



# Family Support Line

## Holidays: Great Times to Talk About Personal Safety

The holidays are a great time to connect with family and friends. They are also a great time to talk with children about touch and personal safety.

Long car rides and present-wrapping sessions are perfect times to remind kids to say “please” and “thank you.” They’re also perfect times to prepare them for the visiting to come. Children need to know that it’s okay to say “no” to touching they don’t like – even to a relative or friend.

Here are some ways you can get those conversations started:

*“How do you want to greet \_\_\_\_\_ when you see them?”*

*“Do you feel comfortable hugging \_\_\_\_?”*

*“You don’t have to give anyone a hug if you want to. You have the right to decide.”*

You can also offer suggestions for alternate greetings – such as a high five, fist bump, or special handshake.

Of course, it’s not just parents who can share this important message. All you aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents out there can also reinforce this message. One of the best ways is asking, *Is it okay for me to give you a hug?* That one sentence communicates that you respect the child’s boundaries, want them to be comfortable, and recognize their choice. That’s a gift that keeps on giving!

**Want to read more on this topic? Check out these articles:**

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2015/06/never-force-child-hug-people/>

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/06/20/living/give-grandma-hug-child/>

<http://www.popsugar.com/moms/Why-Your-Child-Should-Never-Forced-Hug-Relative-27334392>



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