

How to Get the Most from Your

Kids



on the Block

Presentation

Proudly presented by



and our funding partners





Welcome!

We are excited to bring the *Kids on the Block* to your group!

The *Kids on the Block* is an international puppet-based program that educates children on a wide variety of topics relating to safety, diversity and social issues. Through the use of puppetry, the “Kids” share their personal experiences, role-play and teach practical skills in a factual, child-friendly way.

The *Kids on the Block* Regina is offered by the Regina Sexual Assault Centre, with the support of our community partners. Our program focuses on personal safety, anti-bullying and abuse prevention. We have introduced this program because it is our shared responsibility, as a community, to protect children; and education and skills development in the early years are key factors in the prevention of abuse, sexual assault and interpersonal violence.

Just as we teach children about fire safety and school lockdowns, we need to educate children about personal safety *to prepare them, not to scare them.* Statistically, a child is much more likely to experience some form of abuse than a school fire or lockdown. – from Windsor, ON Kids on the Block

This resource package will provide you with information about how to prepare for your presentation, what will happen during the presentation, suggestions for follow up, and information about how to support children who may disclose abuse or bullying.

If you have any questions about *Kids on the Block*, or your upcoming presentation, contact the *Kids on the Block* Community Education Coordinator at:

306-522-2777 or

kotbregina@gmail.com

Thank you for your commitment to keeping kids safe. We look forward to our visit!



How does a Kids on the Block presentation work?

The *Kids on the Block* team will arrive 30 minutes before the presentation. Our performance stage consists of a 4' x 2' table that is covered in black draping. The best environment is an open space (art room/multipurpose room) with very little traffic or distractions. Children should be seated on the floor, three to four feet from the front of the stage. This allows children to easily view the puppets and enables our puppeteers to have a better view of their audience.

The presentation will be 30-45 minutes long and will consist of short skits featuring puppet characters. After each skit, the audience will participate in activities and discussions to reinforce the messages presented in the skits.

Our team includes trained puppeteers and a facilitator and all individuals who deliver presentations have received training to provide them with the skills and knowledge to effectively and appropriately deliver skits and respond to questions.

The style of puppetry used by the Kids on the Block is based on a Japanese style of puppetry called Bunraku (Boon-rah-koo). Our "Kids" are hand and rod puppets that are 3-4 feet tall.

Preparing for the presentation

The following are some suggestions for preparing for your presentation:

- We require a school counselor or social worker to be present during Abuse Prevention presentations. For the Safety and Bullying presentations, it is highly advisable to consider arranging for these individuals to attend so they can be introduced as "safe adults" children can talk to.
- Consider the size of your group. Ideally, the group should be no more than 30 children. This creates a comfortable environment which supports a quality learning experience.
- Think about how you might continue to reinforce safety strategies and skills in your classroom or group after the presentation.



Preparing for the presentation con't...

While children are not encouraged to disclose personal experiences or information during the presentation, they will be asked to think of “safe adults” they can talk to if they’re having problems. This means a child may disclose abuse or bullying to you. To prepare to respond to potential disclosures:

- Review your school or organization’s policy around disclosures of abuse. You can also review the Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol for more information. www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/child-abuse-protocol.pdf.
- Review your school or organization’s policy on dealing with bullying. Additional information can be found at www.education.gov.sk.ca/anti-bullying.
- Refer to the section, “Supporting a child who discloses” for additional information.

During the presentation

We ask that you:

- Please remain in the room with your class or group to ensure children are listening respectfully. You are welcome to participate in discussions!
- Watch for children who show distress during the presentation. Quietly intervene and support them or allow them to leave.
- Be aware that, as a leader, children look to you for cues on how to respond to information. If adults appear uncomfortable with sensitive issues, children may see these issues as something to be kept hidden. Speaking openly and honestly will encourage children to be open and honest too.
- Allow the facilitator and puppeteers to take the lead if a child discloses abuse or bullying. They will validate what the child has said and then gently redirect the conversation. This prevents undue attention on the child, but still supports what they’ve said. The conversation can then continue later in a more private setting.



After the presentation

In the same way we teach children any new skill (such as math), purposeful follow-up is important to give them an opportunity to “practice” what they’ve been taught. This increases the likelihood that children will remember and use safety strategies if faced with a potentially harmful or dangerous situation.

- Provide children with time for discussion. They may have questions about their own experiences and personal safety scenarios.
- Ask children open ended questions to encourage discussion, such as:
 - Was there anything you didn’t understand?
 - If you or a friend needed help because of abuse or bullying, what could you do?
- Consider choosing activities from our follow-up booklet to use with your group.
- Consider sending a letter to caregivers to encourage them to reinforce the strategies that were taught during the presentation.

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• **Be sure to follow up with any students who displayed signs of discomfort or distress during the presentation. If you’re not comfortable approaching the child on your own, have a school counselor or principal there to support you.**
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Supporting a child who discloses

Adapted from ChildHelp Speak Up Be Safe (www.childhelp.org)

Occasionally, a child may disclose experiences of abuse or bullying after a presentation. Hearing a disclosure – a child telling you that someone has hurt them – can be difficult, but **how you respond to a child who discloses is very important**. It is hard for a child to tell someone what has happened and reacting with shock or disbelief can have a negative effect. Research shows that children who have experienced abuse, particularly sexual abuse, have a better chance of making a healthy recovery if they are believed at the time of their original disclosure.

Here are some suggestions on how to support a child:

- **Avoid denial.** Children rarely lie about violence or abuse as they do not have the knowledge or language to tell about it without having experienced it. **Your support is the**



Supporting a child who discloses con't...

most valuable gift you can give the child.

- **Provide a safe environment.** Make sure the setting is comfortable and confidential. No matter how strong your feelings are, **do not display shock, fear or anger to the child**, as they may shut down. Maintain a neutral body language and be calm and supportive. Don't ask questions that imply the child was at fault like, "What were you doing there?"
- **Reassure the child.** Let them know that telling was the right thing to do, that what happened wasn't their fault and that you will do what you can to help them. Acknowledge their courage in speaking out.
- **Listen and don't make assumptions or judgments.** Listen more than you talk and avoid giving advice. Allow the child to tell their story in language they are comfortable with, including how they name body parts. If a child comes to "just talk" and you suspect a disclosure might be coming, be patient. Don't talk negatively about the person who has hurt the child. If the child has been abused by a family member, they may still love that person.
- **Do not interrogate.** Don't ask leading questions in which you provide a possible answer like, "Did this happen or that happen?" Ask open questions about **when, where and who**, but don't ask for details. Don't stop in the middle of the story to go get someone else, or do something else.
- **Make no promises.** Do not promise you'll keep their secret. Tell a child you will help them, but in order to do that you will have to tell someone else. The child will have fears about what is going to happen next, so tell them what will happen and who they need to talk to. Be honest and don't answer questions you don't have the answer to like "Will Uncle go to jail?"
- **Record information using the child's words.** As well, determine if there is immediate safety concerns by asking when they saw the person last and how they feel about going home. For situations of abuse, the answers will help child protection workers determine how quickly they need to investigate. Take a few moments to make notes. Try to capture what they said as accurately as possible.
- **Report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect.**



Duty To Report

The Child and Family Services Act (Section 12, Subsection 1 and 4) states that every person who has reasonable suspicion to believe that a child may be in need of protection shall report the information to a child protection worker, Ministry of Social Services or First Nations Child and Family Services Agency, or police. *It is not the responsibility of the person receiving the disclosure to decide whether the abuse has occurred.*

Immediately report any suspicions or disclosures of abuse for the safety of the child. Do not wait until you have all information before calling. **Even if you believe someone else is reporting the situation, you still have a duty to report.** Even if a past report has been made about a child, you must still report any additional disclosures or suspicions. Do not contact the alleged perpetrator – this is the responsibility of police and child protection workers.

Your report should contain as much of the following as possible:

- Your name, telephone number and relationship to the child. (This information may be provided anonymously. If the case proceeds to court, those who identify themselves may be summoned to testify.)
- The child's name, age and gender
- Information about the child's caregivers and address
- Details of the child's disclosure, or the reasons you suspect child abuse or neglect
- Relationship of the child to the alleged perpetrator (immediate family member, family friend, babysitter)
- Whether there are other children who may be at risk

For more information about Child Protection services and the Saskatchewan Child Abuse Protocol, go to www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/child-protection.

In Regina and area, reports should be made to one of the following:

Child Protection Services: 306-787-3760

Mobile Crisis (after hours crisis service) 306-569-2724

Regina Police Service: 306-777-6500

Thank You!

Thank you for your ongoing support of the children in our community. By working together to promote child safety, we can help protect children from harm and create a safer community for everyone. We know that these topics can be hard to talk about and we hope that the *Kids on the Block* puppets can help you have these conversations with kids. Teaching about child safety is not a one-time event – but we hope the *Kids on the Block* can open the door to further conversation and learning.



Phone: (306) 522-2777

Email: kotbregina@gmail.com

www.reginalsexualassaultcentre.com/kotb