



TALK LINE
FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

Playing the “What If...” Game

You can use the “What If...” Game to start discussions with your child about his/her fears or concerns and to teach your child what to do in potentially unsafe situations.

How to Play?

- **You or your child can initiate the “What If...” Game simply by asking a question that begins with “What if...”**
- **Try to let your child answer the question first** so you are able to understand his/her fears or concerns. To prompt your child’s response, you might say something like:
 - “That’s a good question. What do you think?”
 - “I have some ideas about that, but first I’d like to know what you think.”
- **When your child doesn’t want to answer a “What if...” question, it’s okay for you to answer first.** After a few games, you can take turns.
- **Examples of the “What If...” Game:**
 - Child: “What if the same kid calls you stupid everyday at recess?”
 - Parent: “I would want to know about it because I love you and want you to be safe.”
 - Parent: “What if someone you don’t know comes up to you at the park and asks whether you want to go see some kittens he’s giving away?”
 - Child: “I would say, ‘No,’ and run to the grown-up I’m with.”

Things to Keep in Mind When Playing the “What If...” Game

- The “What If ...” Game should never frighten your child. Think carefully about your questions before asking them.
- If your child continues to ask the same “What if...” question, your child’s real concern is probably not being addressed.
- Start the “What If...” Game with an issue your child has already talked about.
- Don’t respond to your child’s “What if...” question by saying it will never happen.

