



With the impact of the Coronavirus being felt across the world, you may be finding it difficult to maintain some of the normal steps you take to protect your children in this ever-changing environment. If your child's school has been canceled temporarily you may be finding yourself faced with securing alternate means of childcare. How do you balance the need to work with the need to find a safe place for your children, especially in an emergency?

Here are some protective steps you can take to keep your children as safe as possible, even in less than ideal circumstances:

- **Prevent Isolation:** More than 80% of sexual abuse cases occur in isolated, one-on-one situations. Make a rule that doors must be open at all times. Encourage activities and behaviors that include the whole group and discourage individual pursuits. Consider making certain areas of the house off-limits while you're away, like basements or bedrooms, and insist that these areas are off-limits for your children in other's homes as well.
- **Keeping Situations Interruptible:** Make sure the sitter knows that you'll be checking in with the kids throughout the day. It may even be a good idea to circle back by the house and drop in while you're supposed to be out, if you can. You could also ask a "[safe](#)" neighbor or family member to drop by unannounced for you. Confirm boundaries with your kids and remind them that if anyone makes them feel uncomfortable, they can tell you. A phone call is a quick way to check-in and gauge the situation.
- **Setting Expectations:** Ask the sitter to come over early so you can speak to them and set expectations. Let the sitter know that your kids know about body safety and boundaries and that you don't keep secrets from each other. Being upfront with this information can often be a deterrent to inappropriate behavior.

More information on minimizing opportunity in unexpected scenarios can be found in [this blog post](#). Just as COVID-19 can be prevented by hand-washing and social-distancing, child sexual abuse can be prevented by taking a few simple, pre-emptive steps.

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