



Starting the Conversation with Cardboard Kids®

A Guided Activity for Caregivers

ChildSafe's Cardboard Kids® Campaign transforms statistics into powerful visual reminders of the children impacted by abuse and neglect. As Bexar County's only Children's Advocacy Center, we use these figures to spark vital community conversations and restore hope to traumatized children.

Starting a conversation about personal safety can feel overwhelming, but you don't have to do it alone. Cardboard Kids® are more than an art project—they are a practical tool to help you navigate essential topics with ease. By decorating a Cardboard Kid together, you can talk about topics like "body boundaries" and "staying safe" using words that are easy for children to understand. It's a gentle way to help your child feel brave, smart, and protected.

DECORATE	CONVERSATION STARTERS
<p>Introduce Cardboard Kid</p>	<p><i>This is your Cardboard Kid! Today, we're going to decorate it from head to toe. We will use it to practice speaking up, setting boundaries, and naming the grown-ups who keep us safe.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should our Cardboard Kid's name be? • Who are people in your life that make you feel safe? • Is there a question you have wanted to ask me, but have been too afraid to ask?
<p>Step 1: Decorate Eyes, Mouth & Face</p> <p>Topic: Communication</p>	<p><i>Let's start with the head. This is where our feelings and words begin! Our faces and voices help us tell others what we need and how we feel, especially if something doesn't feel right.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's one thing you want to be able to tell me or talk to me about, but worry about how I'll react? • What are some things you could do or say if someone is in your personal space? • What should you do if you tell someone 'Stop' or 'No,' but they don't listen?

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<p>Step 2: Decorate Hands & Feet</p> <p>Topic: Boundaries</p>	<p><i>Boundaries are like an invisible bubble around you. They help you stay safe and comfortable. When someone gets too close or touches you in a way you don't like, they are crossing your boundary.</i></p> <p><i>We talked about using our voice to say 'no,' but you can use your hands, too! If someone wants a hug and you don't, you can put your hand up like a stop sign 🙅 and say, 'I need some space' or 'No, thank you.' Your hands and your voice are like your own personal shields.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should you keep a secret that makes me feel scared or worried? • How does our body let us know that we are feeling unsafe or uncomfortable? • Is it harder to say 'no' to a stranger or to someone you know well?
<p>Step 3: Decorate Body & Outfit</p> <p>Topic: Trusted Adults</p>	<p><i>Now let's decorate the body! Think of 'Trusted Adults' like your personal superheroes or sidekicks. These are the grown-ups who have your back and make sure you are safe, healthy, and happy.</i></p> <p><i>They can be anyone, parents, teachers, coaches, or doctors. They help you solve problems and protect you from your head to your toes.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is someone who you can turn to when you feel scared or worried? • Who is someone that you feel always listens to what you have to say? • Why could it be hard to talk to a trusted adult about something that is bothering us?
<p>Wrap-Up</p>	<p><i>We finished our Cardboard Kid! Thank you for sharing your ideas with me. If you ever feel worried, if something just feels 'off,' or if you just have a questions you can always come tell me or a trusted adult. I am always on your team!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did any strong feelings come up while decorating your Cardboard Kid? • Who are your other trusted adults? (at school, home, etc.)

