

Safety in the Community

Your toddler needs fresh air and outdoor space where she can run and play, get dirty and make noise. And you need to be with her to share her fun and keep her safe.



KEY TAKEAWAY

You can help your toddler learn to be cautious, but she's too young to protect herself. You must take responsibility for her safety:

- ✓ Always know where she is.
- ✓ Only leave her with people you trust.
- ✓ Be aware of the dangers in your community.

Developing Your Toddler's Skills

Use the "check with me first" approach

When young children are harmed, it's usually by people they know. So it's not enough just to tell your toddler not to talk to strangers.

Help your child learn trust while staying safe by teaching her to check with you or a caregiver before:

- going anywhere with anyone
- taking a gift or treat

Streetproof your toddler

What is streetproofing?

Helping your toddler learn and practise the skills she'll need if she's in traffic, around strangers or lost.

You can help streetproof your toddler by teaching her:

- her first and last names
- your first and last names
- the name of your street
- your phone number
- the proper names for genitals (see [Sexual Development](#))
- how to use her "big voice" when she needs help

What is your child's "big voice"?

The loud, powerful voice your child can use to express important boundaries (like "Don't touch me!") and get help when she needs it ("I've lost my mom!").



TRY THIS

Sing your phone number as a little song to make it easier for your child to remember.

Keep instructions simple

Be as clear as possible by:

- stating your rules and the reasons in simple words
- using the same words and ideas over and over
- being specific – "look up the driveway when you ride," for example, instead of "be careful on the tricycle"
- reminding her of the instructions often

Show your toddler what to do

Don't just use words. Clearly show your toddler what she needs to know. Try:

- walking her around the neighbourhood, showing her neighbours' houses and landmarks
- pointing out police officers and explaining that police help people
- acting out situations and letting her practise using her "big voice"
- physically pointing out the limits. In the yard, for example, say, "You can play anywhere in front of this big tree, but you can't go past it."

Set a good example

Your toddler learns by copying you. Teach her by:

- acting how you want her to act – always using a crosswalk, for example
- talking to her as you do things together – "we're carefully looking both ways before we cross," for example