

TEAM TALKS

Lifting Safety

Much of safe-lifting guidance focuses on lifting boxes, furniture or other heavy/immobile items. But in a youth-serving environment, it's important to understand how to safely lift children.

Lifting a calm child can be hard enough, and the task gets significantly harder if the child is wiggling excitedly or throwing a tantrum. Practicing safe lifting of children is an important way to prevent serious bodily injury to yourself, or to the child you are lifting.

Facilitator Note: *Practicing proper lifting with a mannequin can provide valuable hands-on training.*

Safe Lifting Tips

- Let the child know you are going to pick them up. Making them aware will allow them to be more comfortable, and less likely to squirm.
- When picking up a child, face them with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- While maintaining the natural S-curve of your back, squat to pick them up.
- Stand up slowly, using the strength of your legs (not your back), and bring the child to your chest using both hands.
- While turning, move your feet and not your torso.
- To set the child down, keep the child close to your body and bend your legs (not your back).

NOTES

Team Talks are ready-to-use content for facilitated employee safety discussions with your staff. We hope this provides a useful starting point to help you initiate meaningful discussion. We would love to hear feedback on how your talk goes, and we welcome your ideas on additional ways that we can all practice better safety.

The Redwoods Group

Things to Avoid

- Don't lift at the waist; lift at the knees.
- Don't turn or twist your torso.
- Avoid sudden/quick movements.
- Don't lift a child over a baby gate or other objects that can become an obstacle for you while lifting.
- As much as possible, do not lift a child above your waist, which can cause undue strain on your body. Passing a child to another staff member while you are seated on the floor is a good example of how not to lift.

We appreciate the work you do with children, and we know it's not always easy. And just as it is our collective mission to preserve the hearts, minds, and physical well-being of the children we serve, your overall safety is our top priority, too.

Quick Quiz

When lifting a child, you should stand slowly, using the strength of your legs, not your back.

TRUE **FALSE**

As long as you are strong enough, you can lift the child over a baby gate.

TRUE **FALSE**

Always lift by bending at the waist.

TRUE **FALSE**

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