

Activity: Who can help?

It is important that from a young age, children understand that there are specific people they can seek help from both offline (in person) and online. We always need to send the message that children don't talk to anyone they don't know online. However, as children are developing abstract thinking skills at this time, we know helping them grasp this concept in the online world can be more difficult. This activity intends to give children the context of "faces they know", "faces they don't know" and "faces they can trust".

We also need to manage children's fears and misinterpretations. In an early childhood setting we do encourage children to talk to people they don't know sometimes, for example, when they are new at the school, when a new friend starts or at the beginning of the year. The way to manage this in the activity is to

focus on the concept of getting help from people in a uniform like police. It is okay to say hello to someone at the shops if you are with your parents or guardian – family member, so it is important we only talk or communicate with friends online in the presence of a trusted adult. This reasserts to children and parents the importance of "co-viewing" and "co-play" on technology.

Readiness

Children are ready for this activity when they are able to identify people in their lives who can help them in different situations both offline and online. You could talk about people they know and how they help them. This can be facilitated through conversation such as "What does mum/dad/granny/family member do to help you?"

Other Playing IT Safe activities to further explore what to do when something unexpected happens on digital devices include:

- Classroom pop-ups.

Description

Note: You can do this as a group activity or with individual children.

Part 1: Set up

- Use a smartphone or tablet to take a series of photographs from pictures provided with the PlayingITSafe downloads. The photos are of a family and people in the community that might be trusted adults. They will include: a mum, a dad, a grandparent, educators, co-educators, a police officer, an ambulance officer. There will also be three unknown people.

Part 2: Run the activity

- Ask if they have ever spoken to someone by video call on a phone, tablet or computer, and if not, explain video calls. Then, play a game of swipe with the photographs you have taken – where they swipe to a face and tell you if they would talk to that person or not.
- Introduce the family and other people, as you swipe. Ask the children to decide who they should talk to and who they shouldn't.
- How they answer will allow you to discuss the concept of trusting adults we know and talking to them and being aware that there are people we come across we don't know on our phone or computer then we tell a parent or one of the people we know and trust.

Resources required

Tablet or smartphone, supplied photos of trusted adults.

Purposefully-framed play

You may need to offer support to the child by exploring the following ideas:

- It is best to spend time with parents on phones and other devices when you can.
- Who are trusted adults that are not our parents/carers?

Prompts

- How do the adults we know keep us safe?
- How can adults keep us safe when we use phones and computers?

Learning statement

<Name of child/ren> understands that trusted adults like parents, educators and emergency service workers are there to keep them safe and help them. They demonstrated the ability to recognise trusted adults and identify adults they don't know and showed understanding that they should only speak or communicate with trusted adults – both offline and online.

Alignment

Outcome 1:

Children have a strong sense of identity.

Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.

This is evident when children:

- Identify trusted adults and know they can go to them for support and help.
- Understand that we don't communicate with adults we don't know – online or offline – unless we are with a trusted adult.

