



Helping Your Child Feel Safe and Secure at Home

A Parent's Guide to Creating a Safe, Supportive, and Nurturing Environment

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1. Build Your Support Network

- Reach out to family, friends, neighbors, and community resources.
- Share challenges openly and seek support and available resources when needed.
- Complete Incredible Years *Building Your Support Network* document for listing your support team including family, friends, community, professionals, parenting classes, & crisis hotlines.

2. Strengthen Your Parent-Child Attachment

- Spend daily one-on-one child-directed play time with your child (play, read, talk, listen, ask open-ended questions, sing, engage in imaginary play).
- Offer warmth, affection, and encouragement.
- Use emotion coaching by listening to your child's feelings, naming them and validating their experiences.

3. Use Positive and Responsive Parenting

- Notice, give attention to and praise safe, responsible behavior ("I'm glad you looked both ways before crossing the street").
- Respond promptly and calmly to children's needs.
- Encourage independence while staying available for support.

4. Practice Nonviolent Discipline

- Use calm, consistent consequences (e.g., ignoring & redirecting targeted challenging behaviors, using time-out to calm down for destructive behaviors, using natural and logical consequences such as a loss of privilege).
- Redirect and teach alternative positive behaviors. For example, if you child is yelling, prompt them to take a deep breath and talk to you in a quieter voice.
- Avoid physical punishment, which can harm trust and emotional well-being. Walk away for a few minutes to calm down so you can respond to your child in a way that will be helpful.

5. Practice Emotional Regulation

- Use strategies from Incredible Years *Parent Coping Cycle: Connecting Positive & Calming Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviors* regarding managing angry, upsetting or depressing thoughts.
- Take "calm-down" breaks when feeling overwhelmed. Use deep breathing and positive imagery.
- Reach out to one of your support people.
- Show your child how to handle frustration or anger in healthy ways.

6. Establish Clear Rules and Routines

- Create simple, consistent rules about safety (e.g., “We walk inside the house,” “We don’t touch hot things”).
- Develop predictable routines for meals, homework, and bedtime—these give children a sense of security.
- Post rules and routines where children can see them.

7. Monitor After-School Safety

- Know where your child is and who they are with.
- Check in with teachers, after-school staff, and friends’ parents.
- Set clear expectations about homework, screen time, and check-ins.

8. Prevent Violence and Unsafe Situations

- If there is potential for violence in the home, seek help immediately (call 911 if urgent, or use local crisis lines).
- Remove dangerous items (e.g., firearms, sharp tools, toxic substances) or store them securely.
- Model nonviolent problem-solving and conflict resolution.
- See Incredible Years *Problem Solving Worksheet for Managing Challenging Child Misbehaviors*

Quick Safety Checklist for Parents

- ✓ Do I know who my child is with after school?
- ✓ Are rules and routines clear in our home?
- ✓ Do I have safe storage for medicines, cleaners, and tools?
- ✓ Do I have strategies for staying calm under stress?
- ✓ Do I connect daily with my child in positive ways?
- ✓ Do I know where to turn for support if things get hard?

Remember: Keeping children safe is more than preventing accidents—it’s also about building strong, trusting relationships and modeling positive coping skills. By creating a safe and supportive home, you give your child the foundation to grow, learn, and thrive.

