

Playing It Safe

Tips for safe sleepovers
and time with friends



Be Available

Even if you've dropped your child off hours ago and you think everything is going well, you should still be prepared to get the call that they want to come home. It is important that kids feel safe asking for help. Tell them repeatedly that they can call you anytime if they want to come home. They don't need to feel embarrassed or feel pressured to stay.

Tips to Be Prepared

- ▶ Come up with a code word or phrase your child can say on the phone when they want to be picked up, like "let's go shopping" or asking about their pet.
- ▶ If your child has a cell phone, ask if they'd like for you to check in on them, and remind them that they can call or text you anytime.
- ▶ If you're going to be away from home while your child is gone, make sure someone else is available. Coordinate with another caretaker, family member, or close friend who can pick them up if necessary.
- ▶ If you're hosting the sleepover, place night lights in important places like near the steps, in the bathroom, and dark hallways. Make sure the kids know how to get to your room and that they can wake you up if there's an emergency or if they need anything.



LET'S FACE IT, trusting people with our children is hard, even at school or on a sports team. Trusting other adults to care for your child during a sleepover or playdate can be especially tough. Whether school-aged or in high school, there are some things children need to know for their own safety and to help them set body boundaries.

Educate and Empower Your Child

Only you and your child can know when they are ready for a sleepover. Here are some tips for a safe and fun experience.

What Kids Need to Know for Their Safety

- ▶ Their parents or caregivers' full names and phone numbers.
- ▶ How to dial 911 and when it's appropriate to do so.
- ▶ The difference between adults and teenagers. Young children may assume that everyone who is "bigger" is a safe adult, but they may actually be an older child.
- ▶ Any allergies they have or medication they take regularly and how to administer it.



Empower Kids with Safe Body Boundaries

- ▶ Make sure your child uses the correct names for body parts, including their genitals, and knows the difference between "okay" and "not okay" touches. No one should ask to see or touch their private parts or show them pictures of private parts. Teach them if those things occur, tell a trusted adult.
- ▶ Teach children that it's okay for them to say "no" if they don't want to hug or kiss someone, including the family where they will be staying, and always respect the child's decision.
- ▶ Educate children about the difference between good secrets and bad secrets. A surprise party is a good secret because it isn't kept for long. A secret that they are told to keep forever is not okay.
- ▶ Make sure your child knows how to bathe themselves and change their own clothes. Teach them that it is OK to change their clothes alone in the bathroom or bedroom with the door closed, and they do not have to share a bed with their friends if it makes them uncomfortable.

Communicate with Caregivers

Sharing information about your child—and asking for information about the home they will be visiting—will help keep your child safe and (hopefully!) help ease your mind.

Questions to Ask

- ▶ Will there be any other children or adults in the home?
- ▶ What are the sleeping arrangements?
- ▶ Does anyone smoke at your home?
- ▶ Are they swimming or doing another activity that may require a change of clothes or sunscreen?
- ▶ Will you be transporting my child? Do you need me to leave a booster seat for you?
- ▶ Are there any pets in your home?
- ▶ Are there any language barriers between caregivers and children?
- ▶ Are there any weapons in your home? If so, how do you secure them?
- ▶ How do you store substances that could be dangerous? This could include things like Tide Pods, medication, and more.
- ▶ If my child misbehaves, how will you handle it?

Details to Share

- ▶ Your phone number and the phone number of at least one other trusted adult.
- ▶ Medical information, including allergies and instructions for any medication your child will take with them.
- ▶ Dietary restrictions or preferences.
- ▶ Online expectations. For example, what content or apps is your child allowed to use? What photos or information about your child are OK to post on social media?
- ▶ Your child's fears, quirks, and routine. For example, "She needs a nightlight to fall asleep."
- ▶ Tell the other caregiver about the body boundaries you have discussed with your child. And tell them that it is OK for your child to call you if needed.
- ▶ Let the caregiver know typical discipline techniques you use in your home and what behavior and language is allowed or not allowed at home.
- ▶ Confirm pick-up times.

Find more tips and resources at faceitmovement.org.



/faceitabuse



@faceitabuse



@faceitmovement