



May/June 2012



King Street  
Cooperative  
Preschool

# Personal Safety in the Preschool Years

by Teacher Lisa

Last summer, Kieran had a sleepover at my mom and dad's house – a high-rise condo in downtown Seattle. When I arrived to pick him up in the morning my mother informed me that they had had quite a scare about an hour earlier. Kieran had disappeared and they couldn't find him anywhere. She described her growing panic as she scoured the condo looking for him, finally to discover him, crying, on the wrong side of the locked front door.

My mother and I both went right to playing the "what if" game. What if he had gotten on the elevator? Does he even know what floor they live on and could he recognize the numeral even if he did? Does he know Nana and Grandpa's full names? How would he get back? Worse yet, what if he made it down to the lobby and left the building? The thought of my then three-year-old wandering the downtown streets alone is still more than I can stand. Ah, the joys of parenthood!

Needless to say, this incident made it strikingly clear to me that it was time (or past time) to teach my son some safety rules and to arm him with the information he would need in case he found himself separated from his grown-ups.

But how? And what? I found myself conflicted. I wanted to ensure his safety, but was afraid of scaring him and changing his view of the world, and the people in it, from safe and loving to a dangerous, fearful place full of ulterior motives and mistrust.

How do we as parents walk that line and what are developmentally appropriate strategies and information for preschoolers? The first step is to know your child and look for safety issues in a given situation or environment that you can address. After all, as "big" as they think they are, there are things you just can't expect a 2, 3, 4, or even 5-year-old to watch out for. That's our job.

In this case my parents and I decided that their front door needed to be dead bolted (the lock just out of Kieran's reach) while Kieran was staying with them. We also sat Kieran down, setting a clear limit, "You may not open the front door without a grown-up. It is our job to keep you safe and, to do that, we need to know where you are."

Next, work with your child to learn his/her full name, parents' names, and home phone number (or a parent's cell phone number). For older preschoolers, you can teach them their home address as well. Make it fun and sing it to a tune to help your child remember (a great mnemonic device!).

In addition to learning our own household information, we have also started teaching Kieran about other family members with whom he spends a lot of time. Now, when we go to Nana and Grandpa's house, Kieran is in charge of pushing the elevator buttons to choose the floor and we ask him, "What are Nana and Grandpa's real names again? Oh, that's right, I forgot." This gives him a chance to practice without creating fear.



It is also a good idea to make a plan with your child about what to do if she/he gets separated from you, or another one of his/her grown-ups (grandparent, nanny, etc.) when out in the world. Make a plan for a predetermined meeting place if you get separated and let your child know that she/he can go to another mom with kids for help if he/she can't find you, because moms with kids know how to help kids.

## The Trouble with "Stranger Danger"

A prominent safety education strategy in the 1970's and 80's that you may remember from your own childhood, was to teach children to beware of strangers. This strategy, commonly known as "stranger danger," is actually not a very effective method of keeping our children safe since "only 10% of child molesters molest children they don't know" (The Stop Child Molestation Book, 2002).

Instead, experts are now recommending that we, as parents, empower our children to be in charge of their bodies and teach them how to say "no" to any kind of contact they are uncom-

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fortable with (see recommended resource list for specific ideas). It is also a good idea to teach your child not to leave a location with another child or grown-up unless he/she has first made a plan with her/his grown-ups (parent, grandparent, nanny, etc.). For emergency situations or unexpected events, like a change in who will be picking your child up from school, one strategy is to have a family code word. Your child knows to only go with another adult who has the code word (Rumpelstiltskin, for example).

Although we can't protect our children from every possible danger, no matter how unlikely, we can prepare them for confronting tricky situations. The key to equipping our children with the skills and information that will help them stay safe, without creating fear and distrust, is to take it a little at a time, make it fun, and give them a chance to practice.

### Get the ball rolling on your safety plan with these easy prevention tips!

(from Savvy Parents Safe Kids: <http://savvyparentssafekids.com/> and *I Can Play It Safe* by Alison Feigh)

- Let your child know if they ever get lost a SAFE grown up will not take them anywhere, but will STAY PUT with the child and find them help.
- Grown-ups: DO NOT TRANSPORT a lost child anywhere! Stay with the child and enlist the help of another adult.
- Remind Kids: Adults don't ask kids for help. Adults get help from other adults.
- Kids should stay away from anyone asking them to approach their car (especially if they don't know them).
- Watch and listen. If your child is avoiding being around a particular person, such as a babysitter, peer, relative, or family friend, don't force them. Kids pick up "red flags" before adults sometimes!
- Test your kids safety knowledge by checking their skills with "What if?" scenarios
- Give your child power over his/her own body. Do not force kids to hug or kiss another person. Kids should decide for themselves how they want to express affection.
- Always trust your "gut" and let your child know it's ok for him/her to trust hers/h
- Talk openly and often about your safety expectations and rules.
- Keep your safety conversations brief, to the point and don't use scare tactics (they don't work).
- Have safety books available in your home for your kids to read.
- Model safe behavior in front of your children.
- Talk with other adults and report suspicious behavior.
- Help children understand the difference between secrets and surprises.
- Teach kids that they do not need to be subject to confusing or harmful touch by others.

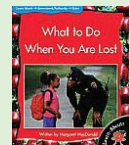
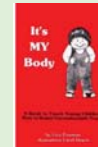
## Resources for Children's Safety

### On the web

- Birds + Bees + Kids: information and resources for talking to kids about sex (including their bodies and how they develop) in age-appropriate ways. <http://birdsandbeesandkids.com/>
- Savvy Parents Safe Kids: information on abuse prevention and personal safety education for kids. Check out the safety tips tab and the newsletter archive. <http://savvyparentssafekids.com/>
- Seattle Police Department: information about teaching your child to stay safe. Keep in mind that there are no age specifications, so some of the advice is not applicable or appropriate for preschool-aged children. <http://www.seattle.gov/police/prevention/child/default.htm>
- Child Molestation Research and Prevention Institute: statistics and research-based information on why the "stranger danger" approach falls short in keeping kids safe. <http://www.seattle.gov/fire/pubEd/familysafety/familySafety.htm>

### Recommended Books

- *It's My Body* by Lory Freeman
- *Because It's My Body* by JoAnne Sherman
- *I Can Be Safe* by Pat Thomas
- *I Can Play It Safe* by Alison Feigh
- *Amazing You: Getting Smart About Your Private Parts* by Gail Saltz and Lynne Avril
- *What to Do When You Are Lost* by Margaret MacDonald





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# 2011-2012 *Bridge Ceremony*

*An event to mark the transition from school into summer,  
and the graduation of some towards kindergarten.*

**Monday, June 11**  
(Grown-ups arrive by 12:30 p.m.)

Audrey  
Elena  
Ian H.  
Theo

**Tuesday, June 12**  
(Grown-ups arrive by 12:30 p.m.)

Brandon  
Ian M.  
Ian R.  
Kaz  
Maxine  
Noah  
Olivine  
Pete  
Rowan  
Zach

**Wednesday, June 13**  
(Grown-ups arrive by 12:00 p.m.)

Alex  
Reese  
Ali  
Annika  
Cooper  
Emily  
Kendra  
Kieran  
Lena  
Linnea  
Mona  
Yusra  
Nina  
Olivia  
Oscar  
Rose  
Skye  
Henry

## 2012 Auction Donors

Remember to thank all our generous donors from this year's auction!

8 Limbs Yoga Center	IDOL Style Studio	Regina Coleman
A Dog's Life Doggy Daycare	Ivar's	Retroactive Kids
ACT Theater	J & M Cafe	Ricky & Lona Teh
Alana Holmquist	Jan Munger	Robert Leonard Salon
Alisha Dallo'sto	Jen Reyes	Rudy's Barbershop
American Dance Institute	Jewels Curnow	S.O. Fit
American Girl Doll	Jillian's Billiards	Samarya Center
Anthony's Art Studio	Joshua Latterell	Schwartz Brothers Restaurants
Arena Sports	Julep Nail Parlor	Seafair
ArtsWest	Karen Pinkard	Seattle Aquarium
BaBaLouise	Kate Brien	Seattle Boulderling Project
Bakery Nouveau	Kate Endle & Caspar Babyants	Seattle Children's Theater
Be Luminous Yoga	KCTS 9	Seattle Family Doula
Beehive Salon	Kelly McCaffrey	Seattle Gymnastics Academy
Bike Works	Keren Kang	Seattle Massage Oasis
Bootyland	Kids Club	Seattle Seahawks
Broadcast Coffee	KidsQuest Museum	Seattle Sounders FC
Build the Movement Fitness and Personal Trainer	Kindermusik	Shane Kiehn
Cactus Restaurants	King Street Cooperative Preschool	Shari Kaufman
Cafe Lago	Kids	SIFF
Caffe Ladro	Kumon Math & Learning Center of Beacon Hill	Sponge
Caffe Vita Seward Park	Landmark Theaters	Stellar Pizza & Ale
Catherine Grisez Jewelry	Lanz Massage	Studio East
Cedar Grove	Laurie & Dino Martinelli	Sugarlump
Central Bark	Maneki Japanese Restaurant	Sun Ya Seafood
Century Ballroom	Maria Phillips	Sweet Iron Waffles
City Kitchens	Mediterranean Mix	Sweet Pea's Consignment
City People's	Mike Fitness	Tacoma Rainiers
Columbia City Bakery	Mini Mountain School of Skiing and Snowboarding	Tara Hook
Costco	Molly Moon's Homemade Ice Cream	The Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture
Craig Montgomery	MSW	The Children's Museum
Creative Dance Center	Museum of Flight	The Holmquist Family
Daly's Paint & Decorating	My Gym	The Huja/Gier Family
Dayna Provitt	My Mac Hero, LLC	The Miller and Bishop Families
Dick's Drive in Restaurants, Inc.	My World Dance and Fitness Studio	The Orcas Hotel
Dimitriou's Jazz Alley	Northwest Film Forum	The Pietromonaco Family
Doe Bay Resort & Retreat	Northwest Outdoor Center	The Provitt Family
Donni & Eric McCray	Nurturing Pathways, Inc	The Red Balloon Co.
Dragon's Toy Box	Oasis Tea Zone	The Robbins Family
El Quetzal	Olympus Spa	The Station Coffee
Elliott Bay Books	On the Boards	The Triple Door
Eltana	Orcas Island Eclipse Charters	Theo Chocolates
Emerald Downs	Organic Valley	Tiffany Johnson
EMP Museum	Pacific Science Center	Tom Zachary Landscape Architects
Family Fun Center	Paint the Town	Tove Martin
Fantagraphics Books	PCC Natural Markets	Tutta Bella
Feminist Karate Union	Prism Designs, Inc	University Book Store
Full Tilt Ice Cream	Pretty Boys Pizza	Ursa Minor
Garage	Rainy Day Creation	Woodland Park Zoo
Geraldine's Counter	Recess Monkey	YMCA
Heavy Restaurant Group	Red Wagon Toys	Yogalife & OmCulture
Henry Art Gallery		Zaw Pizza
Holmquist & Gardiner, PLLC		
Hothouse Spa		



## King Street Family Opens Restaurant

The Bezzaz family (Mona's family) opened a second location of their Mediterranean Mix restaurant at 23rd and Union, bringing some great food to the Central District.

Otman Bezzaz says, "Thank you, we are excited to be part of the neighborhood. The Med-Mix is fresh, home made Mediterranean food Restaurant. Mediterranean cuisine is the food from the cultures adjacent to the Mediterranean Sea.

"We are honored to offer fresh, homemade food at a great price to the neighborhood and look forward to making lots of new friends."

Reviews from King Street families: thumbs up!



## Important Dates

## Happy Birthday!

Apr 11: Olivia Kang  
 Apr 16: Pete Chavez  
 Apr 16: Rowan Martin  
 Apr 23: Ian Robbins  
 Apr 26: Nina Miranda  
 May 1: Olivine Minne  
 May 15: Zach Dubowy  
 May 16: Kaz Gier  
 May 21: Ian Hintze  
 May 23: Theo Cary  
 Jun 18: Annika Kiehne  
 Jun 20: Lena Zura  
 Jun 24: Elena Latterell  
 Jul 1: KendraPinkard  
 Jul 22: Emily Stralberg