

The tough stuff – Child Protection

Child Protection – that has to be one of the most emotive phrases in the English language! We all desperately want to protect our children from any sort of harm, but at the same time, it seems really difficult to talk about it to anyone. If we do, then we might seem to be disclosing too much. If we don't we might be trying to hide something. There's also the '**what**' – what are we protecting our kids from?

To help, I'd like to get you thinking about the '**what**' as being measured on a catastrophe meter:

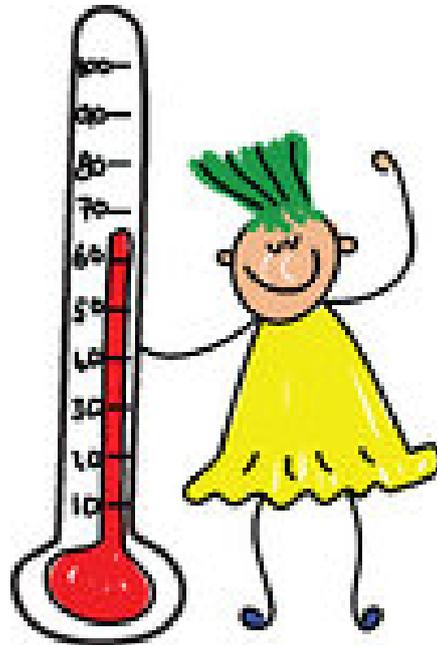
What if your child fell off their bike and broke their arm? No one would wish for that, and you might even put it at 100 on the meter. What if they failed the maths test they've been studying for so hard?

As a safeguard you provide your child with safety equipment for their bike, a helmet, good brakes and tyres, you teach them the road rules and even suggest safe places to go. You help your child with homework and provide a calculator and ruler.

What if your child was sexually abused? That's definitely a 100 catastrophe and puts the broken arm well and truly down at 10.

But how do you provide them with any safeguards against abuse? The best way is **to talk about it with them**. Let them know that:

- **Nothing** is so bad that they can't **tell** someone
- There are lots of other people in their lives they can **tell** too (teacher, auntie, coach, priest)
- It's ok to say '**NO**' and then teach them to do it. Allow them to practice it
- It is ok to **talk** about all of their body parts and teach them the correct names for each
- There are parts of their body that are private and **no one can touch** if they don't want it
- They can **trust their intuition** – if they think a person is doing something wrong, it probably is wrong



So, on the nervousness catastrophe meter you may be feeling 100 at the idea of raising child protection as a topic of **discussion** in your family. Fortunately, there are ranges of simple and powerful resources available on line, at school and in book stores that will help you to help your kids. Please talk with your child's school counsellor, your family doctor or one of the community service providers available on the phone or locally in your area for more information.

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Learning, Respect, Community and Faith



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