Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe**®

ELEMENTARY

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Acknowledgments

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*Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe***

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Stand Strong • Stay Safe

Introduction

Stand Strong • Stay Safe offers a classroom-based Elementary School curriculum that promotes personal safety by teaching children how to set boundaries and be assertive. Using interactive presentations, skills practice, and role-play, this program helps children develop skills to stay safe from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and bullying.[1] As the core skill of this curriculum, assertiveness forms a foundation for students to stand up for themselves and others and to get help from a trusted adult.

Students learn that they have:

- the right to be safe and respected,

- the power to make safe choices by being assertive,

- the capability to seek help when they feel unsafe, and

- the responsibility to contribute to the safety of their community.

The curriculum is comprised of two age-appropriate editions containing five lessons each, designed to fit into a typical public or private school schedule. The Lower Elementary edition is written for Second and Third Grade students, as well as any student who has not previously participated in *Stand Strong • Stay Safe.* The Upper Elementary edition is intended to build upon the skills developed in the Lower Elementary edition, and is meant for Fourth and Fifth Grade students.

Each lesson features engaging characters, interactive discussions, and practice in personal safety skills. Follow-Up Activities and Literature Connections are included in the manual to promote retention of the skills.[2] Parent involvement is encouraged by the inclusion of Home Connections and the web-based Parent Guide that accompanies the curriculum. Involving parents in the program helps to reinforce the personal safety skills at home, which is critical to the program's success.[3]

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1 Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman (1995); National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (1999); National Sexual Violence Resource Center (2011)

2 Rispens, Aleman, & Goudena (1997)

3 Kenny, Wurtele, & Alonso (2012); Brassard (2015)

Why Is This Program Needed?

Experiencing or witnessing violence during childhood causes trauma. Although adults bear responsibility for keeping children safe, too many children in the United States regularly experience violence perpetrated by an adult or another child in the form of physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, or bullying. In 2017, Child Protective Services confirmed over 123,000 victims of physical abuse and nearly 58,000 victims of sexual abuse.[1] One out of every ten children is sexually abused before their 18th birthday, and experts estimate that there are over 42 million survivors of sexual abuse in the United States today.[2] National statistics on emotional abuse are very low, likely because it is hard to investigate and confirm. Researchers argue that it is one of the most common forms of violence children experience, as it is often a co-occuring factor in other forms of abuse.[3] Bullying is prevalent as well; between 20% and 30% of all middle and high school students are involved with bullying, either as victims, perpetrators, or both.[4] Youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) are at much greater risk of bullying, with one study reporting the rate as high as 55%.[5]

Abuse is significantly underreported. Fewer than 30% of victims of sexual abuse ever report their abuse,[6] and many tell a friend rather than an adult who can help.[7] Similarly, only 20% of children involved in bullying report their experiences to an adult. Reporting abuse is an important way to prevent the trauma resulting from ongoing abuse. When children disclose early and often, they are likely to get help more quickly. With this in mind, this curriculum increases disclosures of abuse to avoid the damage caused by secrecy.

The consequences of childhood trauma resonate deeply through society. Experiences of abuse and victimization affect the physical and mental health of victims. Researchers have found a relationship between child abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder, behavior problems, adult criminality, and addiction.[8] Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) increase the risk for serious chronic health problems, substance abuse, intimate partner violence, unintended pregnancies, and depression, among other factors. Early trauma can even alter the structure and wiring of the brain as it develops.[9]

In addition to the physical and mental health consequences, child abuse and neglect carries an economic burden that affects the whole community. Researchers conservatively estimate that the lifetime economic impact of child abuse and neglect

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1 United States Department of Health and Human Services (2019)
2 Darkness to Light (2017)
3 Hibbard, Barlow, & MacMillan (2012)
4 Limber, Olweus, & Luxemberg (2013)
5 Kosciw, Greytak, Giga, Villenas, & Danischewski (2015)
6 Sedlak, et al. (2010)
7 Darkness to Light (2017)
8 Felitti, et al. (1998); Child Welfare Information Gateway (2019)
9 Milani, Hoffman, Fossaluza, Jackowski, & Mello (2017)

cases that occurred in the United States in 2008 will be $124 billion.[1] In 2012 alone, responding to child abuse and neglect cost taxpayers over $80 billion in direct and indirect costs.[2]

Taken together, these facts build a compelling case for a comprehensive approach to preventing child abuse and reducing the impact of childhood trauma. This program aims to prevent trauma by teaching children to recognize abuse and immediately disclose any abuse they experience or witness. It equips them with the knowledge and skills they need to advocate for their right to be safe and respected.

A Skills-Based Response

ChildBuilders' personal safety strategy is driven by the belief that every person has the right to be treated with respect.

We cannot prevent all childhood trauma, nor can we expect that school-based programs stop every instance of abuse. Instead, we arm children with skills that can reduce their risk of trauma, increase their resilience to traumatic events, and increase their awareness of their own rights and responsibilities when it comes to keeping themselves and their communities safe.

Our strategy is informed by research showing that children can learn these skills.[3] *Stand Strong • Stay Safe* focuses on building skills that are universally applicable to situations requiring self-protection: assertiveness, setting and respecting boundaries, emotional control, conflict resolution, and getting help. Consistent with research showing the effectiveness of school-based programs focusing on skill development,[4] *Stand Strong • Stay Safe* achieves the following outcomes:

- Students will recognize unsafe situations.
- Students will learn skills to make safe choices.
- Students will be assertive and stand up for themselves and others, both in everyday interpersonal situations and in potentially unsafe situations.
- Students will identify trusted adults and be able to report abuse.

Assertiveness skills form a foundation on which students can build positive relationships with peers and adults. When children use assertiveness skills, they behave in a way that demands respect by asking for what they need, saying "no" when they are uncomfortable, getting help, and standing up for their rights and the rights of others.[5]

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1 Fang et al. (2012)
2 Gelles & Perlman (2012)
3 Rispens, et al. (1997)
4 e.g., National Sexual Violence Resource Center (2011)
5 Bailey (2000); Olson (2009)

Confident, assertive children who have a strong social support network and know how to get help are more likely to use self-protection skills in unsafe situations.[1] Researchers agree that both sexual predators and perpetrators of bullying are more likely to target children who appear unlikely to stand up for themselves or get help,[2] preferring passive victims to assertive victims.[3]

*Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe*** aims to change the social dynamics within schools and classrooms by increasing the value placed upon kindness and empathy. Students are encouraged to stand up for their own rights as well as the rights of others. They discuss the idea that by doing their part, each member of the community will feel safe and respected. By emphasizing kindness, empathy, and community, schools become places where students thrive and get help rather than places where they feel threatened.[4]

Central to the safety message presented by this program are the following concepts and skills: boundaries, consent, emotional control, and the role of personal power in decision making. Discussions of boundaries and consent emphasize the importance of bodily autonomy. Students learn that they decide how they wish to be treated, while also recognizing that they have a responsibility to respect the decisions that other people make for themselves. By respecting boundaries and valuing consent, students avoid becoming victims or perpetrators of abuse as they move into adolescence.

Emotional control is a key skill in the prevention of bullying and abuse. Often, negative emotions such as anger, resentment, and fear lead to aggression, a common factor in child abuse and bullying.[5] While aggression can lead to the perpetration of abuse, researchers have also found that children who react explosively to being bullied (e.g., crying or angry outbursts) are at risk for repeated victimization.[6] Teaching students to be aware of and in control of their emotions by practicing stress management strategies helps to prevent escalation and bullying while promoting communication and problem solving.

Curriculum Overview

The content for the Elementary Curriculum is presented in two editions. The Lower Elementary edition is designed for Second and Third Grade students and students who have not previously received the *Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe*** program. The Upper Elementary edition is appropriate for Fourth and Fifth Grade students who have received the Lower Elementary edition.

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1   Brassard (2015); National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (1999)
2   Rispens, et al. (1997)
3   Dominguez (2013); Ragozzino & O'Brien (2009)
4   Bailey (2000); Beck & Malley (2003); Dominguez (2013); Gordon (2009); Szalavitz & Perry (2010)
5   Andreou, Vlachou, & Didaskalou (2005); Francis & Wolf (2008)
6   Ragozzino & O'Brien (2009)

Both editions cover related topics that build on each other. The Upper Elementary edition is far more effective if students have previously received the Lower Elementary edition. Presenters are encouraged to teach *Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe*** each year, with Second and Third Grade students receiving the Lower Elementary edition and Fourth and Fifth Grade students receiving the Upper Elementary edition. If Fourth and Fifth Grade students are receiving the program for the first time, presenters should use the Lower Elementary edition so they receive the correct foundation skills.

Core Concepts

The core concepts provide the backbone of each lesson in *Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe***. If students walk away with nothing else, the repetition of the core concepts throughout the program will ensure they know that they deserve to be treated with respect, they have the right to be safe, they have the power to make a safe choice, and they can always talk to a trusted adult when they need help. In the Elementary program, the core concepts describe beliefs and attitudes that can guide students' decision-making when faced with dangerous situations. The core concepts are referred to as Stand Strong Superpowers throughout the Lower Elementary edition and as the *Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe*** (4S) Safety Code throughout the Upper Elementary edition, and are as follows:

Stand Strong Superpowers/4S Safety Code

- I deserve respect.
- I have the right to be safe.
- I have the power to choose.
- I will get help.

Lessons

The safety messages in *Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe** Elementary* are presented to students over the course of five 45-minute lessons. Teachers, counselors, or volunteers are trained by ChildBuilders to deliver the program in the regular classroom. Each lesson includes a story, discussion of the safety message, and an opportunity for practice and integration of the material.

Lower Elementary: Lesson Outlines

Lesson 1: Be Assertive introduces the characters, the core concepts, and leads students through an activity that contrasts the three different communication styles: assertive, aggressive, and passive. In addition, students practice Stop, Breathe, and Think, a calming strategy that can help them make safe and responsible choices.

Lesson 2: Boundaries and Consent introduces students to the concept of personal boundaries - the personal safety rules that each person sets for him or herself. Students are encouraged to recognize that everyone has their own unique set of boundaries, and

to pay attention to boundary language. By having students practice requesting, giving, and withdrawing consent, they learn about personal boundaries.

Lesson 3: Physical Abuse presents students with the definitions of abuse and gives them practice in differentiating abusive behavior from non-abusive behavior. Students discuss actions they can take to stay safe and get help if they experience or witness physical abuse.

Lesson 4: Sexual Abuse presents an age-appropriate, non-graphic discussion of grooming and sexual abuse. Students learn to identify possible grooming behavior. They are led through a demonstration about private parts, followed by a set of safety rules that emphasize their bodily autonomy. The purpose of these discussions is to ensure that every student knows that they have a right to set and defend their sexual boundaries, how to get help if they or someone they know experience grooming or sexual abuse, and that they are never at fault if someone crosses their sexual boundaries. While the topic of child sexual abuse may be difficult for some students and adults to address, having direct discussions with elementary students about this topic provides effective protection against sexual abuse and promotes better mental health outcomes among children who do experience sexual victimization at any point in their lives.[1]

Lesson 5: Emotional Abuse addresses the issues of emotional abuse and bullying. Students learn that emotional pain is as hurtful as physical pain, and that they have the right to be both physically and emotionally safe. Students discuss their responsibility to help keep their communities safe by being upstanders instead of passive bystanders when they witness emotional abuse or bullying.

Lower Elementary: Alignment with TEKS Curriculum Standards

Second Grade
    §115.4.(b)(2)(F)
    §115.4.(b)(8)(A), (B)
    §115.4.(b)(9)(A), (C)
    §115.4.(b)(10), (A-E)

Third Grade
    §115.5.(b)(2)(D), (E)
    §115.5.(b)(9)(A-G)
    §115.5.(b)(10)(A-C), (E)

Fourth Grade
(when teaching the Lower Elementary edition)

    §115.5.(b)(2)(D), (E)
    §115.5.(b)(9)(A-G)
    §115.5.(b)(10)(A-C), (E)

Fifth Grade
(when teaching the Lower Elementary edition)
    §115.7.(b)(5)(H), (I)
    §115.7.(b)(6)(A), (C), (D), (F), (G)
    §115.7.(b)(8)(A)
    §115.7.(b)(10)(A), (B), (D)

Upper Elementary: Lesson Outlines

Lesson 1: Safe Relationships introduces the program and reminds students of the Stand Strong Superpowers, now called the 4S Safety Code. Students practice assertiveness and setting boundaries in the context of making safe friends. As students

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1   Finkelhor & Dziuba-Leatherman (1995)

grow older, personal relationships become more important to them, and learning skills to nurture safe relationships is a critical step towards keeping themselves and their communities safe.

Lesson 2: Emotional Control to Stay Safe builds on the emotional management skills students learned in the Lower Elementary edition. This lesson covers the importance of staying in control in order to avoid acting impulsively and prevent escalation. They practice stress management strategies and identify their favorite. The lesson also provides an introduction to substance abuse by noting that uncontrolled stress is one reason some people turn to drug and alcohol use, as well as other unsafe behaviors.

Lesson 3: Handling Conflict provides practice in identifying power dynamics in relationships and conflict resolution skills in the context of relationships with a balance of power. Students learn that relationships with a power imbalance can lead to violence, while relationships with a balance of power are safe relationships in which conflict can be managed safely. The 4C's of Handling Conflict - control, communicate, consider options, and choose a solution - are presented and practiced.

Lesson 4: Stopping Abuse revisits the definition of abuse and different types of abuse - physical, emotional, and sexual. It is expected that students have previously experienced the Lower Elementary lessons, because this lesson touches on the key points of each type of abuse but does not go into great detail. Students practice recognizing abuse and bullying through various scenarios presented in the Practice section.

Lesson 5: Staying Safe Online presents rules for digital safety. This lesson recognizes the growing importance of digital and social media for today's youth. The rules are designed to be comprehensive and apply to any digital and social media platform. Prior to teaching this lesson, presenters should learn which platforms are currently popular among their students. Josh Ochs, an expert in social media safety, provides an excellent guide to current platforms, including analysis of the dangers of each, at SmartSocial.com. The lesson concludes with a game-show style activity that provides a review of the key points in the curriculum. Presenters may adjust the questions, including adding new questions, to customize the review for their students.

Upper Elementary: Alignment with TEKS Curriculum Standards

Fourth Grade

- §115.5.(b)(2)(D), (E)
- §115.5.(b)(9)(A-G)
- §115.5.(b)(10)(A-C), (E)

Fifth Grade

- §115.7.(b)(5)(H), (I)
- §115.7.(b)(6)(A), (C), (D), (F), (G)
- §115.7.(b)(8)(A)
- §115.7.(b)(10)(A), (B), (D)

Comics

Each lesson in *Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe*** uses engaging and developmentally appropriate stories to ground the discussion. Each story is designed to raise multiple discussion points, even though the scripted discussion stays narrowly focused. Depending on the population of students and time available, presenters may bring in additional issues raised by the stories.

The Lower Elementary edition includes a story presented in comic book style for each lesson. Each two- to three-page comic book may be downloaded and printed as a handout for each student, either in black and white or color. Alternatively, the comics for the Lower Elementary Edition are available as short two- to three-minute animated videos. Refer to the digital media for options.

The Upper Elementary Edition includes brief story scenarios featuring the same characters. Each story is prompted by an image shown on the PowerPoint slides. Stories may be read aloud by the presenter or enacted as a role-play by students who have been prepared ahead of time.

Twist

Jumps

Characters

The characters featured in *Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe*** have been carefully created to appeal to today's elementary-age students. Each character has a unique challenge as well as a special set of character strengths they use to solve problems. Presenters are encouraged to highlight the characters' challenges if they help address a current issue, concern, or topic for students in a particular class. These challenges are not, however, placed at the center of the discussion.

The specific traits portrayed by each character are designed to reflect common risk factors for bullying and abuse. Behavior challenges, physical differences, learning disabilities, and identifying as LGBTQ increase the risk of bullying and abuse.[1] Prejudice and discrimination are often contributing factors as well. Researchers have found that when victimization is based on discrimination, youth experience more intense bullying, increased truancy, more substance abuse, and worse mental health outcomes than other students.[2] It is important for school personnel to acknowledge the role of bias in bullying and abuse, and to recognize that there are students on every school campus experiencing one or more of these challenges. The characters in this program may be used to facilitate difficult conversations as appropriate.

Volt

Ray


1 Davis & Nixon (2010); Hibbard & Desch (2007); Kosciw, et al., (2015); Rose, Monda-Amaya, & Espelage (2011)
2 Russell, Sinclair, Poteat, & Koenig (2012)

Twist

Twist has a very strong sense of what is right and wrong, but can be stubborn and single-minded about enforcing the rules. She has trouble with her friends when she fails to see an issue from their perspective. Twist has Type I Diabetes and carries a pack with medicine and snacks. This point can help students be understanding towards individuals with medical conditions.
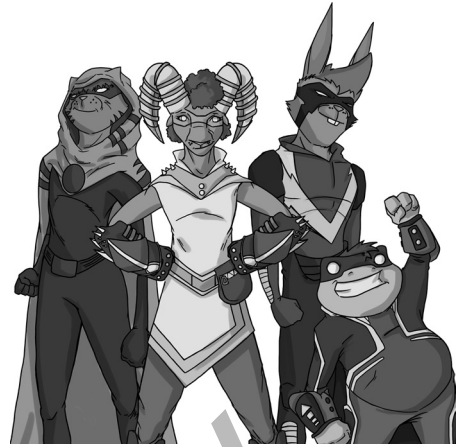
Jumps

Jumps is energetic, impulsive, and enthusiastic. He likes to be physically active, including jumping and playing rough. He is a loyal friend but does not always think before he acts. His story presents an opportunity to discuss impulsiveness and the importance of staying in control, both emotionally and physically.

Volt

Volt is kind, helpful, and wants to please the people around him. He is homeschooled during Lower Elementary, but maintains friendships with the kids in the neighborhood who attend school. By Upper Elementary, Volt has transitioned into the mainstream school with his friends. Presenters may use Volt to discuss alternative learning styles and settings.

Ray

Ray is quiet and introverted. While she enjoys spending time with a few friends, she also likes to be alone listening to music or playing her guitar. Her appearance is intended to be gender-ambiguous. Presenters may take the opportunity to discuss gender identity, expression, and sexual orientation.

Implementation Guidelines

Lesson Structure

Each lesson is designed to take 45 minutes with about 15 minutes of preparation prior to the lesson. Information about Objectives, Materials and Preparation is presented in the sidebar at the start of each lesson. Thumbnails of the PowerPoint slides are displayed in the sidebar for the presenter's convenience. Vocabulary is also listed in the side bar as the terms appear in the script. All digital materials, including PowerPoint files, video files, comics, and handouts, are available to trained presenters at ChildBuilders' website. Each lesson contains the following sections:

Review

This section presents a brief review of some of the key concepts from the previous lesson. While it does not review the entire lesson, information that may be needed to understand the current lesson is addressed. Spend no more than a couple of minutes on the review.

Engage

This section sets up the lesson by presenting a word or an idea that will help students make sense of the comic and the discussion. This section acts as an introduction or anticipatory set, depending on the lesson.

Explore

This section presents a short story or comic to launch the discussion of the lesson content. In the Lower Elementary edition, present the comics by streaming the video using an overhead projector or by distributing and reading photocopies of the comic handout.

In this part of the lesson, present the comic story that will be used as a springboard for discussion of key concepts. Presenters have two options for presenting the comics, viewing the video or reading the comic handouts.

Videos: Prepare ahead of time by ensuring that the audiovisual equipment in the classroom will properly load the video files, including sound. During the lesson, play videos by clicking the image on the PowerPoint slide. Optionally, distribute printed handouts of the comics so students may refer back to the comics throughout the lesson.

Comic Handouts: Prepare ahead of time by photocopying the comic pages or print color handouts from the website. Distribute the handouts during class and read the comic aloud as students follow along.

Note that the lessons in the Upper Elementary edition do not have an Explore section. Instead, the story is presented as part of the Discuss section.

Discuss

This section delivers the central content of the lesson. In most cases, it is presented as a scripted discussion, while occasionally a guided activity or demonstration is included.

Practice

This section allows students time to rehearse, practice, and apply the new information presented in the Discuss section. Plan adequate time to teach this section as it is essential for skill-building.

Conclude

In this section, students are reminded once more of the most important information presented in the lesson. This is also a final opportunity in each lesson to link the content to the core concepts.

Follow-Up Activities

Activities designed to reinforce lessons are included with this manual. Descriptions of the activities and materials can be found under the Follow-Up Activities tab. Presenters may leave a copy of these activities with classroom teachers to use during class time or to send home with students.

Stand Strong Word Wall

Key vocabulary is highlighted in the script and definitions are printed in the sidebar. In the Materials section of each edition, the vocabulary is reprinted as the Stand Strong Word Wall. Cut out the definitions and attach them to the wall or white board to reinforce student learning. Encourage students to use them as a reference whenever needed.

Materials

Each lesson combines digital media, posters, and handouts to deliver the content.

Digital Media

Access to the digital media is included with this curriculum and available on the ChildBuilders website. The digital media includes a PowerPoint file for each lesson, video animations of each comic story for the Lower Elementary edition, and PDF versions of all handouts and posters. Depending on the available technology, materials can be downloaded ahead of time or accessed live from the website during class. A computer and projector are required to display the PowerPoint presentations, and a sound system is also needed to show the video animations. The PowerPoint slides anchor the lessons, so presenters are encouraged to troubleshoot any audiovisual issues prior to teaching the lessons.

Posters

This program is packaged with four posters. The script makes reference to the posters throughout the program and it works best if posters are displayed in the classroom during the presentations. If this is not possible, the PowerPoint slides include versions of the posters as they are referenced. When not in use, the posters make great displays for hallways and counselors' offices. Laminating the posters will maintain their condition. You may order additional full-size posters directly from ChildBuilders.

Handouts

Handouts and materials, including paper copies of the comics, can be found in the Materials section at the end of each edition. Full-color versions may be printed as needed for teaching from the digital media included with the curriculum. Some materials require photocopying, cutting, and collating prior to class time. Review the Materials and Preparation sections at the beginning of each lesson as part of your planning.

Scheduling

Each lesson in this program will take 45 minutes to teach, as long as presenters stick closely to the script. The content in each lesson builds and reinforces the previous lesson, so the lessons must be taught in order. Teaching one or two lessons per week over the course of four or five weeks is most effective. Lessons may be revisited should students need additional practice or if certain situations arise requiring timely attention, such as an increase in bullying.

Presentations should be limited to one classroom at a time. This prevention program is effective due to its ability to involve students through interactive learning and provides opportunities to practice personal safety skills. Large-group presentations diminish this effect.

Preparing the Lessons

Read the script, materials, and PowerPoint slides before teaching the lesson to become comfortable with the content and verbiage. If you choose to read the comics to students instead of showing the video, reading the comic aloud several times helps presenters bring life to the characters and increase student engagement. Familiarize yourself with the characters and the key issues presented in each lesson so that you may anticipate students' questions or concerns and respond without judgment.

Make decisions about any adaptations ahead of time and prepare materials accordingly. Presenters may make changes to the PowerPoint slides to reflect these decisions.

Prior to presenting this curriculum, learn the names of school personnel whom the students trust and can turn to for help. Write down the names of the classroom teacher, counselor or social worker, nurse, assistant principal, enrichment teachers, police officers, and any other trusted adults in the school. Mention these trusted adults by name throughout the program.

Classroom Setting

Set up your classroom and materials ahead of time by making copies of handouts, providing sharpened pencils, displaying posters and charts as needed, loading the digital media, and troubleshooting technology before students walk into the room.

The classroom teacher should always be present during the lessons. When the presenter is someone other than the classroom teacher, classroom management is easier for the presenter if the classroom teacher can hold students accountable to classroom rules. Concepts introduced during the lessons need to be reinforced daily, and classroom teachers who experience the program are better prepared to support the knowledge and skills gained during the presentations. Limit interruptions and distractions during the presentation, and discourage school staff and visitors from entering and leaving the classroom during this time.

Using the Lesson Scripts

*Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe*** has been carefully written to convey information consistent with current research on antivictimization and abuse prevention. Adherence to the script is essential for the effective delivery of the message. The repetition in the script is intentional and will help students retain the message.[1]

If students do not answer a question correctly right away, ask the question again with slight rephrasing to make sure they understand the question properly. Then give them the correct answer and move on. Important content is repeated several times throughout the curriculum, so that the correct information is reinforced.

Symbols Used In the Script

Normal text indicates the presenter's actions. This explains what the presenter is supposed to do throughout the lesson.

- 🗣 Normal text with a speaking bullet indicates the presenter's script. These are the words that the presenter says to the students.

    - ⇨ *Indented, italicized text with an arrow indicates the expected student responses.*

  - Additional key information or explanations are typed in normal text with a standard bullet.

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1   Kenny & Wurtele (2010)

Communication With Parents

Check with the school for policies determining how parents and caregivers should be informed about special programs their children are receiving. When parents and caregivers are informed in a timely manner, they can support and reinforce the message at home, increasing students' retention of the material. A Parent Guide is available online at the ChildBuilders website in a format that is accessible on all personal computers and hand-held devices: ChildBuilders.org/parents. Below is suggested language to send home:

> "Over the next few weeks, we will be using the *Stand **Strong** • Stay **Safe*** curriculum to teach students assertiveness skills that they can use to stay safe at home, at school, and in the community. Students will learn what to do when faced with an unsafe situation and how to get help. More information is available in the Parent Guide, which is available at ChildBuilders.org/parents. You may also access more information about ChildBuilders' programs through that website."

Thank you for preparing your students to Stand Strong and Stay Safe!