

WE CAN HELP
PREVENT CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

NAPCAN
PREVENT CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

Safer Communities for Children

A Community Approach to Child Wellbeing and Safety



ECLD Immersion Experience

Perth, 28 March 2026

PRESENTED BY: Meron Looney

Acknowledging Country



Who is NAPCAN?

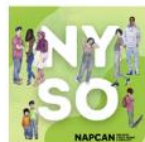
CHILD PROTECTION WEEK

Coordinating NCPW across Australia since 1990 (Every September).

Engage and educate all Australians to understand they have a part to play in keeping our children and young people safe. Working collectively we know we can change the trajectory for children and families.



NAPCAN YOUTH SPEAK OUT (NYSO)



NYSO is NAPCAN's youth advisory council (**14-25yrs**) representing the voices and opinions of young people across Australia influencing projects within NAPCAN and beyond.

NYSO represents a **diverse range of voices**, perspectives, identities, cultures and lived experiences.
Instagram [**@untaughteducation**](#)

Introductions

Choose a Feelings Card for how you are feeling or that you would like to talk about

Introduce yourself & your role

Tell us why you have chosen your card



If you read more than one story to children from the
Safer Communities for Children kit,
we suggest reading them in the following order...



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Safer Communities for Children

a story kit to support:

Educators, workers
and communities

Children
(3-10 yrs)



Parents,
caregivers and
other adults



The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

3 Key Rights

1

The right to be safe

2

The right to have a voice (and for adults to take it seriously)

3

The right to seek help



Strengths



- Values children's voices and participation
- Promotes deep listening/tuning in
- Safe and non-threatening – narrative approach
- Introduces the concept of consent
- Focus on prevention
- Gently challenges gender stereotypes
- Focus is on prevention (adult responsibility)
- Inclusive and flexible
- Aims to build child and community wellbeing and safety.

'Would you like a hug, Frankie?' asked Mum.
Frankie nodded.

**Introduces
concept of
consent**



Mum gave Frankie a big frog hug, and
Frankie smiled a big frog smile.



Safer Communities for Children

A Community Approach to Child Wellbeing and Safety



**Alignment with
Australian Curriculum version 9.0 and EYLF v2.0**



Frankie Speaks Up



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

NAPCAN acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of the many lands across Australia, on which this kit will be used. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders past and present and to young knowledge-holders. As the oldest continuing culture on earth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the knowledge embedded in culture to build strong communities and families that keep children safe. We understand how important it is for all of us to listen, and learn from their wisdom.

ACKNOWLEDGING CONTRIBUTORS TO *SAFER COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN*

Safer Communities for Children was developed in consultation with Northern Territory service providers and communities, and from current Australian and international literature.

Thank you to the Northern Territory Primary Health Network (NT PHN) and the Primary Health Networks Programme – an Australian Government Initiative – for financial and other support in developing the original *Safer Communities for Children* approach and resources.

Thank you to the Northern Territory Government for funding and supporting the expansion of *Safer Communities for Children* through the Community and Place-Based Partnerships for Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Response.

Thank you to the NAPCAN Safer Communities for Children Advisory Group for its contributions, including providing a trauma lens over the stories, activities and messages for adults.

Thank you to the many Northern Territory organisations and individuals who contributed to the stories and development of *Safer Communities for Children*. Your knowledge, support, feedback and contributions have been invaluable. A special thank you to Shirleen Campbell for her wonderful artwork, **Grandmothers' Story – Deep Listening**.

We are grateful for the support of the NSW Ministry of Health for supporting adaptations of *Safer Communities for Children* for the NSW context. We acknowledge the wisdom and cultural insights from the Aboriginal Advisory Group in guiding the process of adaptation. Together we can ensure that every child in every community is listened to and heard.

Funded by:



While the Australian Government helped fund this document, it has not reviewed the content and is not responsible for any injury, loss or damage however arising from the use of or reliance on the information provided herein.



NAPCAN PREVENT CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
www.napcan.org.au



Safer Communities for Children

A Community Approach to Protective Behaviours

Children do well when family members, caregivers, educators and others in their lives listen to them and value what they have to say. When we do this, we can learn more about how children think and feel, and what they need from us to help them feel safe and be safe.

SHARING STORIES IS A GOOD WAY TO START THE CONVERSATION.

This story is part of the *Safer Communities for Children* kit that uses bush animal stories to help children explore ideas around safety.

The story is followed by:

- questions you can ask children
- tips for adults, and
- activities children may like to do.

Feel free to look through these before you read the story to children. They can help you to explore the key messages in the story and have meaningful conversations about the topics covered.

The stories are a gentle way to talk with children about their safety. It's possible, however, that a child might tell you about times they have felt unsafe or been hurt. If this happens, you will need to follow up with them, and may need to act to keep them safe. See the last page for services and supports.

If you read more than one story to children from the
Safer Communities for Children kit,
we suggest reading them in the following order...



THE BIG IDEA

Children do well when their feelings and abilities are respected, and they are supported to speak up.

FRANKIE SPEAKS UP

IS THE FIFTH STORY IN *SAFER COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN*.

In this story, Frankie Frog is feeling worried because everyone expects him to leap across the creek like the other frogs. But he can only do little hops. He doesn't feel safe. With the support of his cousin Jirra, Frankie tells the other animals he is not ready. Frankie's dad is proud of him for standing up for himself. He is sure Frankie will be able to try to leap one day - when he wants to, and feels ready.

New experiences can often feel risky for children. As adults, we can see the benefits of children trying new things and may want to encourage them to step out of their comfort zones. By listening to children's worries and fears and by taking them seriously, we let children know that we are here to support them and that it is okay to not want to do something now or in the future.

When adults help children to work through their small worries, children are more likely to come to them for support with big worries later on.



Enjoy the story >



All the animals
were playing
by the creek.

The kangaroos were bounding around the clearing, jumping higher and higher.



The dingoes were playing catch with a stick.

The koalas were racing one another up and down the gum trees.



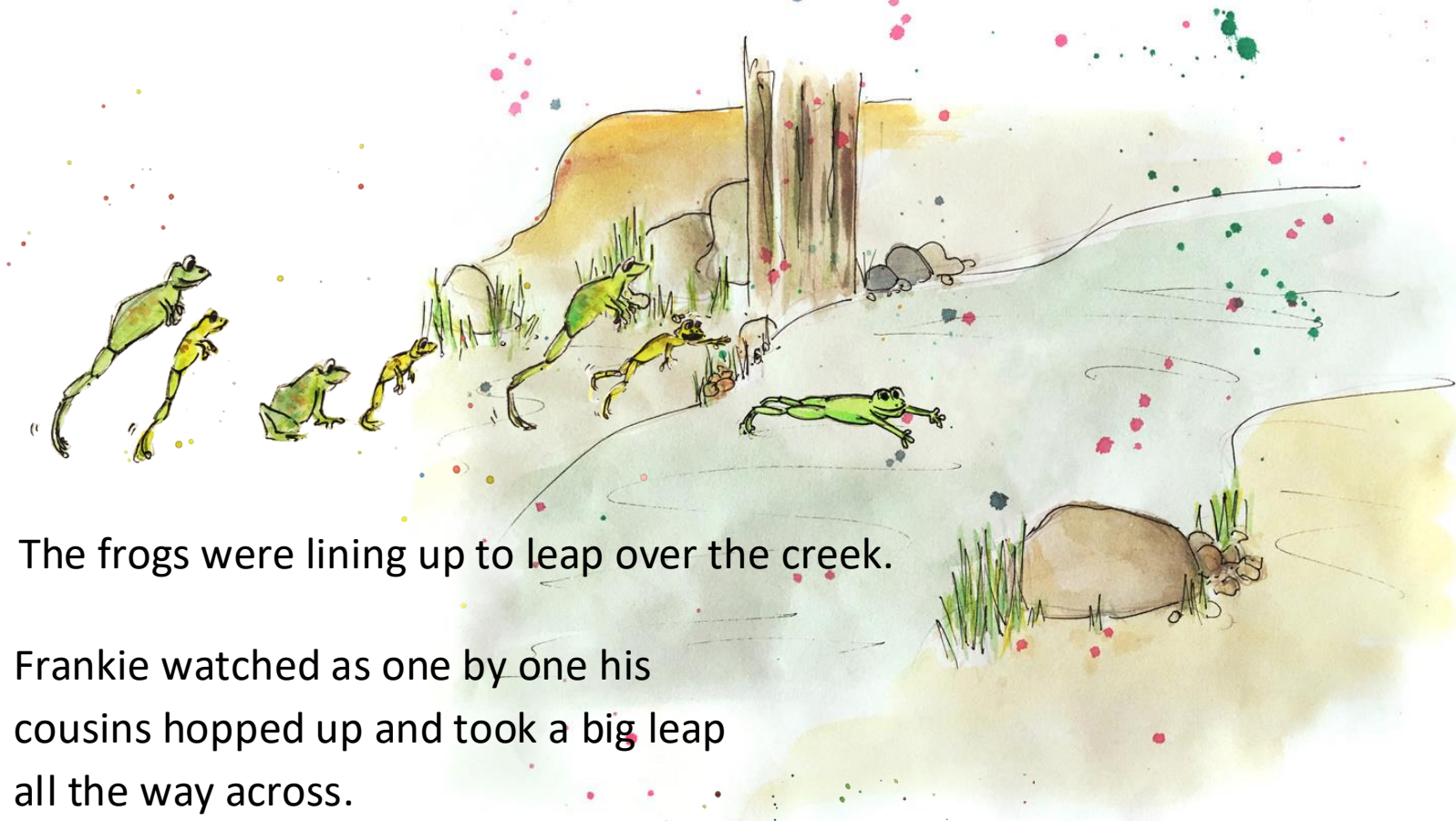


The eagles were practising their swoops from the treetops.

The snakes were curling and slithering together beside an old log.



They were all having fun.



The frogs were lining up to leap over the creek.

Frankie watched as one by one his
cousins hopped up and took a big leap
all the way across.



It was nearly his turn.



Frankie's body was sweaty and
his legs felt wobbly like jelly.

He wasn't sure he felt ready to leap.

"I can't," he thought.

"It's your turn Frankie," smiled his big cousin Jirra.



Frankie gulped.

"But I can't leap. I can only do little hops," he said in a very small voice.

The animals crowded around.



“You CAN leap Frankie. All frogs can leap!
Go ahead and leap over the creek!”

Frankie just stood there,
like he was stuck to the ground.





"Go on!"
tutted the
kangaroos
and joeys.



"You can do it!"
whistled the eagles
and eaglets.



"Come on, Frankie..."
yawned the koalas and joeys.



"We dare you!"
hissed the snakes
and snakelets.



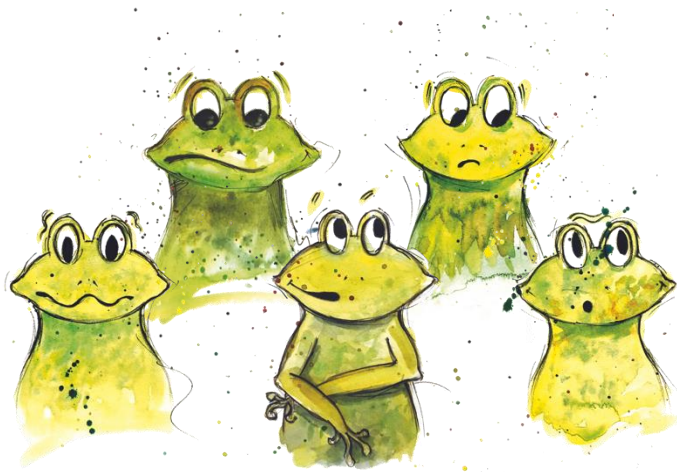
"Just try it!"
howled the dingoes and
pups.



Frankie looked at the creek.
It had been raining and the water
was flowing fast.

"I'm only a little froglet,"
he thought.

"If I fall in the creek,
the water might push me
into the rocks and
pull me under."



How do you
think Frankie might
be
feeling?



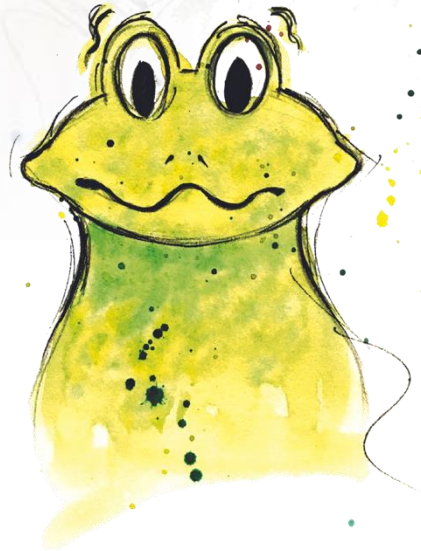
Frankie felt scared.

His heart was beating fast and
he felt a lump in his throat.

Frankie could hear the animals
calling for him to
go ahead and leap.

Just try it!

**Come ON
Frankie!**



He could see them waiting for him,
and he felt sick in his stomach.

Frankie turned to Jirra.

“Jirra,” he croaked quietly,
“everyone says I can leap, but I don't want to do it.

I don't feel safe.”



Jirra could see that Frankie was afraid.



“Frankie,” she said, “You don't have to leap if you don't feel safe. You can decide what feels right for you.”

With Jirra standing next to him, Frankie felt brave
and spoke to the others.

“I don’t want to try to leap,” he said. “I’m not ready.”



“Are you sure you don’t want to try?” asked Kenny.

“I’m sure,” Frankie replied. “Not today.”

The adults talked together about what Frankie said. They realised that Frankie was feeling pressured, and explained this to the children.



The children agreed and said to Frankie,
“Of course! You can choose whether or not you want to try.
Just let us know if we can help.”

Frankie breathed a sigh of relief.

His heart
stopped beating
fast.



The lump in his throat was
gone and he didn't feel sick
anymore.

He felt calm again.

Later, back at the Billabong,
Dad listened carefully while Frankie told him
what had happened.



“It was brave of you to stand up for yourself and speak out like
that,” he said, “and I’m glad everyone listened.”

“Dad,” asked Frankie,
“will I ever be able to leap across the
creek like the other frogs?”



“I’m sure you will,” Dad said.
“If you want to, and when you feel ready.”



Frankie smiled at Dad and asked him for a big hug.



How do you
think Frankie is
feeling now?

Questions & Activities



Questions for children & key messages for adults

You can use some of the following questions with children to help explore the main ideas of the story. Feel free to look back through the pages together. By listening to children and having open conversations – without judgement – we can support children to learn about what they might need to feel and be safe, and learn about what we can do to help.

FOR CHILDREN

“What did Frankie feel in his body when he felt scared to leap, then pressured by his friends to try?”

(e.g. early warning signs: sweaty, wobbly legs, unable to move, fast heartbeat, lump in his throat, sick in his stomach).



FOR ADULTS

Early warning signs can help us know when we are feeling unsafe and might need to get help

- We can use our senses to help us tune into what's around us.
- Our bodies can then give us clues to let us know if we feel safe or unsafe.
- Remind children that these are called 'early warning signs'. They can help us know when we are feeling scared or unsafe, and need to get help.

Pressuring children can make them feel unsafe

- When children are pressured into doing things that make them feel unsafe, they can feel anxious.
- Sometimes, without meaning to, adults can contribute to children's anxiety by putting pressure on them. This happens to Frankie when the animals pressure him to leap.

Questions for children & key messages for adults

FOR CHILDREN

“When Frankie tuned into his early warning signs, he realised he didn't feel safe to leap - so he talked with Jirra.”

“Who can you talk to if you have any worries?”



FOR ADULTS

Remind children that it's important they tell a trusted adult when they feel worried or unsafe.

Children feel safer when they feel heard and supported

- Rather than pressuring him, Jirra listens to Frankie's concerns. She tells him he doesn't have to leap if he doesn't want to, and supports him to tell the other animals.
- When children feel listened to, they know someone is looking out for them. This helps them grow trust and confidence.

It is important to take children's perceptions of risk seriously

- Frankie is worried he might fall into the creek if he tries to leap over. It feels risky and unsafe.
- When children feel a situation is risky or unsafe, adults need to provide attention and care.

Questions for children & key messages for adults

FOR CHILDREN

"In the story, Jirra listened to Frankie and explained he did not have to try to leap if he didn't feel ready. This helped Frankie to feel brave and tell the others."

"Can you think of a time you felt brave?"



FOR ADULTS

Giving children a sense of control can reduce their anxiety and increase their sense of agency

- Supporting children to speak up for themselves, rather than speaking for them helps build the skills and courage they need to resist pressure and feel braver.
- After setting his own boundaries, Frankie begins to feel calmer and more in control, which helps to restore his sense of safety and personal agency .

Questions for children & key messages for adults

FOR CHILDREN

“How does Frankie's dad help him at the end of the story?”



FOR ADULTS

Build children's confidence by acknowledging their strengths and efforts

- Frankie's dad understands that it has taken courage for him to resist pressure and tell the other animals how he feels.
- He knows that speaking up for himself is an important step for Frankie and he is proud of his efforts.
- Acknowledging children's efforts in specific and positive ways shows you are supporting them and builds their confidence.

Something to think about...



How can you encourage
children without pressuring them?

THE BIG IDEA
Children do well
when their feelings
and abilities are
respected, and they
are supported to
speak up.

Here are some
activities children
might enjoy that
can help to
reinforce and
explore the
messages in the
story.

*Note: It's important
children have the choice to
'pass' on taking part in
activities if they don't want
to do them.*

Let's play!

(You could use background music or instruments)

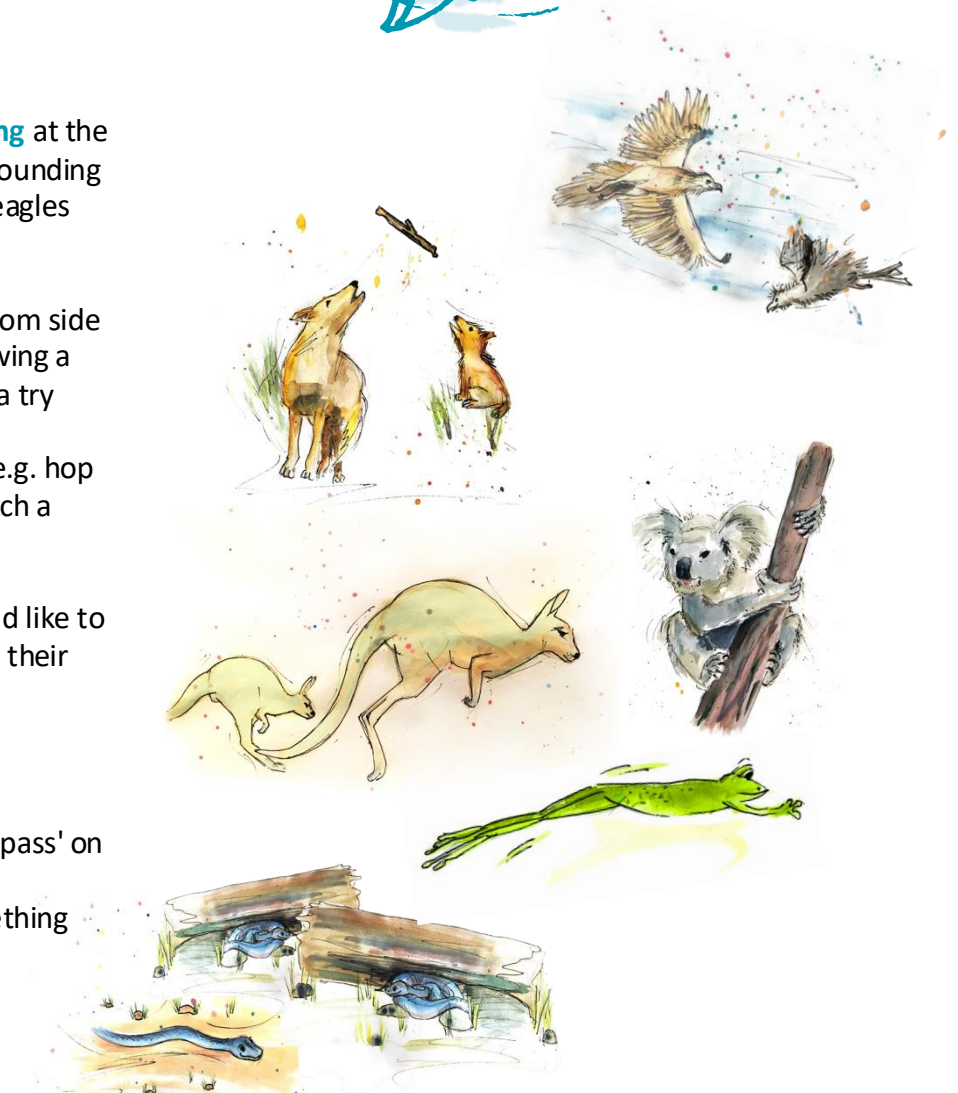
Invite children to:

- **act out some of the things the animals were doing** at the beginning of the story (e.g. the kangaroos were bounding and jumping, the dingos were playing catch, the eagles were swooping, and the frogs were leaping)
- **try doing the skills in different ways** (e.g. jump from side to side, clap hands in between catching and throwing a ball). Ask for their ideas, and invite them to have a try
- **think of (and practice) something THEY can do** (e.g. hop on one leg, walk backwards, spin, bounce and catch a ball)
- **think of (and practice) something new** they would like to try (e.g. hop on the other leg, hop backwards, roll their tongue)

Help them to think of ways they:

- would like to be supported to try something new
- could say 'no' if they don't feel ready, or want to 'pass' on trying something
- could encourage and support a friend to try something new (without pressuring).

Make it fun!



Checking with friends

In the story, Frankie feels pressured by his friends to try to leap over the creek. Instead of pressuring, we can check with our friends if they'd like to do something.

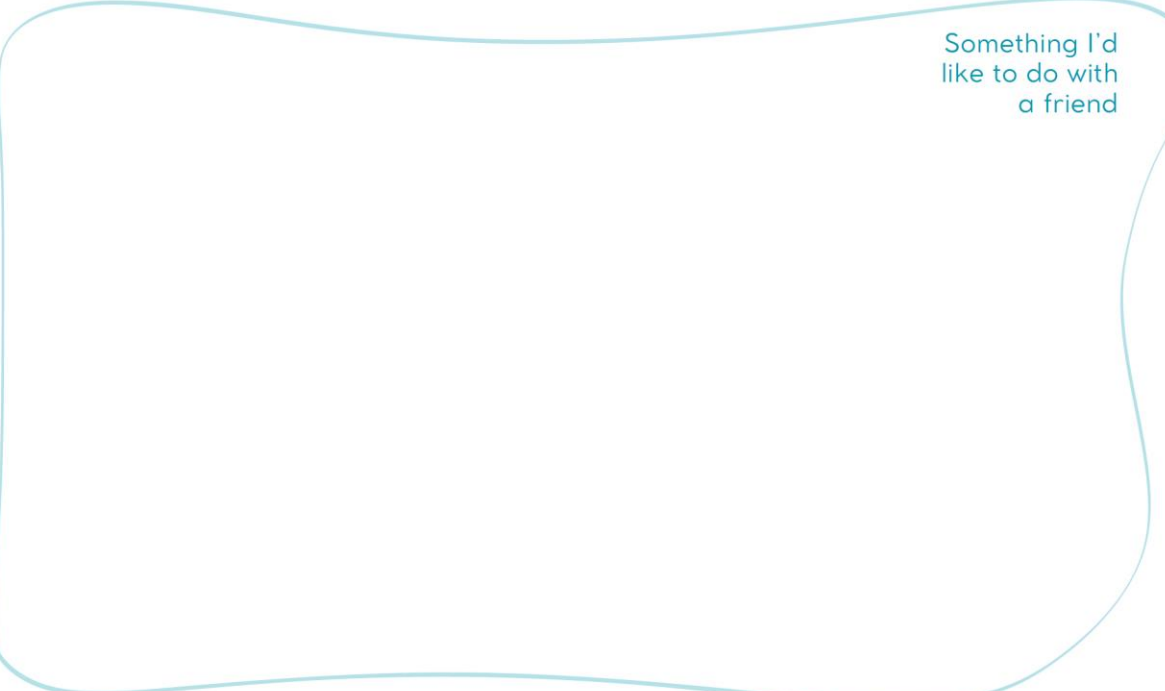
Invite children to write or draw about something they would like to do with a friend



STORY PLAN 5 - CHECKING WITH FRIENDS

ART ACTIVITY SHEET

Something I'd like to do with a friend



101

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Checking with friends

In the story, Frankie feels pressured by his friends to try to leap over the creek. Instead of pressuring, we can check with our friends if they'd like to do something.

Invite children to write or draw about something they would like to do with a friend (eg. play a game, watch a movie, go to the park).

While they are drawing or writing, ask them:

- How could you check with your friend that this is something they'd like to do (i.e. get their friend's consent/permission and agree that it's okay)?
- What could you do or say if your friend says "no"?



Important!

Talk with children about how it might feel if their friend says 'no' or changes their mind (they might feel hurt, rejected, angry, sad, okay). If necessary, explain that it does not mean their friend doesn't like them — maybe they just don't want to do, or feel ready to do, that thing.

Help children to think of responses that show respect for their friend's decision. You can help write their chosen response in a speech bubble on their drawing if they would like.

That's OK.
Maybe we can do it
another time.

That's OK.
Tell me if you
change your mind.

That's OK. I'll try
someone else.

That's OK.
Let me know when
you feel ready.

That's OK.
What would you
like to do?



Early warning signs

This activity can help children to learn more about 'early warning signs'.

1. Look back through the story with children to identify the different ways the animals knew they felt unsafe, scared, or worried. What clues did their bodies give them?
2. Invite children to:
 - write or draw their responses around Frankie
 - think about other ways someone's body might tell them they feel unsafe or worried
 - add these ideas next to Frankie.
3. Explain that:
 - "These signals from our bodies are called 'early warning signs', and they can help us know how we feel
 - If we get any of these signs it can mean we are unsafe, or feeling scared or worried – and we may need to get help from a trusted adult."

4. Invite children to think of ways Frankie might know he feels safe.

(See the activity on page 31 to help children develop a Support Circle of people they can go to for help and support.)

How might Frankie know he feels...

UNSAFE?

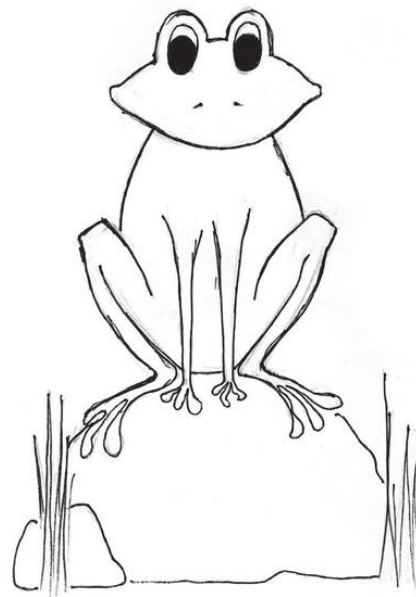
Feet stuck to the ground

Feel like crying

Feel like running away

Dry mouth and throat

Heart beating fast



SAFE?

Feel calm

Relaxed muscles

Laughing

Breathing slowly

Having fun

Ask children:

"If you were feeling any of these early warning signs, what would you want adults to do to help you feel and be safe?"

Note: This activity is an important part of Story 2 *Frankie Learns to Tune In*.

Support Circle

Invite children to make a Support Circle of adults in their life and community who:

look out for them

•

they trust and feel safe with,
and

•

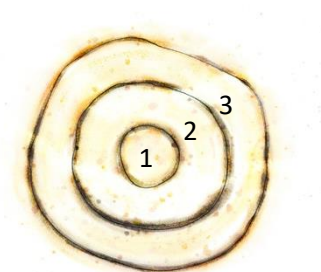
they could go to for help and
support.

Note: This activity is an important part of
Story 3 *Help! Kenny at the Waterhole.*





Support Circle



On a large piece of paper, draw three circles (like the circles Uncle Roo draws in the sand in *Story 3: Help! Kenny at the Waterhole*).

1. Invite children to draw a picture or put a photo of themselves in the small, centre circle.
2. For Circle 2, invite children to write or draw:
 - people close to them who they trust and feel safe with (e.g. family and friends)
 - the adults they could talk to if they were feeling happy, excited, upset, unsafe or worried
 - the things or items that are important to them and that help them to feel comfortable and safe (e.g. toys, pets, comfort items)
3. For Circle 3, invite children to write or draw:
 - community members who they trust and feel safe with (e.g. teachers, support workers, local business owners or workers)
 - places where they feel safe and welcome (e.g. school, childcare, shop, library, park).

Help children work out ways they can invite the adults they have identified to be in their Support Circle, so each adult understands what this means (i.e. that the child trusts them to listen to and support them). For example, children could write or draw an invitation for each person (which could include the qualities identified by the child).

It's important that the adults identified by children:

- *know that they have been included in the child's Support Circle*
- *will believe, listen to and support the child if they feel worried or unsafe*
- *will help the child work out what to do next if they have any worries*
- *will keep the child informed about what is happening*
- *will value the child and support and celebrate their achievements.*

If necessary, help children think of people or services they may like to include - e.g. formal support services such as Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800 and Emergency Services (Triple Zero 000)).

Don't force children to include any particular people. Children may not want to show or share their Support Circle with others.

It's ok if children want to include a pet or a toy, but they also need to include adults who can help them.

Children may wish to review and update their Support Circle - as people come and go in their lives, and their circumstances change.



Services, Resources and Supports for Parents, Caregivers, Workers and Children

An important part of listening to children includes noticing if a child is feeling worried or anxious.

If you are concerned about how to support a child with their fears or worries, the following services, resources and supports can help.

Parent Helplines

ACT	Parentline ACT (02) 6287 3833 • www.parentlineact.org.au
VIC	Parent Line Victoria 13 22 89
NSW	Parentline New South Wales 1300 1300 52
QLD + NT	Parentline Queensland & Northern Territory 1300 30 1300 • www.parentline.com.au
WA	Ngala Parenting Line Western Australia (08) 9368 9368 or 1800 111 546 • www.ngala.com.au/parenting-line
TAS	Parenting Information Telephone Assistance Service (PITAS) Tasmania 1300 808 178
SA	Parent Help Line South Australia 1300 364 100 • www.cafhs.sa.gov.au/services/parent-helpline

Information to help you understand and support children through their fears and anxieties

Emerging Minds
www.emergingminds.com.au
www.emergingminds.com.au/families
www.emergingminds.com.au/practitioners

Kids Helpline
www.kidshelpline.com.au/parents
www.kidshelpline.com.au/kids

Raising Children Network
raisingchildren.net.au
Mental health resources
www.raisingchildren.net.au/for-professionals/mental-health-resources

Support and information for women, children and men affected by domestic, family and/or sexual violence

1800 Respect
1800 737 732
Domestic, family, and sexual violence
counselling, information, and support.

Mensline Australia
1300 766 491
Telephone and online counselling service for
men with emotional health and relationship
concerns, including issues of violence.

Support & Crisis Intervention

For immediate safety concerns, contact the police and/or the child protection service in your state or territory (see link below)
<https://aifs.gov.au/resources/resource-sheets/mandatory-reporting-childabuse-and-neglect>

Lifeline (24 hrs)
13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au
A crisis support and suicide
prevention service for people
experiencing emotional distress.
It offers counselling by phone,
online chat, and text.

Kids Helpline (24 hrs)
1800 55 1800

www.kidshelpline.com.au
A free, confidential phone,
webchat and email counselling service
for children and young people aged 5-25
years.

1300 YARN (24 hrs)
www.13yarn.org.au

A crisis support line for Aboriginal
and Torres Strait Islander people.

Insert your own hotlines here

STORY 4



STORY 3



STORY 2



STORY 1



STORY 6



STORY 7



Story 3

Children's Voices

activity sheet (when run as a program)

things we can play with ^{being with people we love}
 couches and books
 feeling clean
 use kind voices to us.
 good playgrounds
 being around friends
 nice soft cushions
 lots of books + toys
 nice colours
 soft things
 having pets around

Children's Voices Activity Sheet: Story 3



Creating Spaces where Children Feel Safe

Make the place feel safe

things we can play with ^{being able to have fun}
 couches and books
 feeling clean
 use kind voices to us.
 good playgrounds
 being around friends
 nice soft cushions
 lots of books + toys
 nice colours
 soft things
 having pets around
 toys + play things

Make the place feel unsafe

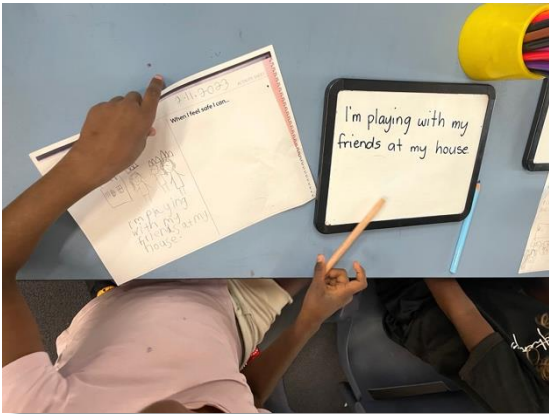
when it feels dangerous
 being home alone
 when people yell
 when people get angry
 adults arguing
 when I am teased
 when things change a lot
 when I'm teased + picked on
 when people don't share
 fighting
 no toys - broken things
 family fighting
 strangers around
 broken glass + things
 people yelling

What can adults do

take kids out for bike rides and fun things
 put games and toys around
 adults should make nice places for kids to play in
 lots of toys and play things
 taking me for a drive around and doing stuff together
 kind words
 provide lots of toys
 keep kids away from danger
 stay with kids and do nice activities
 when I am teased
 when things change a lot
 when I'm teased + picked on
 when people don't share
 fighting
 no toys - broken things
 family fighting
 strangers around
 broken glass + things
 people yelling

STOP FIGHTING
 STOP SWEARING
 NO YELLING

SCFC in action...





Questions for adults to think about - children's safety



How can you help children to feel safe and share their feelings?



How can you help children to do the things they like to do when they feel safe?



How can you tune into children and check how they are feeling?



How can you support children if they are feeling unsure, worried or unsafe?



What can you do to help places feel safe and welcoming for children?



How can you encourage children without pressuring them?



What can you do to support children to learn new skills?



How can you help children feel safe, valued and connected in your community?

The Kit

THE STORIES

All the beautiful stories



THE MANUAL

All the content-rich info and guidelines



FEELINGS CARDS

A box of goodness - 52 animal feelings cards contained in their own box



WHAT'S NEXT...? POSTER

Navigate your way through the stories



United Nations Convention on The Rights of the Child

UNCROC POSTER





SAFER COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN

SCFC Web Page

www.napcan.org.au/programs/safer-communities-national/

A community approach to child wellbeing and safety

An overview of the stories



SAFER COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN is an approach to support children aged around 3-10 years to learn about safety, express their feelings, and share what helps them feel secure and safe in their families and communities.

- ✔ **Practical and Engaging Resources**
- ✔ **Child-focused**
- ✔ **Adult Responsibility**
- ✔ **What makes SCFC different?**

Try it out! Read Story 2 here



PROGRAM APPROACH & TRAINING

Safer Communities for Children can be used by people working with children and families to promote meaningful conversations and planning around the wellbeing and safety needs of children and to respond to children in supportive ways.

- ✔ **The Approach**
- ✔ **Safeguarding Children**
- ✔ **Download the Curriculum Alignment Document**
- ✔ **About the Training**

Activity

Read

- The introduction
- The Big Idea
- The story
- The questions for children and information for adults



Explore

- The Activities

Discuss

- How could you use the story and activities in your work?
- What is one concrete action you can implement in your setting to amplify children's voices and promote their safety?

Inclusive and flexible...



THANK YOU



ENQUIRE

Learn more about SCFC and other NAPCAN programs.

Enquire Now →

Phone: 02 8073 3300

Email: contact@napcan.org.au



TRAINING SCHEDULE

Check out our scheduled workshops and book with us today.

View Training →

www.napcan.org.au/training/

meron.looney@napcan.org.au

[0411 737 630](tel:0411737630)

www.napcan.org.au

SCFC Web Page

www.napcan.org.au/programs/safer-communities-national/

