

All About Strangers

3-4 Year Olds

Day 3 of 5

Objectives

To review Rules 1 and 2:

- Stay an arm's reach away, and
- Don't talk to strangers.

To teach Rule #3:

- Don't take things from strangers.

To role-play the rules so children have an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the techniques.

Introduction for adult

While the first two rules were designed to teach the children to be alert when they're by themselves, the next rule is focused on reducing the actual possibility of abuse or abduction. This is accomplished by strengthening the child's ability to avoid getting involved with someone they don't know when they're by themselves. One of the reasons children are vulnerable is because they get engaged with the stranger and then forget the rules. We want to prevent the child getting involved in any way and keep their attention on themselves.

Once again, the initial presentation of the rules will take place on the video. Please use the video as a model for your subsequent role-playing with your child. As the video demonstrates, the role-playing should never be frightening. You should always err to the side of being silly rather than threatening.

If any of the children seem upset or anxious at any time during these lessons, let the child know that the purpose of the activity is to learn what to do so there is no fear or anxiety.

Some young children will respond to the questions in this section with fantasy answers such as, "I'd shoot him or punch him." We don't want to take fantasy away from children in this age group. However, it is important to discuss with them the difference between make-believe and real situations.

Ask questions about what happens if they try to solve real life problems with fantasy solutions. For example, you might say, "Is that make-believe or is that real life?" Let the child role-play the fantasy solution and then role-play the real life solution. Note that it is not possible for the child to make contact with the stranger and still stay an arm's reach away.

Introduction for children

Do you remember the first two rules we learned about strangers?

1. Stay an arm's reach away, keep a circle of safety around yourself and pay attention.
2. Don't talk to someone you don't know when you're by yourself.

What is a stranger? Right, anyone you don't know.

Do we need to be afraid of strangers?

Absolutely not! There's no way to tell who's nice and who isn't by how they look, so staying safe and taking care of yourself means following the rules with all strangers, when you're by yourself.

Are you ready to learn another rule?

Watch videotape

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1lwMv3Y7Ec&list=PLSrCYUKewj4fovjoOqyXkWnJ9mFR4Tcfo&index=9>

Role-play

So what's the new rule? Don't take anything from someone you don't know.

When do you need to follow these rules?

When you're all by yourself or with your friends and no grownup is taking care of you.

When you're by yourself, is it your job to take care of grownups?

No. One of the rules for grownups is, "When grownups need help with a problem, they need to go to another grownup or take care of it themselves. But sometimes grown-ups forget and ask children to help them.

Who's it your job to take care of! Yourself!

RP: What if a stranger comes into the yard and says, "Tam, I'm a friend of your Mom's and she left her keys at my house. Could you give them to her for me please?" Would you take them?

What if she wanted to be really helpful and take the keys to give to her mother? Is that okay?

If the child steps forward to take the keys, put your hand gently under your child's hand to demonstrate that she is not an arm's reach away. When she is an arm's reach away, she can't take the keys.

RP: What if a delivery person comes and wants you to take the package? Do you take it?

Is this a grownup with a problem? Is it your job to take care of that grownup when you're all by yourself or with your friends?

No, it isn't and the grownup should either take care of his/her own problem or find another grownup to help.

What if your Mother is in the yard and she says to take it?

It is important to continue to intersperse examples where mom or dad are present to reinforce that children can interact with strangers when a care-taking adult is present and gives permission.

RP: What if someone is delivering flowers for your mother? Do you take them?

No. They could leave them on the porch.

RP: What if a new neighbor comes over and has a present for you? Do you take it?

No, go in the house and get a parent.

RP: What if you're at the grocery store and someone is passing out samples of food? Do you need to ask permission before you take one?

Does this mean that anyone who tries to give you something is bad?

No, it just means that you can't tell, so you don't take anything from someone you don't know when you're all by yourself or with your friends.

RP: What if a stranger has something that belongs to you? Something that you really like?

What is your favorite toy? If someone you don't know has your favorite toy, do you take it?

This is the hardest example. If your child is alone, s/he needs to know not to take anything, even something that belongs to him or her.

Who is more important, you or your toys?

If something happened to your toy, could we go to the store and buy another one?

If something happened to you, could we go to the store and buy you again?

So, you're more important aren't you?

RP: What if you were sitting in your yard playing with a favorite toy and someone you didn't know came up to you and said, "What nice toys! Can I look at them?" What would you do?

Stop what they're doing, stand up, back up and pay attention. This can be really hard for children, so work with your child gently so they can follow the rule in this situation.

What if the stranger picks up your toy and says, "I think you should take this into the house." What would you do?

The child should back up several more steps.

What if the stranger says, "Well, if you don't want this toy, I think I will take it home for my little girl." What would you do?

Again, the child should back up and at that point practice turning around and running into the house to get an adult.

Are all strangers bad? No, they're just strangers - people you don't know.

Can you remember the 3 rules we've learned so far?

1. Stay an arm's reach away from the stranger.
2. Don't talk to the stranger.
3. Don't take anything from anyone you don't know.

There is just one more rule to learn next time.