

We Can Keep Safe New Zealand



Type of intervention



Group Work



Game

Target group, level of prevention and sub-groups:



Primary prevention

Young Children (0-5 Years) | Male & Female | Group Work, Game | English

Target population

Children aged 3-5 years.

Delivery organisation

We Can Keep Safe was developed by the Auckland Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation (HELP); a foundation that provides support for sexual abuse survivors in New Zealand.

Mode and context of delivery

HELP believes “it is never too early for children to learn how to keep themselves safe”. We Can Keep Safe is a primary prevention programme which helps children to develop personal safety skills. Drama, music, movement, storytelling and puppetry are the main methods of delivery and these methods are backed up by resources such as a resource book (aimed at both parents and children), handouts and take-home activities. The programme is held in early childhood education centres (such as day cares, play centres, kindergartens and early learning centres).

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

Educators trained by HELP deliver the We Can Keep Safe programme around the Auckland region.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The programme consists of five 45 minute sessions delivered by a ‘trained educator’.

Description of intervention

We Can Keep Safe teaches children how to name body parts and to develop assertion about the ownership of their bodies. In addition, it educates on the touching rules, identifying feelings and how to tell someone to get something to stop happening.

Evaluation

Woodley, A. & Metzger, N. (2012). An evaluation of the “We Can Keep Safe” personal safety programme. *Point Research*. Available from: <http://helpauckland.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/We-can-keep-safe-evaluation-report-30-06-2012.pdf>.

“Data was collected via in depth interviews with parents and children and during programme observations at four early childhood centres within the wider Auckland area during February to May 2011. In total, parents/caregivers and children from 20 families were interviewed prior to participating in the programme, and again one month and six months following the programme. Two families withdrew during this process.

There were marked changes in the children’s knowledge before and after completing the programme. After the programme, most or all of the children could:

- Distinguish between “OK” and “not OK” touches and articulate how these touches would make them feel
- Articulate strategies for action if someone touched them in a way they didn’t like or made them scared or worried
- Identify at least one trusted adult who they could tell about touching they didn’t like
- Understand that telling a grown up would help keep them safe
- Identify and use the correct anatomical or widely accepted terms for their genital areas, for example penis and bottom, and just under half used the words vagina or vulva
- Articulate the three touching rules, for example, it is okay for you to touch your own penis/vulva/bottom, it is not okay for you to touch someone else’s penis/vulva/bottom and it is not okay for someone else to touch your penis/vulva/bottom
- Distinguish between secrets and surprises. Most indicated that they would tell their mum when given a scenario involving a ‘secret’.

These changes were largely sustained at one, six and twelve months, although there is some evidence that this knowledge may start to decrease around one year following the programme.”

References

<http://helpauckland.org.nz/services/we-can-keep-safe/existing-initiatives-preschool>

<http://helpauckland.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/We-can-keep-safe-evaluation-report-30-06-2012.pdf>

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