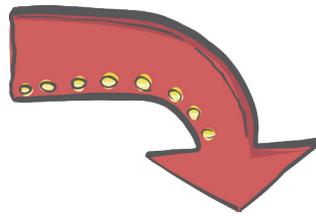




## What can everyone do to help keep us safe?

Children and young people believe that the whole community needs to **take safety seriously**, especially for those who find it hard to protect themselves. They felt unsafe when they felt powerless, and thought that this power imbalance needed to be addressed.

Children and young people also want to be involved in making institutions and communities safer, as they know the most about what they need. They thought that adults could be more creative in how they involve children and young people – not everybody reads, writes or speaks; but everyone needs to know how to be safe.



## We think most adults are doing well!

Children said that most adults are doing well, and appreciate their efforts to keep them safe. They said that things aren't as bad as many adults believe. However, they said that some adults need to develop their skills, and places need to deal better with safety concerns.



### For more information about this research:

The Institute of Child Protection Studies at the Australian Catholic University spoke to children and young people about their views and perceptions of safety in institutions. This research was commissioned by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

For more information about this study, visit [www.acu.edu.au/icps](http://www.acu.edu.au/icps)  
To view the animated video about what children and young people think about safety, visit [www.ncps.org.au](http://www.ncps.org.au)

## What do children and young people think about safety?

*Every child has the right to be safe and protected from abuse and harm*

In the past, some children and young people were hurt by people in places where adults were supposed to keep them safe, such as church, school, sports teams, and children's services.

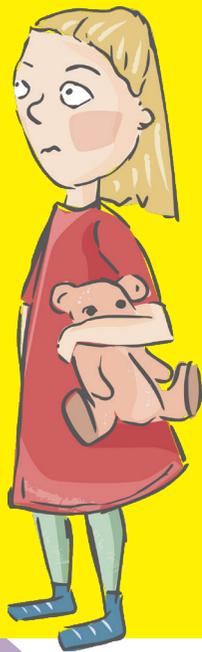
In 2013, a Royal Commission started to find out why children and young people were harmed and what should have been done to keep them safe, and what must be done in the future.....



A national study of more than **1400** young Australians was part of this process, and found that **8 in 10 boys and 9 in 10 girls** said they felt safe some or all of the time when they were at school, church, holiday camps or playing in a team sport.

However, **1 in 5** said they wouldn't know what to do if they came across another person who made them feel unsafe or who hurt them.

Almost half of children and young people felt that adults would only know that children were being hurt if they told them. What follows is a summary of what children and young people said in the study.



## What can adults do to help protect us?

When children and young people were worried that an adult might hurt them, they said they needed:

- To know what to do and say
- To have a trusted adult to go to, talk to and get help from
- For another adult to notice that they aren't OK
- And for an adult to believe them when they tell them they're not safe

Children and young people thought the most important thing was for adults to **pay attention** when they raised a concern.

## What stops us from seeking help?

A number of things stopped children and young people from getting help to deal with their safety concerns, like:

Worrying that things would get worse if they told

Feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable talking to adults



Believing that adults wouldn't know what to do

They also thought that adults don't have enough time for children and young people, that adults don't see it as their job to protect kids, and that adults don't like talking to kids about 'tough' or 'sensitive' things.

## What can institutions do to help us feel safe?

Children and young people said institutions should:

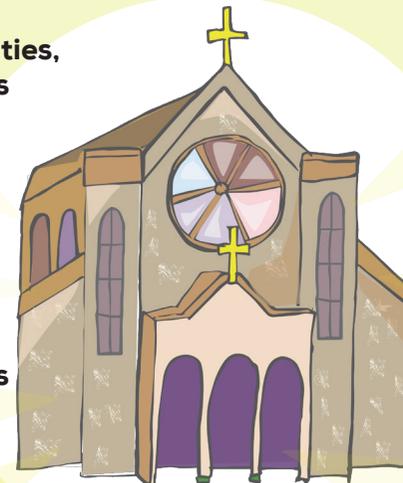
**RESPECT** their abilities, observations, needs and wishes

**DO** what they're supposed to do and what they say they'll do

**ASK** what they're thinking, feeling, seeing and what they need

**INFORM** kids about dangers – but also what's being done to protect them

**WATCH** what adults are doing, and how they're behaving



**LISTEN** to what kids are really saying

**STAND UP AND SPEAK OUT** when kids are being hurt, bullied or treated badly

Kids said they needed to have some power and control to feel safe, including after they had told adults about being in an unsafe situation.