

ROLE-PLAY SCENARIOS

FOR
PRACTICING BOUNDARIES
WITH
CHILDREN

By
Onokemi Onojobi

**SCENARIOS TO PRACTICE
ASSERTIVENESS**

INTRODUCTION

Role-play scenarios serve as a valuable tool for children to practice setting boundaries and asserting themselves in challenging situations. By engaging in role-play, children can explore different scenarios and develop the skills needed to communicate their boundaries effectively. However, it's crucial to approach these scenarios with sensitivity, using age-appropriate language and considering the child's developmental stage. This ensures that the role-play experience remains constructive and respectful, allowing children to gain confidence in expressing their boundaries.

In each of the following scenario, it is important for the child to assertively communicate their boundaries and express their discomfort with the situation. Encourage them to use a firm tone, maintain eye contact, and seek help from a trusted adult when necessary. Reinforce the importance of open communication and seeking assistance from parents or caregivers to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Remember, the key is to encourage open communication with children and teach them that it is okay to say no to anything that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Role-playing these scenarios in a safe and supportive environment can help build their confidence in setting boundaries and seeking help when needed.

Let us look at 15 example scenarios focused on preventing potential sexual abuse:

Scenario 1: The Personal Space Invader

Description: Your friend keeps getting too close and touching you in uncomfortable places during playtime.

Objective: Practice telling your friend to stop invading your personal space.

Child's Response: "Stop! I don't like it when you touch me there. Please respect my personal space."

Scenario 2: Unwanted Hugs

Description: Your older cousin always insists on giving you hugs, but it makes you uncomfortable.

Objective: Practice asserting yourself and saying no to unwanted physical contact.

Child's Response: "I appreciate that you want to show affection, but I don't like hugs. Please respect my boundaries and find other ways to greet me."

Scenario 3: Inappropriate Secrets

Description: A classmate is asking you to keep a secret about something that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Objective: Practice recognising inappropriate secrets and refusing to keep them.

Child's Response: "I don't think that's a good secret to keep. I need to tell an adult I trust about this."

Scenario 4: Online Chatting

Description: Someone online is asking you to share personal information or inappropriate pictures.

Objective: Practice saying no to sharing personal information online and seeking help from a trusted adult.

Child's Response: "I'm not allowed to share personal information or pictures online. I'm going to talk to my parents about this."

Scenario 5: Strangers asking for Help

Description: A stranger approaches you, asking you to come with them to help find their lost pet.

Objective: Practice recognising potentially dangerous situations and refusing to go with strangers.

Child's Response: "No, I can't go with you. I need to find a trusted adult to help you."

Scenario 6: Private Body Parts

Description: A relative keeps asking to see or touch your private body parts.

Objective: Practice firmly telling them to stop and immediately telling a trusted adult.

Child's Response: "Stop! It's not okay to ask to see or touch my private body parts. I'm going to tell my parents about this."

Scenario 7: Inappropriate Jokes

Description: A friend keeps making inappropriate jokes that make you feel uncomfortable.

Objective: Practice speaking up and telling them to stop making those jokes

Child's Response: "I don't like those jokes. Please stop making them. Let's find something else to talk about."

Scenario 8: Personal Information Requests

Description: An unknown adult keeps asking you personal questions, such as where you live or go to school.

Objective: Practice refusing to share personal information with strangers.

Child's Response: "I don't want to play that game. Let's play something else that we both enjoy."

Scenario 9: Pushy Playmate

Description: During a playdate, a friend insists on playing a game that you don't feel comfortable with.

Objective: Practice saying no to activities that make you uncomfortable and suggest an alternative.

Child's Response: "Please stop touching me like that. It's not part of the game, and it makes me uncomfortable. I'm going to talk to the coach about it."

Scenario 10: Unwanted Touching in Sports

Description: A teammate keeps touching you inappropriately during sports activities.

Objective: Practice setting boundaries and speaking up about uncomfortable touch.

Child's Response: "Stop touching me like that. It's not appropriate and makes me feel uncomfortable. I don't want to be touched in that way during sports. I'm going to talk to the coach or a trusted adult about this."

Scenario 11: Unsuitable Photos

Description: A family member wants to take pictures of you in your swimsuit without your consent.

Objective: Practice telling them that you don't want to be photographed like that and telling a trusted adult.

Child's Response: "I don't want to be photographed like that. It makes me uncomfortable. I'm going to tell my parents about this."

Scenario 12: Uncomfortable Conversations

Description: A relative or family friend brings up topics that are too personal or make you feel uneasy.

Objective: Practice redirecting the conversation or excusing yourself from the situation politely.

Child's Response: "I don't feel comfortable talking about this. Can we change the subject, please?"

Scenario 13: Ignoring “No”

Description: A classmate keeps tickling you even after you've asked them to stop.

Objective: Practice being assertive and firmly telling them to stop.

Child's Response: "I said no, and I mean it. Stop tickling me. I don't like it."

Scenario 14: Unwanted Social Media Messages

Description: Someone you know sends you inappropriate messages or pictures on social media.

Objective: Practice blocking or unfriending that person and talking to a trusted adult about the situation.

Child's Response: "This message is inappropriate, and I don't want to see or receive these kinds of messages. I'm going to block and report this person, and then I'll talk to my parents about it."

Scenario 15: Secrets from Parents

Description: A grown-up asks you to keep a secret from your parents.

Objective: Practice understanding that it's important to share everything with your parents, especially if it makes you uncomfortable.

Child's Response: "I'm sorry, but I can't keep secrets from my parents. It's important to tell them everything. I need to talk to them about this."

SCENARIOS TO PRACTICE REPORTING

During these role-playing scenarios, guide the child on how to approach a trusted adult , what to say, and how to express themselves clearly. Encourage them to remain calm, provide specific details, and emphasise the importance of reporting to ensure safety and wellbeing.

By practicing these scenarios, children gain confidence in their ability to speak up and report various types of abuse or concerning situations.

Here are some reporting scenarios, please note that these are just general examples and should be tailored age-appropriately.

Scenario 1: Inappropriate Touching by an Adult

Description: An adult family friend keeps touching you in a way that feels wrong and makes you uncomfortable.

Objective: Practice speaking up and reporting the inappropriate touching to a trusted adult.

Scenario 2: Unwanted Advances from a Peer

Description: A classmate is making unwanted sexual advances towards you, such as inappropriate comments or gestures.

Objective: Practice speaking up and reporting the peer's behaviour to a trusted adult or school authority.

Scenario 3: Exposure to Inappropriate Content Online

Description: You come across explicit or inappropriate content online that makes you feel uncomfortable or scared.

Objective: Practice reporting the incident to a trusted adult or using reporting tools provided by the online platform

Scenario 4: Witnessing Sexual Harassment

Description: You witness someone being sexually harassed, such as unwelcome comments or actions of a sexual nature.

Objective: Practice speaking up and reporting the sexual harassment incident to a trusted adult or authority figure.

Scenario 5: Witnessing Inappropriate Touching in Sports

Description: You observe a coach or teammate touching another child inappropriately during sports activities

Objective: Practice speaking up and reporting the observed inappropriate touching to a trusted adult or sports authority.

Scenario 6: Unwanted Advances from an Adult

Description: An unknown adult approaches you in public, making inappropriate comments or propositions

Objective: Practice speaking up, ensuring your safety, and reporting the incident to a trusted adult or authority figure.

Scenario 7: Inappropriate Conversation Online

Description: Someone you communicate with online engages in explicit or inappropriate conversations with you.

Objective: Practice reporting the online conversation to a trusted adult or using reporting tools available on the platform.

Scenario 8: Witnessing Child Exploitation Material

Description: You come across explicit images or videos involving children online.

Objective: Practice reporting the discovery to a trusted adult or using the reporting mechanisms provided by online platforms or helplines.

Scenario 9: Disclosure from a Friend

Description: A friend confides in you about experiencing potential sexual abuse.

Objective: Practice responding with support and encouraging your friend to report the abuse to a trusted adult together.

Scenario 10: Unwanted Advances from a Family Member

Description: A family member engages in inappropriate behaviour towards you, such as unwanted touching or comments.

Objective: Practice speaking up, ensuring your safety, and reporting the family member's behaviour to another trusted adult or authority figure.

EXAMPLES OF REPORTING CONVERSATIONS

During these reporting conversations, children should be taught how to approach them in languages appropriate to their age, they should also be encouraged to provide specific details, express their feelings, and ask for guidance and support. Reassure them that they have done the right thing by speaking up and reporting the potential sexual abuse, and ensure that appropriate action is taken to address the situation.

When talking to a young children, use age-appropriate language and keep the conversation simple and clear.

Reporting Conversation with a Trusted Adult (Teacher):

Child: "Miss Johnson, can I talk to you about something important? There's a grown-up who keeps touching me in a way that feels wrong. It happens when we're alone, and it makes me feel uncomfortable. I wanted to tell you because I need your help to make it stop."

Reporting Conversation with a School Counsellor:

Child: "Mrs Nneka, there's something I want to tell you. Someone online is saying things that make me scared and uncomfortable. They keep asking me to do things I know I shouldn't. I wanted to tell you because I need your help to handle it."

Reporting Conversation with a Helpline:

Child: "Hello, I need to tell you something that's been happening. Someone I don't know well has been sending me messages that make me feel scared. They're saying mean things and asking me to do things that make me uncomfortable. I wanted to ask for your help and advice on what to do."

Reporting Conversation with a Trusted Adult (Coach):

Child: "Coach Dede, I need to tell you something that's been happening. There's a friend on the team who keeps touching another player in a way that seems wrong. It's not part of the game, and it makes me worried. Can you help make it stop?"

Reporting Conversation with a Parent:

Child: "Mum/Dad, I need to tell you something that's been happening. The house-help touches my private part during bath time, also threatens me and keeps asking me to do things that make me uncomfortable. Could you please help make it stop?"

Reporting Conversation with a Trusted Adult (Coach):

Child: "Coach Dede, I need to tell you something that's been happening. There's a friend on the team who keeps touching another player in a way that seems wrong. It's not part of the game, and it makes me worried. Can you help make it stop?"