reaction designed to help people run away or stay and 'fight' (the 'flight or fight' response).

Explain how if you can cue into these feelings early on, they can help people to avoid risky/dangerous situations. Talk about instincts and how they can help in this way. Then ask parents to:

6. Think of a time when you trusted your instincts and it helped you avoid a dangerous/risky situation - share with the group if you wish.
7. Close your eyes again and think of a time you were really excited. Where and how did you feel this? Share with the group. Were any of the feelings similar to your scared feelings? (This can act to 'debrief' the group, as well as look at how some physical reactions can be similar for different feelings)
8. What was it like to do this activity?
9. How might doing this activity with children help them to recognise when they might be feeling scared or unsafe (in contrast to other feelings) - as in the Family Activity 'How Do We Know When We Feel Scared?' (**Step 3**: page 2).

◆ Hand out the Family Activity 'When Can I Say "NO"?' (**Step 3**: page 3). (This activity offers an opportunity for parents and children to discuss and explore a number of unsafe and risky situations 'at a distance' – through the experiences of the 'other kids' in the scenarios.)

◆ Discuss as a group:

What do you think about the idea of teaching children to say 'NO' to adults under certain circumstances? (Discuss how if children are afraid to do this it can put them at risk of harm.)

◆ Ask parents to select the scenarios they think would be useful to go through with each of their children. (Parents do not need to share their choices with the group.)

◆ Discuss as a group:

What *reasons* influenced the choices you made about which scenarios to do? (e.g. age, level of understanding, relevance to family situation, past experiences of parent or child, not wanting to overwhelm children).

How do you feel about talking with your children about these types of situations?

What are some ways you could use 'When Can I Say "NO"?' to help your children explore a whole range of possible responses for the children in the scenarios. (Keep in mind that the goals for the 'scenario children' are to stay safe and use strategies to cope and get help if necessary.)

What types of questions could you use to help your children explore options?

What could you say or do if a child discloses or hints that they have felt or been at risk? (Be prepared with a list of relevant contacts in your area to give to parents for support or advice. Include numbers such as Kids Help Line and Parentline.)

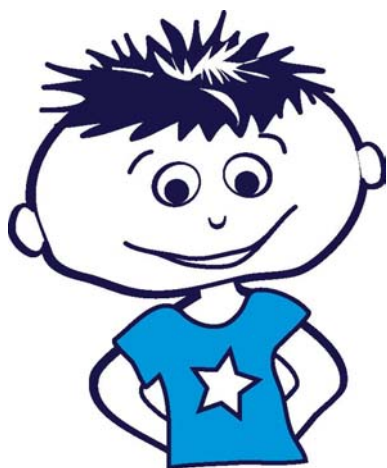
What strategies are you already using to help your children feel and be safe with other people? (If parents think it would be helpful, you could write these strategies down and hand them out to the group.)

Try it out!

Suggest parents try some of the scenarios from the Family Activity 'When Can I Say "NO"?' with their children.

Remember to talk about how it went in your next session. Was it helpful? How did their children participate? How did parents feel about discussing these issues with their children?

Ask parents to help or encourage each of their children to make a 'Helper Plan' of people they can talk to if they feel worried, angry or frightened.



Tips for working with groups of children

Before you work through **Step 3** with children, think about how you will need to handle any strong reactions or disclosures of abuse. If you are not trained and skilled in how to support children in this way, you may need to engage the support or assistance of someone else who works with or supports children in this area.

Activities about feelings

An ability to recognize and empathise with the feelings of others is regarded as a good indicator of a child's ability to develop positive relationships with children and adults. The following tips and activities include ideas to help children increase their ability to recognise a range of feelings in themselves and others.

- ◆ As a group, ask children:

Have you ever felt scared?

How did you know you were scared?

- ◆ Provide coloured pencils and ask each child to:

Draw an outline of a body (or give children a picture of a simple body outline).

Close your eyes and think of a time you felt scared.

Write or draw on the body how you felt and where you had those feelings. (Note that each child's response may be unique.)

Describe to the group the types of feelings you had, and where on your body you experienced them. (Children don't need to talk about the actual situation.)

- ◆ Explain to children how these are physical reactions to feeling scared. Ask them:

Have you had those physical reactions when you've had other feelings e.g. nervousness, excitement, anticipation? (Discuss similarities and differences.)

How can you know/recognise the difference?

- ◆ Explain to children how people can use some uncomfortable/unsafe feelings (instincts) as a warning signal to tell them something is wrong. Ask for examples from children and discuss.

Activities about secrets

- ◆ To help children increase their ability to identify potentially unsafe or risky situations you can hold a small group discussion about 'secrets' and ask the following questions:

What are secrets?

Have you ever been asked to keep a secret? (Children could share experiences.)

Can you think of any times secrets might not be good? (Some examples might be when a secret hurts someone's feelings, when keeping a secret might be dangerous, or when it stops someone from getting help.)

- ◆ Discuss these situations and talk about 'bad secrets' that can make a person feel scared or bad. Explain the importance of telling someone in these situations and to persist until somebody listens to them.

Activities about saying 'NO' to adults

- ◆ As a group, discuss with children if and when it's OK to say 'NO' to an adult.
- ◆ Use the activity 'When Can I Say "NO"? (Step 3: page 3) to think of situations. Invite children to think of others. Talk about when it is OK and not OK to say 'NO'.

Fun Activities

Feelings

Get together with a friend or partner and think of as many words as possible that mean 'happy', 'sad', 'scared', and 'angry'. Write them down. Add them to words other children have thought of to make a list of 'feelings'. You can use these words to make your stories/poems etc really interesting.

Instincts

Write a story about how a person's or animal's 'instinct' helped them to keep safe or 'save the day'.

Saying 'NO'

Write a story about a situation where a child said 'NO' to an adult in order to stay safe.

Feelings

Draw some faces that show different feelings (e.g. happy, sad, angry, frightened). See if your friends can guess what the feelings are. Can you draw some tricky feelings (e.g. nervousness, frustration, contempt, gratitude or embarrassment)?

Secrets

Write a story about a secret – it could be a 'good' secret or a 'bad' secret. What is the secret? Who asks it? Why do they ask it? How does the other person feel about being asked to keep the secret? Do they keep it? What happens?

Feelings

What is it about people's faces and body language that can give clues to how they are feeling? Discuss. In pairs or small groups, take it in turns to show a feeling through body language and facial expression. Try some tricky feelings. Others can try to guess!

Feelings

Write down a list of 'feelings'. Check you have the correct spelling then use your list to create a "Feelings Wordsearch". Test it on your friends or family!

Feelings

Write a story that begins with a description of a person or animal being scared. How might they feel it in their body? Have the story finish with the person or animal having a different feeling. See how well you can describe it.

Helper Plan

Use the Family Activity in **Step 3** to help children make a Helper Plan of people they can talk to if they feel scared, worried or angry.



Tips for working with communities

Following are some ideas of questions that you can use to facilitate discussion with communities or community groups about children's physical and emotional safety.

- ◆ How does your community show that it values children and young people?
- ◆ What is the attitude of your community towards keeping children safe? (For example in relation to physical, sexual, emotional, psychological or social abuse and child neglect)?
- ◆ What strategies does your community have in place to prevent, for example, bullying or child abuse or neglect?
- ◆ What community attitudes could hinder or support families or individuals who might want to seek help in relation to any of these issues?
- ◆ What are the attitudes or procedures in your community that hinder or support the rights of children (and adults) to live in safe environments?
- ◆ Are there any changes you would like to make to improve community attitudes towards the right of children to be, and feel, safe with others?
- ◆ Are there any other changes you would like to make to improve the safety of children and families? Discuss.
- ◆ Identify any groups, individuals, research etc that might support your attempts to make these changes. (For ideas go to the NAPCAN website www.napcan.org.au, or to <http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/> or <http://www.community.gov.au/>

Step 4 What's Special about Our Family?



Step 4 is designed to help families determine anything about their particular situation that could place their children at risk of harm. It also helps identify knowledge and skills children may need to act and think safely. Families are encouraged to consider how these issues might impact on the development of their Safety Plans in Steps 2, 3, 5, and 7. You can use **“What’s Special About Our Family”** to help families identify potential areas of risk or concern for children.

The goals of Step 4 are:

To help families:

- Identify circumstances around or within their family situation that can affect the potential for risk to children.
- Consider how these circumstances might influence their safety and emergency plans and strategies.

Tips for working with individual families parents or carers

Here are some ideas on how you could use **Step 4** with families.

- ◆ Use the information in **Step 4: ‘What’s Special About Our Family?’** to help families identify any specific circumstances that might increase or decrease the risk of harm to their children. (Families might also think of other situations not covered in the Step).
- ◆ Talk through these issues with parents in regard to any implications for themselves and their children.
- ◆ Help parents identify things they can do to address any areas of concern and so increase the safety and wellbeing of their children (use the Parent Tips to help). Discuss any strengths and resources they can draw on as well as any barriers to their achieving this.
- ◆ Help parents to identify how they can use the information in **Step 4** as they work through the information and activities in other Steps.

- ◆ Encourage family members to talk together to identify ‘what’s special’ about their family. They could do a family collage or picture, or children could do a drawing.
- ◆ You could make a ‘family strengths’ picture:
 1. Trace around the hand of each family member onto a piece of fabric or paper. Invite each person to write ‘inside’ their own hand what strengths they believe they bring to their family (children might need help with this).
 2. Then ask each person to write down (or children can tell you) what strengths they believe each other family member brings to the family. Some families may need some help with this.
 3. Cut out each person’s ‘hand’ and stick it to a large piece of cardboard or fabric. Around each person’s hand, write down all the things that other family members have said about them.
 4. Invite families to decorate their picture and give it a title. You can discuss with family members what it was like to do this activity.

Tips for working with parent groups

For parent or carer groups, you can use the tips outlined above (for working with individual families and parents), perhaps beginning with a brainstorm about the many types of family situations or circumstances that could impact on the risk to children’s safety and wellbeing. Some of you may be working with parents with specific issues related to drugs and alcohol, family violence, mental health, adult or child disability or chronic illness, or child abuse or neglect. You can tailor questions and activities (like those suggested above) to the specific needs of your group.

Tips for working with groups of children

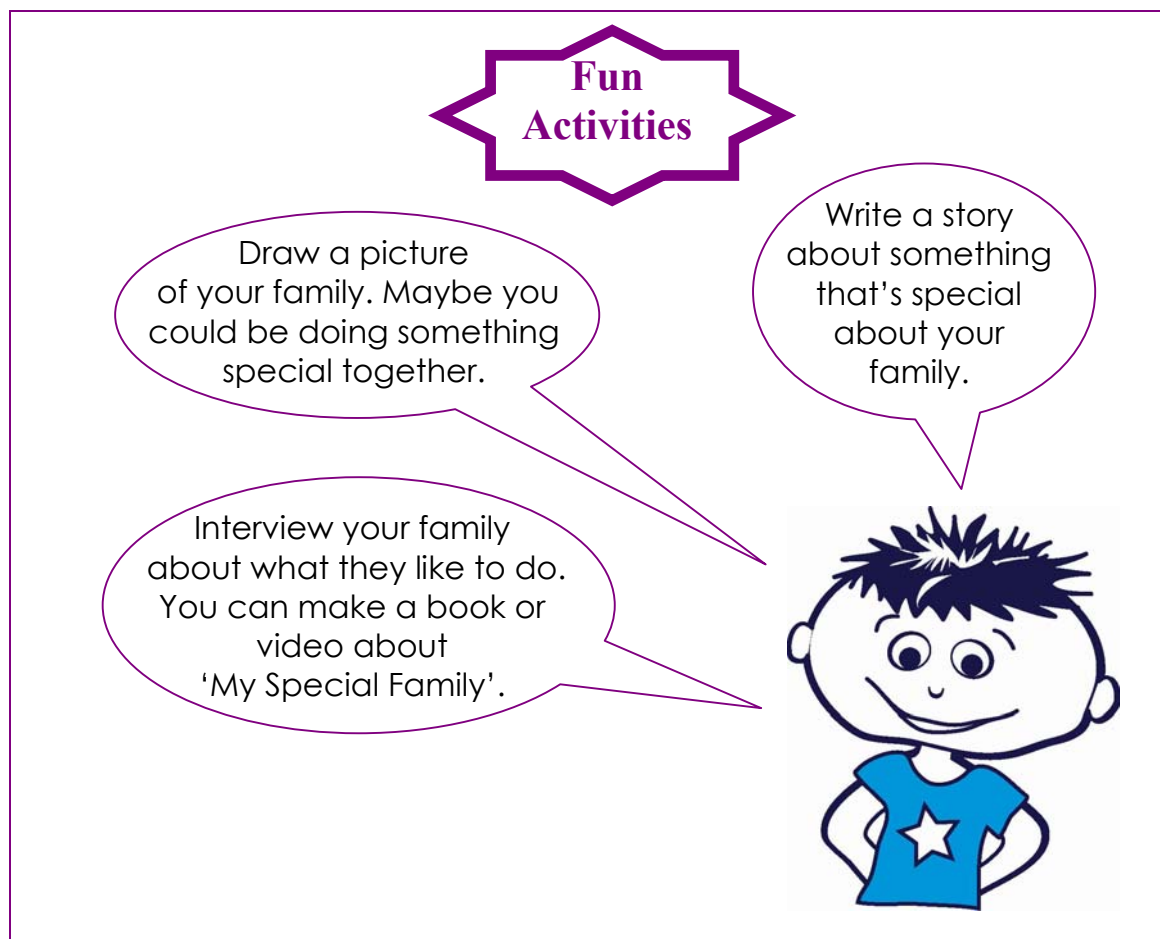
Here are some ideas to help children look at the ‘special’ things about their family:

- ◆ Group discussion. Ask children:

What makes up ‘a family’? (Note a broad range of ‘types’ of families.)

What’s special about your family? What are some things about your family that make it unique? What do you like best about your family? What does your family like to do together?

Are there any things about your family or where you live that might make things tricky or risky for you or affect what you could do in an emergency (e.g. live out bush, don’t have a telephone)? Think of as many as possible. (There is no need to identify issues like violence or substance abuse, unless children bring it up. Raising an issue like this might be ok if you work specifically with children affected by family violence, for example. Otherwise, think about how you can sensitively handle a situation if children raise these issues in a more generic group.)



Tips for working with communities

- ◆ What's special about your community?
- ◆ What strategies or supports does your community have in place to meet any special needs of families in a crisis, or in an ongoing way?
- ◆ If there are any gaps, what could be done to improve services/strategies/ supports?
- ◆ Discuss what a strong community (or child friendly community) looks like.
- ◆ Invite the community to paint, draw or design a community strengths resource. It could be a communal painting, a book, a song, a performance, or a patchwork of different ideas or contributions. It could even be a plan that everyone in the community contributes to that identifies children's rights and needs and how the community can meet these.

Step 5 Emergency



Step 5 provides information and activities to help parents teach their children how to recognise and respond to an emergency. It explains how the 000 emergency number works and recommends that families practise what to do in an emergency. There are some guidelines and examples for families to make an 'Emergency Contacts' list suitable for their children.

The goals of Step 5 are:

For parents/carers to:

- ▶ Help their children learn how to identify and respond to an emergency.
- ▶ Use the Family Activity: "Is this an Emergency?" to engage their children in discussion about safe ways to respond to a variety of situations.
- ▶ Help their children develop an 'Emergency Contacts' list.

For children to:

- ▶ Develop their ability to recognise what makes a particular situation an emergency.
- ▶ Know how to respond in an emergency (including dial 000).
- ▶ Create a meaningful and age-appropriate 'Emergency Contacts' list.

Tips for working with individual families parents or carers

Here are some ideas for working with individual families.

- ◆ Discuss with families any occasions a member might have needed to act in an emergency. What happened? What skills or information, if any, could have helped that person deal better with the situation or feel more confident?
- ◆ Help families identify and talk about any emergency situations that could arise for their children at home, then discuss:
 - What would be the safest way children could get help in these situations?
 - What things could make it easier or harder for children to get help?
 - How might children feel about getting help?

- ◆ Help parents (if necessary) identify which scenarios they want to cover with their children from the Family Activity: “Is this an Emergency?” (**Step 5**: page 5)
Are there other situations they would like to include?
Discuss how they can help children explore a number of responses and choose the safest or ‘best’ one.
- ◆ Encourage families to practise how children can get help in a 000 emergency (**Step 5**: pages 1-4). Provide support if required.
- ◆ Talk with families about an ‘Emergency Contacts’ list (**Step 5**: page 9). Do they have one? Do they need to update/create one? Provide paper/textas etc if necessary.
- ◆ Discuss First Aid (**Step 5**: page 4) and possible training for family members.

Tips for working with parent groups

Following are examples of questions and activities you could use with a parent group to help them prepare for working through **Step 5** with their children. (This might raise painful memories for some people. Be prepared.)

- ◆ Group discussion. Use the following ideas for discussion:
 - What experience, if any, have you had in responding to an emergency? Do you know of anyone else’s experience? What did it feel like for you or them? What things made it easier or harder to know what to do?
 - What types of emergencies might children have to face at home?
 - What do you think it would be like for your child if they needed to act in an emergency? Would they know what to do? How do you think they would cope emotionally? Who could they call on for help?
 - Discuss the Family Activity that suggests that families practise what to do in an emergency (**Step 5**: pages 3, 4). What do you think about this activity? Are there any things that could make it easier or harder to practise this with your children?
- ◆ In pairs. Look through the Family Activity ‘Is this an Emergency?’ (**Step 5**: page 5-7) and discuss:
 - What things might you need to consider before doing this activity with each child? Would you do all of the scenarios or some? Which ones? Why? Would you need to make up some scenarios of your own?
 - What types of responses do you think your children might give?
 - If you did this activity and a child’s responses were *unsafe*, how could you handle this respectfully and in a way that would help your child know and feel more confident about what to do?
 - Discuss the possible effect on some children of doing all the scenarios in one session.
 - What things could you do to help children work through this activity?

- ◆ Group discussion. Feed back to the group and write on board/paper if required:

What were some of the strategies you discussed in pairs that would help your children work through the Family Activity 'Is This an Emergency?'

- ◆ Group discussion. Take a look at the Family Activity 'Make an Emergency Contacts List' (**Step 5**: page 9), then ask:

What strategy does your family currently have for contacting someone in an emergency?

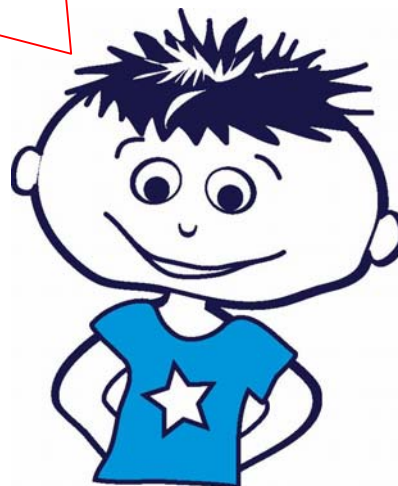
What could be useful about making an 'Emergency Contacts' list *with* your children?

Try it out!

As a group, decide which of the Family Activities parents want to do with their children before the next session. (Remind parents to do the activity in a way which does not make children fearful, but reassures them that it's good to have appropriate skills and knowledge ... just in case.)

How did it go?

Remember to discuss how it went at your next session. How did it go? How did children respond? How did parents and children feel about doing the activity? How do children now feel about their capacity to respond in an emergency?



Tips for working with groups of children

Here are some ideas of questions and activities that can help children to examine their understanding of emergencies and how to respond safely.

- ◆ Group discussion. To help children learn about emergencies, you can ask them:

What IS an emergency?

Is there a difference between a 000 emergency and other emergencies?

What sorts of things could happen at home that would be an emergency?

Has anyone had to do something in an emergency? What did you do? How did you feel?

How important is it that people *only* ring 000 in a *real* Emergency?

What do you know about what to do in an emergency? What number do you need to ring? What happens? Who comes? What might happen if you rang 911 (the emergency number in the USA)?

- ◆ As a group: Use **Step 5** (pages 2-5) as a reference to outline to children the processes they need to know to get help in a 000 emergency. Discuss with them:

How would you get help in a 000 emergency if you had a phone?

What would you do if you didn't have a phone, or your phone wasn't working?

- ◆ Role-play. Help children 'Practise what to do in an emergency' (**Step 5**: pages 1-4).

1. Write up on a board/butcher's paper the questions the Emergency Services Operator would ask if a child rang 000. Check that each child knows their own address. (Some children might not want others to know where they live. They could make up an address for the purpose of this exercise.)
2. As a group, think of a situation where a child might need to act in an emergency.
3. Begin with an adult playing the role of the Emergency Services Operator. Have a child pretend to ring up for help. Go through the questions that would be asked if they were ringing from a) a fixed phone, and/or b) a mobile phone. Give assistance as required.
4. As a group, discuss how it went. How did the child feel?
5. Break into groups of two or three children. Take it in turns to think of an emergency situation and play the role of the operator and the child calling for help. A third child could prompt if/as necessary.
6. As a group, discuss what it was like to pretend to ring up Emergency Services. How did it feel? How might it be different in a real situation?

- ◆ As a group:

Read through some of the scenarios in the Family Activity 'Is This an Emergency?' (**Step 5**: pages 5-7). Discuss possible responses and decide on the safest things to do.

Ask whether any children have completed a First Aid course. If so, discuss if/how they have used their knowledge and skills.

- ◆ Talk to children about whether they have an Emergency Contacts list at home.

Discuss the process outlined in the Family Activity 'Make an Emergency Contacts list' (**Step 5**: page 9).

Encourage children to make one with their family.

Send home copies of **Step 5: Emergency**.

- ◆ Invite St John Ambulance, Red Cross or another qualified agency to run a First Aid course with your group or class.

- ◆ Arrange for a visit to or by an Emergency Services department. Ask them to explain what happens when they find out about and then respond to an emergency.

Fun Activities

Pretend you are a journalist who has been asked to prepare a story about an incident where a child got help during an emergency at their home. You can write a newspaper or magazine article, or an item for the television news or a current affairs program. Pretend you have interviewed the child about what they did and how they felt.

Make up a simple 'Emergency Song' that can teach little kids what to do in an Emergency.

Write down as many words as you can that have something to do with "Emergencies". Check you have the correct spelling then use your list to create an "Emergencies Wordsearch". Try it out with friends or family!



Draw a map of your neighbourhood. Talk to your family and then mark down where you would go if you needed help in an emergency. What landmarks would you need to give if you had to direct someone to your house in an emergency? Draw and label them.

Create audio-visual productions with children about 'safe' and 'unsafe' ways to respond in an emergency. Younger children could work with older children (such as secondary drama or media students) to explore the issues, create scripts for skits, and then act these out. They could be serious or funny! Share these with other classes, groups or schools.

Tips for working with communities

Here are some ideas to help communities and community groups examine safety and emergency issues.

◆ Discuss at a community forum:

What types of situations lead to emergencies in your area?

How easy or difficult is it for children and families to get help in an emergency?

Discuss any issues, including geographical, social, cultural and physical problems or supports (eg no public phones).

If necessary, what changes might need to be made to improve the ability of people to gain access to Emergency Services (Police, Fire and Ambulance) in an emergency?

How easy is it for Emergency Services to gain access to your area? Discuss any issues.

How could access be made easier, if necessary?

Do people in your community have access to quality First Aid training? If not, discuss the potential need for this and possible strategies to access/provide appropriate training.

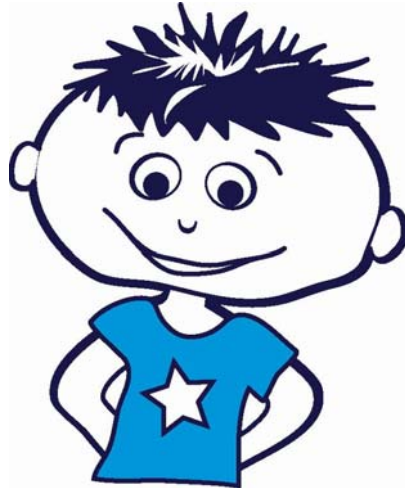
◆ Hold a 'Community Safety and Emergency Information Day'. Invite groups and organizations involved in individual, family and community safety and emergencies to set up displays and conduct activities that promote safety and help people learn about how to prevent and respond to emergency situations.

◆ Invite the local school to make up a play or 'Safety Song'.

◆ Invite St John's Ambulance, Red Cross or some other qualified agency to organise First Aid training in your community.

Step 6 Ready Yet?

Step 6 provides information that can help families make informed and safe decisions about whether their children are 'ready' to spend time at home on their own. Families need to prepare themselves, their home and their children before making this important step.



The goals of Step 6 are:

For parents/carers to:

- ▶ Assess whether their children have the maturity, confidence, skills and resources to safely spend periods of time at home alone.
- ▶ Consider the emotional impact on their children of being left at home alone if they lack the maturity, confidence, skills or resources to feel and be safe.
- ▶ Help their children learn some skills and strategies to enhance their ability to make safe decisions (particularly if they are considered to be ready to spend periods at home on their own).

For children to:

- ▶ Talk with their family about what they think and feel about being home on their own.
- ▶ Develop strategies to stay and feel safe when they are home on their own.

Tips for working with individual families parents or carers

If, as a worker, you have any concerns about children being left at home in circumstances that make (or could make) them feel or be unsafe, you might like to consider the best way to work with families on the material contained in this Step. One option is to initially discuss the issues with parents and children separately. This can give them an opportunity to discuss concerns with you privately. You can then support them to explore these issues as a family at a later date. You'll know the best approach to use to support each family.

- ◆ You can use **Step 6** as a reference to discuss with families any issues or concerns they have about leaving children at home alone. (Discuss with parents and children separately at first if you think appropriate.)
 - What are their feelings about the children being home alone?
 - Are there any dilemmas?
 - Review the ‘checks’ outlined in the kit (**Step 6**: pages 2-5)
 - How might these ‘checks’ influence decisions the family might make about children staying home alone?
 - What other things impact on these decisions (e.g. work, child care)?
 - What choices do they have if they don’t want their children to stay at home alone?
 - What strategies have they been using?
 - Discuss options and provide information if necessary. See **Step 6** for **Parentline** and **Child Care Access Hotline** phone numbers.
- ◆ “What Territory Kids Say” (**Step 6**: page 1) can be used to help parents identify feelings their children might have about being home alone. Children could discuss and add their own comments.
- ◆ If children already spend periods of time at home alone you can discuss:
 - What strategies does the family already use to ‘monitor’ the children and make it safe for them?
 - What do the parents do?
 - What do the children do?
 - Are there other things they would like to do? (Families could make a list and discuss possibilities.)
- ◆ Watch the NAPCAN videos ‘Getting Home’ and ‘Safe at Home’ (available from NAPCAN offices) to stimulate discussion about risks and strategies.
- ◆ Encourage families to play the “What if ...” game (**Step 6**: page 4). Help them to think of situations that could arise and to practise what children should do.
- ◆ If families have safely decided that children are ready to stay at home alone, help them (if necessary) to work out a good way to start. “Get ready, Get set, Go!” could help you (**Step 6**: page 6).
- ◆ You can use the Story: “Looking After Brothers and Sisters” (**Step 6**: page 7) to help families explore issues of older children caring for younger kids.
- ◆ You can use information from other Steps in **7 Steps to Safety** to help families prepare children for staying home alone.

Tips for working with parent groups

You can use the following ideas to help parent or carer groups explore the issues in **Step 6** regarding children's 'readiness' to stay at home alone.

- ◆ **Group Discussion.** Write on the board/butcher's paper the children's statements in 'What Territory Kids Say...' (**Step 6:** page 1) and discuss:

What decisions might the adults in these children's lives have made for, or about, these children?

What has been the impact on the children?

What do these statements say to you about the 'readiness' of each of these children to be at home on their own?

What might be some of the risks for these children of being left at home alone?

- ◆ **Group activity.** This activity can offer a non-threatening way to help parents discuss any concerns they have about leaving children alone, since no-one will know which parents raised which concerns.

1. Hand out sheets of paper and invite parents to anonymously write down any issues or dilemmas they might have about their children being home on their own. (For some parents this may not yet be an issue but they may still have some thoughts or feelings about it.)
2. Randomly write the comments on the board/butcher's paper, and then discuss each as a group.
3. Explore each issue, including parents' feelings about them, before identifying and exploring any strategies or solutions.
4. Ask parents what it was like to do this activity.

- ◆ **Discuss in pairs.** Write on the board/butcher's paper each of the checks 1- 8 (**Step 6:** pages 2-5).

Invite parents to go through each of the checks and discuss in relation to their own children.

- ◆ **Group Discussion.** Then, as a group, discuss the following questions:

Which of these issues had you thought about before?

Which ones hadn't you considered?

How helpful is it to think about these?

How might it impact on decisions your family might make about your children staying home alone?

What other things impact on those decisions?

What choices/options do families in your area have if their children are not ready to be left at home alone? If inadequate, what could you do about this?

- ◆ **Group Discussion.** Read through and discuss the Family Activity ‘Play the “What if ...” game’ (**Step 6:** page 4).

What types of questions would you need to ask each of your children to help you decide whether they could safely handle being at home?

How could you helpfully respond to children’s answers, particularly if their choices are unsafe?

- ◆ **In Pairs.** Ask parents to practice things they could say to their children.

- ◆ **Group Discussion.** Continue discussion:

What sort of role-plays could you use with your children to help them practise safe responses?

What strategies have you used to help your children prepare for or manage being at home alone?

What methods do you use to monitor, supervise, or follow up with your children if or when they are at home on their own?

What other strategies could you use (eg regular house meetings to check how things are going)?

- ◆ **Watch the NAPCAN videos ‘Getting Home’ and ‘Safe at Home’ (available from NAPCAN offices) to stimulate further discussion about risks and strategies.**

Try it out!

Ask parents to carry out some checks (**Step 6:** pages 2-5) and/or play the ‘What If Game ...’ (**Step 6:** page 4) game to help them determine how ready their children might be to spend time at home alone. Discuss what happened, including children’s responses, at the next session.



Tips for working with groups of children

It’s important that children feel safe and free to talk about the issues in this Step. Keep discussion ‘matter-of-fact’ but be alert to situations where children might be fearful, at risk of abuse or neglect, or where families might need support to find alternatives to children being at home on their own. Think about what you might need to do in these situations, and have appropriate contact details ready for support/assistance. Know how to make a report to Family and Children’s Services (FACS) if necessary.

◆ Group Discussion. Ask children:

Have you ever been at home on your own or with brothers or sisters? What was it like? How did you feel? If you do spend time at home alone, have you thought about what things you can do to make sure you feel and stay safe? Discuss.

What things do your parents do to help you feel and stay safe?

Do you have any rules about answering the phone, going out or having friends over? Discuss, including implications and possible consequences.

What do you think about these rules?

◆ Watch the NAPCAN videos ‘Getting Home’ and ‘Safe at Home’ (available from NAPCAN offices). Discuss:

What strategies have been used in the videos to address any risks associated with the girl getting and being home alone?

What strategies do you use now to decrease any risks like these?

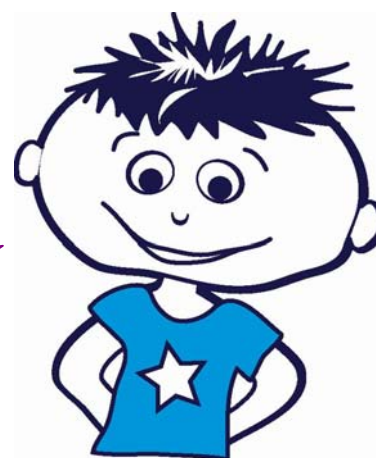
What else could you do to make it safer?

◆ Use the “What if ...” game and role-plays to help children think about scenarios and work out the safest thing to do.

**Fun
Activities**

If you were to give advice to another child who was about to stay at home alone for the first time, what would your advice be? **Write a story** about it. Why did that child ask your advice? Why did you give that particular advice? Did the other child follow it?

Design a board game where kids need to make safe decisions to get to the end. What sort of decisions do they need to make? What happens if they make unsafe decisions?



Tips for working with communities

Discuss at a community forum:

- ◆ If parents or carers in your area need to spend time away from their children (to go to work, for example), what choices do they have if their children are not ready to be left home alone?
- ◆ What would need to happen to provide more choices for families?
- ◆ Make a list of the services or supports available to families and work out a way to let families know about them (eg community radio).
- ◆ Organise a parent workshop on this Step. If people are interested you could organise a series of workshops covering each Step.
- ◆ Set up a display at a local shop or shopping centre and give out copies of **Step 6: 'Ready Yet?'** as well as information about services that support families in your area.
- ◆ Invite a guest speaker to come to the local school or workplace to talk about children being safe at home.
- ◆ Write a letter for your community newsletter about the importance of parents making good decisions about children's safety and wellbeing.
- ◆ Celebrate and communicate your community's support for children.

Step 7 Make a Care Plan



Step 7 encourages parents to consider and plan for what they want to happen with their children if suddenly they are unable to care for them. It is helpful for all families to plan for this situation, however unlikely this might seem. This Step is particularly useful for families who might be isolated from informal support networks such as extended family, or where a parent has a physical or mental health issue that could require sudden hospitalisation. Having a formal plan in these instances can reassure parents and children that children will be well cared for by someone trusted and accepted by the family.

The goals of Step 7 are:

For parents/carers to:

- ▶ Consider care arrangements for their children if suddenly they are unable to care for them.
- ▶ Involve their children in making a plan to address this issue and check it with the relevant people (i.e. those listed in the plan).
- ▶ Feel reassured that their children would be safely looked after if they were unable to care for them.

For children to:

- ▶ Be involved in making a plan for where they would go if their parent/carer suddenly could not look after them.
- ▶ Feel safe and at ease with the decisions made about what would happen to them in this situation.

Tips for working with individual families parents or carers

Here are some ideas for using **Step 7**.

- ◆ Use **Step 7** to talk with parents about situations where they might suddenly be unable to care for their children.
 - How do they feel about this possibility?
 - Do they have any plans about where their children could go?
 - Have they discussed any plans with their children?
 - Have they discussed any plans with people they would like to provide care?
- ◆ If necessary, support parents in developing a Care Plan with their children.
 - Discuss with parents the importance of involving children in the plan so they can feel safe and be reassured about what would happen.
 - Talk with children about what their worries might be if they had to stay away from home for a while. Consider these in the plan.
 - Talk with children about who they would like to stay with and who they would like to implement their plan if required.

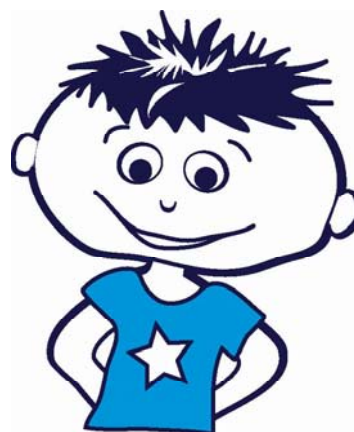
Tips for working with parent groups

Following are some ideas of questions you can use with parents regarding **Step 7**.

- ◆ Group Discussion. Ask parents:
 - What types of situations might suddenly make it impossible for you to care for your children?
 - Has anyone ever experienced this?
 - What might it feel like for you? For your children?
 - What plans do you have for this type of situation?
- ◆ In pairs. Take a look at **Step 7: Make a Care Plan** (page 3) and:
 - Discuss what sorts of things you might need to consider in making a Care Plan with your children (e.g. pets, who your children would feel comfortable with, children's health issues, family support etc).
 - Talk about how you could involve your children in making their Care Plan while reassuring them that the plan may never need to be used.
 - Discuss any difficulties in finding people to put on your child's Care Plan.
- ◆ Group Discussion.
 - What was it like to do that Activity?
 - What sorts of things did people think it was important to consider?
 - What problems did people identify? How might these be overcome?

Try it out!

Ask parents to develop a Care Plan with their children. Discuss at the next session. How did it go? What went well? Any problems or difficulties?



Tips for working with groups of children

For some children, the idea that their parents might suddenly be unable to care for them could be quite frightening. Discussion and development of a Care Plan might best be handled by their parents or carers, who can reassure the children that the situation is possible, but unlikely.

Some of you, however, might be working with groups of children who are more likely to need a Care Plan, and who may be more aware that one could be required. Children who have a parent with a physical or mental health issue or violence in their family are examples. For these children, a group setting can provide a safe environment to explore their feelings and share strategies - with children in similar circumstances - about how to deal with the possibility that their parents may suddenly be unable to care for them. You and the parents or carers know these children best. Talk to them about their issues, fears and concerns and use **Step 7: Make a Care Plan** to help families develop a plan that best suits their needs.

Tips for working with communities

- ◆ Is there anything about your community or area that increases the possibility that parents might suddenly be unable to care for their children?
- ◆ What, if anything, could be done to improve this situation?
- ◆ What supports exist in your community for situations where parents might suddenly be unable to care for their children?
- ◆ Are there any other supports that could be included? How? Who should be involved?
- ◆ What strategies could be put into place to support families who might be isolated from extended family networks or friends?

Resource List

Benjamin, J., Bessant, J. & Watts, K. 1997 *Making Groups Work: Rethinking Practice*, Allen and Unwin, NSW.

Bundey, C., Cullen, J., Denshire, L. Grant, J., Norfor, J. & Nore, T. 1968 *Group Leadership: A manual about group leadership and a resource for group leaders*, Health Promotion Unit, NSW.

Curran, D. 1989 *Working with Parents: Dolores Curran's Guide to Successful Parent Groups*, American Guidance Services, Minnesota.

Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, F. P. 2006 *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*, 9th ed, Allyn & Bacon, USA.

Mc Dermott, F. 2002 *Inside Group Work: A guide to reflective practice*, Allen and Unwin, NSW.

Zastrow, C. 2006 *Social Work With Groups: A comprehensive workbook*, 6th ed, Thompson Brooks/Cole, Belmont, CA.

Your feedback

During the first year of release of this guide and the **7 Steps to Safety** kit we are seeking feedback from people who have used the GUIDE to assist families, children or communities to work through sections of the kit. This will help us to:

- Determine whether the GUIDE is being used in conjunction with the **7 Steps to Safety** kit
- Determine how useful the GUIDE is for people working to support families, children or communities in their use of the **7 Steps to Safety** kit
- Identify ways the GUIDE could be improved both in content and layout

Once we have received this feedback we can modify the guide if necessary to ensure that it contains relevant, useful material that is easy to use. In this way we can all work together to help families and communities provide safe environments for children.

If you would like to let us know what you think about the guide please return the following questionnaire to Office of Children and Families or drop us a line.

Facsimile (08) 8999 2765	Postal Address Office of Children and Families DHCS PO Box 40596 CASUARINA NT 0811
Email Address families@nt.gov.au	
Telephone 1800 005 485	

Please feel free to contact us if you would also like to:

- Provide feedback about the **7 Steps to Safety** KIT, including any issues that arise as you use it.
- Receive copies of the pre- and post-test tools for use with individual families or groups.
- Get any help about using the kit or guide along the way.

FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE for “7 Steps to Safety - Your Guide”

Office of Children and Families would be grateful if you could answer the following questions to help us make ‘7 Steps to Safety - Your Guide’ as useful as possible for people working with families, parents, children and communities/community groups. The information will be used to improve the guide’s content, layout and usability. Please return the completed tear-out questionnaire to Office of Children and Families by 28th February 2007. Postal Address: PO Box 40596, Casuarina, NT 0811; Email: families@nt.gov.au; Facsimile: (08) 8999 2765, Telephone: 1800 005 485.

The ratings in the questionnaire are on a scale from 1 to 5, with ‘1’ mostly being ‘Not Useful’ to you, and ‘5’ being ‘Very Useful’ to you. Please circle the number that best shows what you feel about each question. We would also appreciate any comments you might have.

Type of agency

Crisis Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child Protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Support	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol and Other Drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	Migrant Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Defence Forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family Violence	<input type="checkbox"/>
School/Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhood Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	After School/Vacation Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family Day Care	<input type="checkbox"/>			Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please state:

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Geographic area

<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban
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If you have used 7 Steps to Safety in your work with families, children, communities or community groups, could you please provide a brief outline of this work?

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Have you used the guide to support your use of 7 Steps to Safety? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please add any comments here
.....

If not, do you think you *would* use this guide? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please add any comments here
.....

Overall, how useful is the content of the guide?

1 2 3 4 5
Not Useful Very Useful

Please add any comments here
.....

Overall, how user-friendly is the guide?

1 2 3 4 5
Not User Friendly Very User Friendly

Please add any comments here
.....

We need to know how useful each section of the guide is, in helping you to use the *7 Steps to Safety KIT* and **GUIDE**. Please tick any sections you have **READ**, rate how useful they are and add any comments.

Section of guide	Tick each section read	Circle a number to rate the usefulness of each section	Please comment
Why a <i>7 Steps to Safety GUIDE</i> ? (page 3)		1 2 3 4 5 Not Useful Very Useful	
Why a <i>7 Steps to Safety KIT</i> ? (page 3)		1 2 3 4 5 Not Useful Very Useful	
Each Step in <i>7 Steps to Safety</i> includes ... (page 5)		1 2 3 4 5 Not Useful Very Useful	
Printing out the Steps (page 6)		1 2 3 4 5 Not Useful Very Useful	
Using the kit with different groups (page 7)		1 2 3 4 5 Not Useful Very Useful	
Your guide to using each Step (page 10 ...)		1 2 3 4 5 Not Useful Very Useful	

Please add any further comments here

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If you have READ (but not yet used) the sections ‘Using the kit with different groups’ (page 7) and ‘Your guide to using each Step’ (page 10 ...), please tick the sets of tips for groups that are most relevant to your work NOW and those that might be relevant in the FUTURE. Please add any comments.

Groups	Relevant NOW	Relevant in FUTURE	Please comment
Individual families/parents/carers tips			
Parent groups tips			
Groups of children tips			
Communities/community groups tips			

If you have USED the sections ‘Using the kit with different groups’ (page 7) and ‘Your guide to using each Step’ (page 10 ...) please rate how useful you found the sets of tips, and add any comments.

Groups	Tick the tips USED	Circle a number to rate the usefulness of the tips	Please comment
Individual families, parents or carers tips		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
Parent groups tips		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
Groups of children tips		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
Communities or community groups tips		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	

Please add any further comments here

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We need to learn more about which sections in ‘Your guide to using each Step’ (page 10 ...) are most USED and most USEFUL. Firstly, please tick the sections you USED, rate their usefulness and add any comments.

Your guide to using each Step	Tick each section USED	Circle a number to rate the usefulness of section used	Please comment
STEP 1: Make Your Place Safe		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 2: Cool Tools For Family Rules		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 3: Feel Safe With People		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 4: What’s Special About Our Family?		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 5: Emergency		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 6: Ready Yet?		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 7: Make a Care Plan		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	

Please add any further comments here

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Now, please tick any sections you haven't used, but that could be useful in your future work. Please rate how useful you think they could be and add any comments.

Your guide to using each Step	Tick each section you might use	Circle a number to rate the potential usefulness of the section	Please comment
STEP 1: Make Your Place Safe		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 2: Cool Tools For Family Rules		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 3: Feel Safe With People		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 4: What's Special About Our Family?		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 5: Emergency		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 6: Ready Yet?		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	
STEP 7: Make a Care Plan		<div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Not Useful Very Useful</div>	

Please add any further comments here

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Do you have any suggestions for changes that could make the guide more user friendly?

Please add any comments here

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Do you have any additional creative ways to use *7 Steps to Safety* that we could include in any updates of the guide?

Please add any comments here (feel free to add extra pages if necessary)

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Would you recommend this guide to others? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please add any comments here

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To help us determine which STEPS in the *7 Steps to Safety* KIT are most useful to families in the NT, please rate the usefulness of each Step on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being 'Not Useful' and 5 being 'Very Useful'.

STEP	Rating 1-5	STEP	Rating 1-5
Step 1: Make Your Place Safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	Step 5: Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 2: Cool Tools for Family Rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	Step 6: Ready Yet?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 3: Feels Safe with People	<input type="checkbox"/>	Step 7: Make a Care Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Step 4: What's Special about Our Family?	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Please add any comments here

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Thanks again for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire to help us improve “*7 Steps to Safety... Your Guide*”. For further information please contact Meron Looney at Office of Children and Families (08) 8999 2798 or email meron.looney@nt.gov.au

Would you be prepared for us to contact you and your agency for future evaluations on the *7 Steps to Safety* kit? If so, please fill in your details below and return with your questionnaire or email us at families@nt.gov.au

Name:

Agency:

Phone:

Email: