

## Safety guide for parents and caregivers

Safety planning can help protect you and your children from future violence and abuse. It's essential to create a safety plan with your children using language that they will understand. Although the term "fighting" is used in this guidance, you can use other terminology if you prefer. You should determine what is safe and appropriate to discuss with your children based on their age and needs. Using creative methods, such as a doll's house, paper chain dolls, and figurines of emergency services, can help you talk about safety with them.

Incorporating the following seven key points into their safety plan, when appropriate, can help:

1. **Go to a safe place** - Identify a safe place where your children can go when there is "fighting," and they feel scared or worried. Encourage them to do something that distracts or comforts them. Older children may want to leave the home during such times, so talk with them about safe places to go. Ensure they have a mobile phone with them and practice an escape route with them
2. **Don't get in the middle** – Explain to your children that getting in the middle of the "fighting" could be dangerous for them. Affirm that they may feel conflicted but advise them not to get involved. If they want to stay close by, advise them to stay out of sight and have a phone nearby.
3. **Call for help** - Teach your children how to dial 999 and what information to give emergency services. Create a prompt card with the details if it's safe and appropriate.
4. **You are not alone** – Encourage your children to identify who else they can talk with about domestic abuse and any worries they may have. Help them understand that they are not alone, and program numbers of safe people and places into their mobile phones if they have one.
5. **You are not to blame** - Reaffirm to your children that they are not to blame for the "fighting." Let them know that even if they hear their name during the "fighting," it's not their fault.
6. **Explain that abuse is never OK** - Reassure your children that it's okay to love the parent/person being abusive, but not how they behave when they are "fighting."

7. **Create a password** - Create a password with your children to use in case someone approaches them, claiming that you permitted for them to leave with that person.

Ensure that your child's school is aware of the domestic abuse and any related concerns you have, and keep an open dialogue with them. If the police are called to a domestic abuse incident where a child is present, they are obligated under ["Operation Encompass"](#) to inform the child's school. Remember that there is no "one size fits all" safety plan, and each plan should be unique and specific to your child.