

# The Protect Yourself Rules Child Abuse Prevention Initiative

## Prescreening Guidance

The production of the “Protect Yourself Rules” animated videos was funded by the Barbara Sinatra Children’s Center Foundation in conjunction with the Barbara Sinatra Center for Abused Children and Wonder Media, LLC.

This initiative has been developed to equip young children with skills to recognize and prevent physical and sexual abuse.

The Protect Yourself Rules are 6 age-appropriate rules for children to remember if they are ever confronted with an unsafe situation. These rules teach preparedness, vigilance, appropriate responses, and most importantly, disclosure.

The “Protect Yourself Rules” animated series presents fictional narratives of potentially unsafe or abusive situations, and features animated child characters who model appropriate responses to those situations. The adult character Ms. Barbara moderates the child characters’ stories and explains to the audience how to use The Protect Yourself Rules in every day life.

Why are these videos important? To educate, create awareness, and provide children with the tools they need to keep safe. The videos feature characters who are the same age as the audience, and experience many of the unfortunate realities that children all over the world face every day.

In showing these videos, you may be confronted with a child who is for the first time revealing that an abusive situation has occurred or is currently involved in a child abuse situation. All states require teachers, after-school providers, school counselors, and others to be “mandated” reporters of suspected child maltreatment.

It is not the job of the mandated reporter to determine whether the allegations are valid.....just file an anonymous report!

If child abuse or neglect is reasonably suspected or if child shares information with a mandated reporter leading him/her to believe abuse or neglect has taken place, the report must be made.

The following tools are available should you be confronted with a child revealing suspected abuse and signs and symptoms of abuse in a child.



# The Protect Yourself Rules Prescreening Guidance

When confronted with an abusive situation, where one or more of the “Protect Yourself” Rules come into play, we hope children will recall the “Protect Yourself” Rule icons and get away as quickly as possible. If they can’t get away, they should make a scene or defend themselves however they can. If children have evidence of abuse or if abuse happens to them, they should always tell a trusted adult as soon as they can. If children only watch 1 lesson, the controlling summary should still be evident. Children have the right to privacy, safety, and well-being.

The animated narratives are designed to open the channels of communication and create a safe environment for continued discussion. The videos come with age and grade appropriate ancillary learning materials and printable extension lessons, produced to reinforce the animated lessons with the goal of developing a fundamental understanding of the initiative’s core intentions (the “Protect Yourself” Rules) and preventative/intervening “actions.” These intentions are compartmentalized as memorable pop-up graphics and ingrained through repetition in the animations. Only after the fundamentals of a discipline are mastered can critical split-second decisions be made.

## **If Confronted with a Revelation**

In showing these videos, you may be confronted with a child who is for the first time revealing that an abusive situation has occurred or is currently involved in a suspected child abuse situation. All states require teachers, after-school providers, school counselors, and others to be mandated reporters of suspected child maltreatment. It is not the job of the mandated reporter to determine whether the allegations are valid.....just file an anonymous report!

If child abuse or neglect is reasonably suspected, or if a child shares information with a mandated reporter leading him/her to believe abuse or neglect has taken place, the report must be made.

## **The following tools are available should you be confronted with a child revealing suspected abuse, and signs and symptoms of child abuse:**

National/State Child abuse identification and reporting laws

[www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/state/)

Barbara Sinatra Children’s Center - Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

[www.barbarasinatrachildrenscenter.org/index.php/prevention/signs-of-child-abuse/](http://www.barbarasinatrachildrenscenter.org/index.php/prevention/signs-of-child-abuse/)



# The Protect Yourself Rules

## Grades K-3



Unsafe touches are any touch to a private body part or a part of our bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit, or any touch that makes us feel uncomfortable or unsafe in any way.



No one should ever hurt us, physically or emotionally. Hitting, kicking, pinching, biting, throwing things, and yelling hurtful words are not allowed. If someone does this to us, we have to Tell a Grown-Up we trust to make it stop.



No one can ever touch us in an unsafe way, even people we know well. It doesn't matter if it's a friend, a relative, a teacher, or anyone else. We are allowed to tell people if we don't want to be touched, and they have to listen. If they don't, we have to Shout, Run, and Tell.



We should never talk to strangers without a trusted grown-up present and should never go anywhere with a person we don't know if they ask us to. A strange grown-up will never need help from a child, and they should never offer us anything like a ride, candy, or presents.



If someone makes us feel uncomfortable or unsafe, we should shout for them to stop, run away, and tell a trusted grown-up what happened. No matter who it is or where we are, if someone makes us feel unsafe, we Shout, Run, and Tell.



We must always tell a trusted grown-up if someone hurts us, touches us on a private part of our bodies, asks us to touch them on a private body part, or makes us feel uncomfortable or unsafe in any way.



# The Protect Yourself Rules

## Grades 4-6



Unsafe touches are any touch to a private body part or a part of our bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit, or any touch that makes us feel uncomfortable or unsafe in any way.



No one should ever hurt us, physically or emotionally. Hitting, kicking, pinching, biting, throwing things, and yelling hurtful words are not allowed. If someone does this to us, we have to tell an adult we trust to make it stop.



No one can ever touch us in an unsafe way, even people we know well. It doesn't matter if it's a friend, a relative, a teacher, or anyone else. We are allowed to tell people if we don't want to be touched, and they have to listen.



We have the power to protect ourselves by making smart choices for our own safety. If we find ourselves in an unsafe situation, or our friends participating in dangerous activities, it's time to leave. We protect ourselves online by keeping personal information private.



If someone makes us feel uncomfortable or unsafe, we have to tell them to stop, loudly and clearly. No matter who it is or where we are, if someone makes us feel unsafe, we have to assert our right to safety and privacy and make them stop.



We must always tell a trusted adult if someone hurts us, touches us on a private part of our bodies, asks us to touch them on a private body part, or makes us feel uncomfortable or unsafe in any way.

