

Safety Planning With Children

Safety plans help survivors anticipate the dangers they still face. Before you attempt to leave or take any legal or financial steps to separate from your abuser, you should be aware that the danger of violence escalates when an individual attempts to leave. No survivor/victim has control over their partner's violence, but you can find ways to reduce your risk of harm.

Here are a few tips to help aid your safety plan when children are involved.

- Teach your children how to use the phone or autodial option to contact the police and fire departments and how to contact a safe neighbor for help.
- Make sure they know your address.
- Teach your children what to do in case of danger.
- Teach your children how to make a call to a trusted person if they are concerned about their safety.
- In the house: identify a room they can go to when they're afraid and something they can think about when they're scared.
- Instruct them to stay out of the kitchen, bathroom and other areas where there are items that could be used as weapons.
- Teach them that although they want to protect their parent, they should never intervene.
- Tell your children's caretakers who has permission to pick them up and make sure caretakers know how to recognize those people.
- Enroll them in a counseling program. Local service providers often have children's programs.

Planning for Safe Custody Exchanges

- Avoid exchanging custody at your home or your partner's home.
- Meet in a safe, public place such as a restaurant, a bank/other area with lots of cameras, or even near a police station.
- Bring a friend or relative with you to the exchanges.
- Emotional safety plan as well – figure out something to do before the exchange to calm any nerves you're feeling, and something after to focus on yourself or the kids, such as going to a park or doing a fun activity.