



FTOS PUBLICATION NO. 2

WHO ARE *Your People?*

A guided family workbook for helping children identify, name, and hold on to the trusted adults in their lives — so they always know who to turn to.



Every child deserves people they can trust. This workbook turns that conversation into an activity your family can return to again and again.

*Educate, empower, and empathize... because
understanding changes lives.*

By Michelle J. Walker, M.A.
FTOS Collective



Who Are Your People?

A Family Workbook on Trusted Adults

FTOS Publication No. 2. FTOS Collective Family Resources Series

About This Workbook

This workbook was created to give parents, grandparents, foster parents, and caregivers a simple, repeatable way to open the conversation about safety and trust with the children in their care. It is written from nearly two decades of front-line child welfare experience, and it is meant to be used — written in, drawn on, folded, and returned to.

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This workbook is intended for personal and family use. It does not constitute legal, medical, or mental health advice, and it is not a substitute for professional support. If a child discloses abuse or neglect, contact your local child protective services agency or law enforcement immediately.

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Before You Begin

A few quick things to know before you and your child sit down together — so you can use this workbook with confidence and without pressure to do it "right."

Recommended Ages

Built for children roughly **ages 5–11**, with prompts you can simplify for younger kids or deepen for older ones.

Estimated Time

Most families complete one sitting in about **20–30 minutes**. Spread across several short visits if that suits your child better.

Who Should Complete It

Any parent, grandparent, foster or kinship caregiver, or guardian — alongside the child in their care.

How Often to Repeat It

Revisit this workbook **once a year**, or after any big change — a move, a new school, a new caregiver.

Why This Workbook Matters

Children who can quickly name a trusted adult tend to feel safer and ask for help sooner. This workbook turns that protective skill into a short, low-pressure family habit — one page, one conversation, one year at a time.



DID YOU KNOW?

Children who know multiple trusted adults are more likely to ask for help when something feels wrong.



FROM MICHELLE

A Welcome Letter for Families

Dear Parent, Grandparent, or Caregiver,

For nearly twenty years, I sat across from families on some of their hardest days — as a caseworker, as a supervisor, and as someone who has walked alongside children trying to make sense of confusing and frightening circumstances. Over and over, I noticed the same thing: children who could name a trusted adult, quickly and without hesitation, were children who felt safer, recovered faster, and asked for help sooner.

That single skill — knowing who your people are — is one of the most protective things we can give a child. It costs nothing. It takes no special training. It simply takes a conversation, revisited often, until the answer becomes automatic.

I built this workbook so that conversation would be easy to start and easy to keep going. Inside, you and your child will map out a Safety Circle together, talk through real-life scenarios, learn to tell the difference between a safe secret and one that should never be kept, and build a simple family safety plan you can hang on the refrigerator.

Thank you for making the time for this conversation. It changes lives — I have seen it.

Michelle

Michelle J. Walker, M.A.

Founder, FTOS Collective



How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is written for any adult raising, fostering, or caring for a child — and it flexes to fit your family. A few notes before you dive in:

For Parents & Grandparents

Use this as an ongoing family activity. Revisit the Safety Circle every school year, after a move, or anytime your child's routine changes and new adults enter their life.

For Foster & Kinship Caregivers

This workbook is especially useful during placement transitions. Help your child map new trusted adults without erasing the people from their life before — both can hold a place on the circle.

For Teachers & Community Helpers

Share relevant pages during family engagement events, counseling sessions, or new-student intake to open the conversation at school as well as at home.

For Every Caregiver

There are no wrong answers on these pages. Follow your child's pace, use their own words, and keep the tone warm and curious rather than like a test.

Three Ground Rules

- ☐ **Talk often, not just once.** One conversation isn't enough — this is a habit, not a checklist.
- ☐ **Listen without judgment.** If a child names someone unexpected, get curious before you react.
- ☐ **Believe them and reassure them.** Children should never feel afraid or guilty for asking for help.



Who Are Your People? — Let's Talk About It

To read with your child: Everybody needs people they can count on — people who listen, who help, and who keep them safe. We call these people your **trusted adults**. They aren't always the same people every day, and that's okay. Some are at home, some are at school, some are in your family, and some are in your neighborhood. Today, we're going to figure out who *your* people are.

What Makes Someone a Trusted Adult?

- ☐ They listen when you talk and don't laugh at your worries.
- ☐ They keep you safe and never ask you to keep a secret that scares you.
- ☐ They help you without making you feel bad for asking.
- ☐ Grown-ups you already know trust them too.
- ☐ You feel calm — not nervous — when you're with them.

A Note for Grown-Ups

Children often struggle to name adults outside the household. Prompt gently: "What about your teacher, your coach, or Aunt J?" The goal is at least three to five names your child can recall quickly, from more than one setting.



DID YOU KNOW?

Children who know multiple trusted adults are more likely to ask for help when something feels wrong.



Trusted Adult Mapping — Getting Ready

On the next page, your child will fill in their own **Safety Circle** — six categories of people who can help them. Work through it together, out loud, using the prompts below.

Ask Your Child

Who would you call if you couldn't reach Mom or Dad?

Who makes you feel safe?

Who listens when you're worried?

Which adults are okay to ask for help?

The Six Categories

 **At Home** — parent, guardian, or older sibling

 **At School** — teacher, counselor, or coach

 **Relatives** — grandparents, aunts, uncles

 **Family Friends** — people you trust outside family

 **Community Helpers** — doctor, officer, faith leader

 **Emergency Contacts** — numbers to call right away

Tips for a Great Conversation

- ☐ Let your child name the person; don't fill it in for them.
- ☐ It's okay if a category is empty for now — talk about who could fill it.
- ☐ Keep a copy somewhere your child can find it later.



FTOS TIP

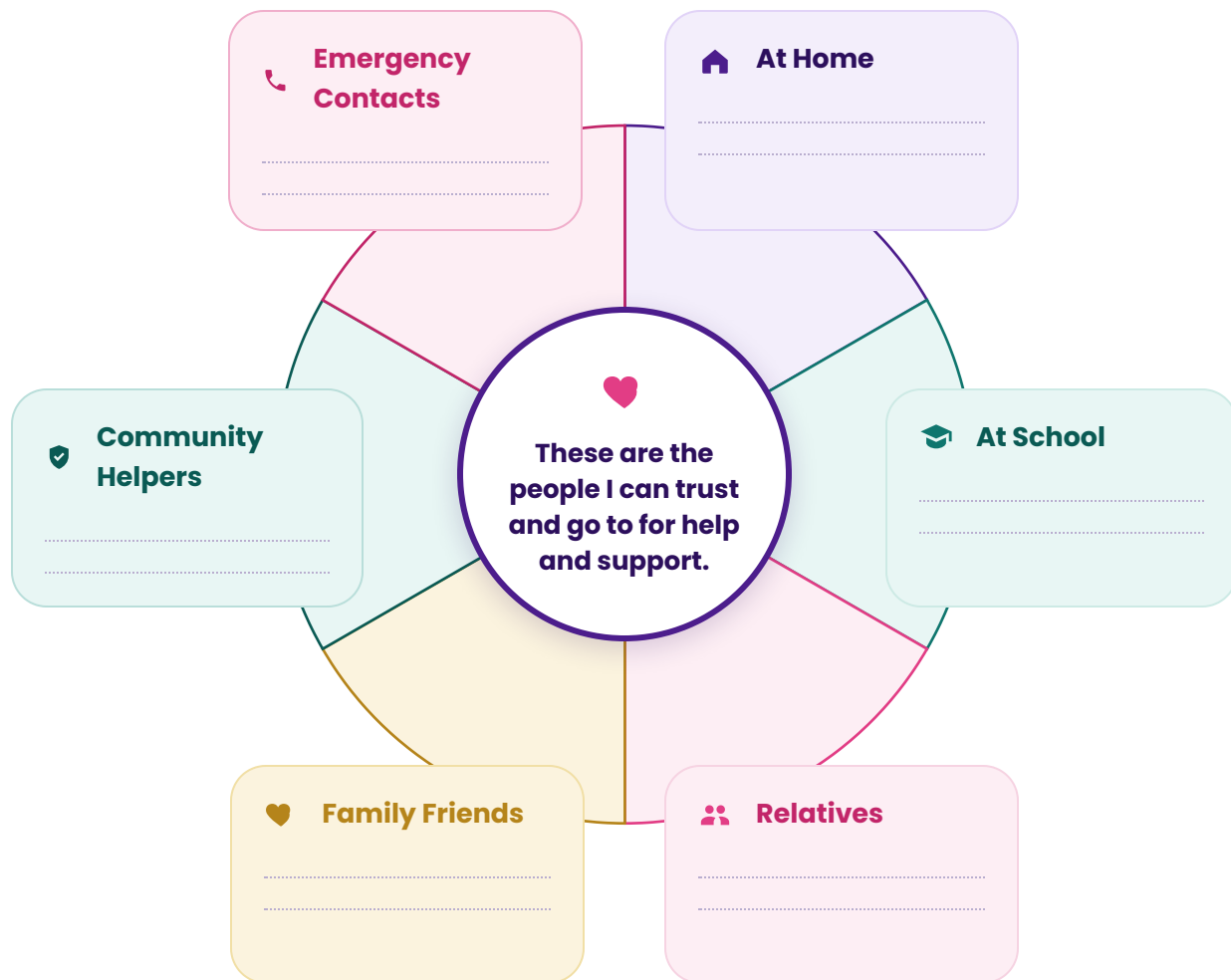
There's no wrong time for this conversation — bath time, bedtime, and car rides all work just as well as sitting down at the table.



My Safety Circle — Trusted Adult Mapping

NAME _____

YEAR _____



Make this an annual tradition: photocopy this page (or download a fresh one from ftoscollective.com) and fill in a new Safety Circle together every year — it's a great way to see how your child's world of trusted people grows.



Who Can Help Me? — Real-Life Scenarios

Read each scenario aloud and ask your child what they would do and who they might go to. There's no single right answer — the goal is practicing the thought process.

Scenario 1

You're at recess and another kid says something that makes you feel scared or confused. What do you do?

.....

Scenario 2

You get home from school and no one is there yet. Who is the first person you call or go to?

.....

Scenario 3

An adult you don't know very well asks you to keep a secret from your parents. What would you do?

.....

Scenario 4

You feel sad or worried about something at home but you're not sure who to tell. Who could you talk to?

.....

Scenario 5

You get separated from your caregiver at the store or a big event. What's your plan?

.....

Scenario 6

Something happens online that makes you feel uncomfortable. Who is the first adult you'd tell?

.....



Green Flags of Trustworthy Adults

Trustworthy adults consistently look like this list — every time, with every child. Read through these together so your child knows what safety and respect actually feel like.

- ☐ Respects your "no" and your personal space
- ☐ Keeps promises and is consistent over time
- ☐ Talks with your parents openly, not around them
- ☐ Never asks you to keep a secret that worries you
- ☐ Encourages you to have other friends and trusted adults
- ☐ Makes you feel calm, respected, and heard
- ☐ Owns their mistakes and apologizes when they're wrong
- ☐ Supports your relationships with other trusted adults

Talk About It

Name one grown-up in your life who shows these green flags. How do they make you feel when you're with them?

.....



Red Flags of Trustworthy Adults

A red flag doesn't always mean danger — but it always means "go tell a trusted adult." Review this list so your child can recognize the warning signs early.

- ☐ Asks you to keep secrets from your parents
- ☐ Wants to spend time alone with you away from others
- ☐ Gives special gifts and asks you not to tell anyone
- ☐ Ignores it when you say "stop" or "no"
- ☐ Makes you feel confused, nervous, or "icky" inside
- ☐ Tries to isolate you from your family or friends
- ☐ Breaks promises or is unpredictable with their moods
- ☐ Makes you feel responsible for their feelings

Remember

Your child will never be in trouble for reporting something that felt wrong — even if they're not sure, even if they promised to keep it secret, and even if it turns out to be nothing.



Safe Secrets vs. Unsafe Secrets

To read with your child: A **safe secret** has an ending and makes people happy — like a surprise birthday party. An **unsafe secret** makes your tummy feel funny, is supposed to last forever, or someone tells you not to tell your parents. Unsafe secrets should always be told to a trusted adult, even if you promised not to tell.

Safe Secret

A birthday surprise for Grandma. It has an ending date, it makes someone happy, and it doesn't feel scary to think about.

Unsafe Secret

Someone tells you "never tell anyone, especially not your mom or dad." It has no ending, and thinking about it makes you feel nervous or sick.

Sort It Out — Circle Safe or Unsafe

A surprise party for your teacher	Safe Unsafe
"Don't tell your mom I picked you up today"	Safe Unsafe
A hiding spot for a holiday gift	Safe Unsafe
Someone touching you in a way that feels wrong and telling you to keep it quiet	Safe Unsafe



DID YOU KNOW?

Practicing the difference between safe and unsafe secrets helps children recognize red flags faster in real life.



How to Use These Conversation Cards

The next two pages hold sixteen conversation cards. Cut along the dashed lines and keep them somewhere handy — a kitchen drawer, a backpack pocket, or the car's glove box.

When to Pull One Out

- ☐ During car rides or walks — side-by-side talk feels easier for many kids
- ☐ At the dinner table, one card per meal
- ☐ At bedtime, as part of a wind-down routine

Ground Rules

- ☐ There are no wrong answers — stay curious, not corrective
- ☐ Let your child ask you a card too
- ☐ Shuffle and reuse — answers change as kids grow



FTOS TIP

Practice this conversation while driving in the car — many kids open up more easily when they're not sitting face-to-face.

Make It a Habit

Try pulling one card a week. Over a year, that's over fifty chances to keep this conversation alive without it ever feeling like a lecture.



Conversation Cards — Set 1

Card 1

Who would you call if you couldn't reach Mom or Dad?

Card 2

Who makes you feel safe, and why do you think that is?

Card 3

Who listens to you when you're worried about something?

Card 4

Which grown-ups outside our family are okay to ask for help?

Card 5

If you needed help right away and I wasn't there, who would you go to?

Card 6

What's the difference between a safe secret and an unsafe one?

Card 7

Name one grown-up at school you'd feel comfortable talking to.

Card 8

What would you do if a grown-up asked you to keep a secret from me?



Conversation Cards — Set 2

Card 9

If you got lost at a store or an event, what's your plan?

Card 10

What would you do if something online made you feel uncomfortable?

Card 11

Has any grown-up ever done something that gave you a "red flag" feeling?

Card 12

What does it feel like in your body when something feels wrong?

Card 13

What's our family password, and when would you use it?

Card 14

Who is someone new in your life this year we should add to your Safety Circle?

Card 15

If a friend told you a scary secret, what would you do?

Card 16

On a scale of 1-5, how easy is it for you to ask a grown-up for help? Why?



Who Can I Call? — Emergency Contact Card, Part 1

Fill in with your child and post this somewhere visible — the fridge, a backpack pocket, or by the home phone.

Mom / Dad / Guardian

.....

.....

Second Parent / Guardian

.....

.....

Trusted Relative

.....

.....

Trusted Neighbor / Family Friend

.....

.....

School / Teacher

.....

.....

Doctor / Pediatrician

.....

.....

Counselor / Therapist

.....

.....

Emergency: 911 / Poison Control

911 — Police, Fire, Medical
Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222



Who Can I Call? — Emergency Contact Card, Part 2

A few more details to keep on hand alongside Part 1.

Home Address

.....

Parent Phone Number

.....

Second Parent Phone Number

.....

Neighbor Phone Number

.....

Family Password

.....

Emergency Meeting Place

Where our family regroups if we get separated or need to leave home quickly:

.....



Our Family Safety Plan — Part 1

Our Family Password

A secret word only our family knows. If someone says they were sent to pick you up, they must know this word first.

.....

If We Get Separated in Public

Meeting spot:

.....

What to do first:

.....

If You Feel Unsafe at Home

First person to call:

.....

Safe place to go:

.....

If Someone Breaks a Green Flag

Who I will tell right away:

.....

If It's an Emergency

Call 911, then call:

.....



Our Family Safety Plan — Part 2

Three Trusted Adults Outside Our Home

People my child can call or go to if they can't reach us:

.....
Name & relationship

.....
Name & relationship

.....
Name & relationship

Our Family's Promise to Each Other

- ☐ We will talk about safety often, not just once.
- ☐ You will never be in trouble for telling the truth or asking for help.
- ☐ We will believe you and take your feelings seriously.
- ☐ We will keep updating this list as our family grows and changes.

We Reviewed This Plan Together

.....
Child's signature / mark

.....
Parent / caregiver signature

.....
Date



Parent & Caregiver Reflection

After you and your child work through this workbook, take a few quiet minutes for yourself. These prompts are for you — not your child — drawn from what I've seen matter most in families I've worked with.

What surprised me about who my child named — or didn't name?

Is there a category on the Safety Circle that feels thin? What's one small step to fill it in?

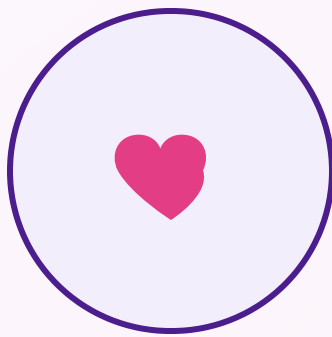
How did it feel to have this conversation? What made it easier or harder than expected?

When will we revisit this workbook next? (Write it on the calendar now.)



FTOS COLLECTIVE PRESENTS

Family Promise Certificate



This certifies that our family has talked about safety, named our trusted adults, and made a promise to keep talking, keep listening, and keep each other safe.

This certificate is awarded to the _____ Family

.....
Child's signature

.....
Parent / caregiver signature

.....
Date

Educate, empower, and empathize... because understanding changes lives.



Let's Keep Working Together

This workbook is just the beginning. Join the FTOS community for real conversations, real support, and real solutions — for families, caregivers, and anyone who's ever worked inside the child welfare system.

Listen & Learn



FTOS Podcast
Real conversations. Real support. Real solutions.

Join Our Community



FTOS Collective
Facebook Group
Connect. Ask questions.
Find support.

Visit Our Website



ftoscollective.com
Resources, ebooks, and more.

You are not alone. We are here for you.

Save this guide, share it with another family, and keep the conversation going.



Every child deserves people they can trust.

Thank you for making the time for this conversation with your family. If you found this workbook helpful, share it with another parent, caregiver, or classroom — understanding changes lives, one family at a time.

Michelle J. Walker, M.A.

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