



## 1 What is Being Safety Smart?

Being Safety Smart is a free to use online and CD-ROM educational gaming environment providing safety strategies for school aged children from 6 to 8. The program is designed to increase the awareness of children to situations within the community which might impact upon their personal safety and to empower them with the ability to act appropriately and with confidence. Being Safety Smart is specifically linked to the Year three Essential Learnings of Health and Physical Education, SOSE and ICTs

Being Safety Smart is a Queensland Police Service initiative, developed by the University of the Sunshine Coast for the Queensland Police Service, in consultation with the Queensland Police Service, Education Queensland, and the Crime and Misconduct Commission, and supported by the Daniel Morcombe Foundation."

## 2 Who can use Being Safety Smart?

Being Safety Smart is available to all schools. It is specifically targeted at Year two and three, however can be used with specific teacher support in Year one.

There are two ways to access Being Safety Smart:

1. Online at [www.beingsafetysmart.com.au](http://www.beingsafetysmart.com.au).
2. CD-ROM version

### 2.1 Online version



Figure 1: Online version of Being Safety Smart at [www.beingsafetysmart.com.au](http://www.beingsafetysmart.com.au)

To register your interest, simply contact us at [www.beingsafetysmart.com.au](http://www.beingsafetysmart.com.au) and we can provide you with login instructions.

Being Safety Smart is designed to run on a standard PC or Mac with loudspeakers connected to the internet with a broadband connection. Simply open up your browser and go to [www.beingsafetysmart.com.au](http://www.beingsafetysmart.com.au) to start. If there is a printer connected to the computer or network then there is the option to print student awards and parent or carer information sheets.

The online resource uses Flash to display the stories and games. If you don't have the Adobe Flash Player installed for your browser, go to <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/> and download the Adobe Flash Player for free.

Once your school is registered, your teachers and students can create individual accounts to use the resource using the 'New User' option. These 'New User' accounts will allow users to start at level 1. Once a user has completed level 1 they are rewarded with a personalised certificate on the lounge room wall which can be printed and displayed in their home, and the parent or carer get an information sheet about the level. Subsequent levels become unlocked as previous levels are completed, building on previous knowledge, skills and strategies.

Start by clicking on the photo frame to personalise your character, click save, and then click on the map to access levels, see Figure 1. Once a level is completed you can display the child awards by clicking on the wall hanging or parent/carer sheets on the bookshelf. The individual accounts record progress through the resource so that students can return and continue from where they left off.

We can also set up and provide teachers and support staff with an 'Existing User' account which has access to all 8 levels. This allows staff to try out in full the Being Safety Smart resource without having to complete each level in turn to progress.

## 2.2 CD-ROM version

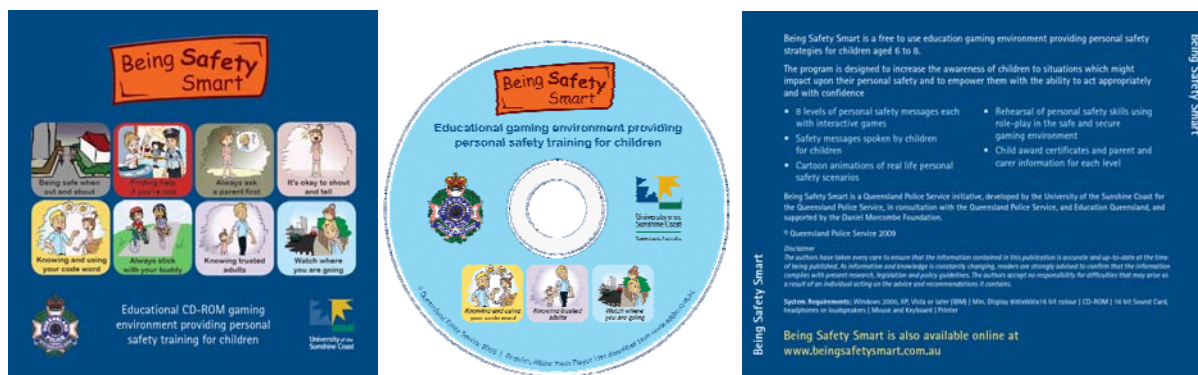


Figure 2: CD-ROM version of Being Safety Smart

The CD-ROM is available from Queensland Police Service or The University of the Sunshine Coast

To run, insert the CD in to your PC and Being Safety Smart will auto play. You can also run Being Safety Smart by double clicking on the file: bss.exe

Users can create a new login, or login using an existing username. Progress through the Being Safety Smart game is automatically saved to the PC so that users can return and continue the game from where they left off.

We can also provide teachers and support staff with an 'Existing User' account which has access to all 8 levels on the CD-ROM. This allows staff to try out in full the Being Safety Smart resource without having to complete each level in turn to progress. Please email us at [info@beingsafetysmart.com.au](mailto:info@beingsafetysmart.com.au) if you require full access to all 8 levels.

The CD-ROM version of Being Safety Smart is designed to run on a standard PC with loudspeakers and does not require internet connection, see Figure 2. If there is a printer connected to the computer then there is the option to print student awards and parent or carer information sheets.

The CD-ROM version uses Flash to display the stories and games. If you don't have the Adobe Flash Player installed on your PC use the Adobe Flash Player Installer included on the CD-ROM to install the player.

## 3 What resources does the school need to use Being Safety Smart?

If you have a computing laboratory, each student can have an individual account and progress through the levels at their own pace. Students can share computers if there are insufficient for individual access. Being Safety Smart can be

delivered as a group activity to all students in a classroom through interactive Smart boards or with a data projector. In these cases the class will have a single access and will work together to progress through the levels.

#### 4 Why do we need Being Safety Smart?

Between 1995 and 2004 the rate of abduction increased from 2.5 to 3.8 victims per 100,000 population (Australian Institute of Criminology 2005). The most vulnerable age for abduction and abuse is between 7 and 13 years (Finkelhor 1994). Therefore, there is a need for a single accessible resource which can provide advice to all children to minimise the risk of abduction, and provide practical strategies to escape situations that may arise.

Being Safety Smart was initiated by the Queensland Police Service (QPS) due to the increasing risk of child abduction, assault and abuse in the region and brought to public attention with the disappearance of Daniel Morcombe in 2003. Being Safety Smart aims to reduce the incidence of child abuse by increasing children's awareness of situations that might impact upon their personal safety and empowering them with the ability to act appropriately when these situations arise. Data has suggested that children in regional and remote areas may be at greater risk of abuse than children in other areas (Neame and Heenan 2004). In response, Being Safety Smart is an internet delivered resource which can enable children in regional and remote areas to have access to the safety awareness message.

Being Safety Smart builds on the experience and evaluation of other child safety, abduction and sexual abuse programs worldwide, together with practical experience and real-life evidence in Australia from the QPS and the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC), to create best practice messages and strategies, accessible to children aged 6 to 8 using supported classroom activities and online resources.

#### 5 What are the key messages in Being Safety Smart?

The safety messages in Being Safety Smart are based on international global best practice messages from other programs including: KlassKids Foundations, Yello Dyno, Kids Help Line, Safer Child Inc, Family Education, FBI Kids and Stay Safe, coupled with experience and advice of the QPS and CMC. The key messages are presented as eight distinct levels, see Table 1.

**Table 1: Being Safety Smart key messages and strategies**

	<b>Location</b>	<b>Key Message</b>	<b>Key Strategies</b>
1	My house	Ask parent/carer first	Always tell your parent or carer where you are going. <i>Things to remember to tell your parent or carer before you go anywhere eg where you are going, when you will be back, how you will get there, who will be with you, phone if your plans change etc</i>
2	Friends House	Stick with your buddy	Better to be with a friend or group of friends when you are out and about. <i>Stick with your buddy, go with a group of friends, ask your parent or carer first</i>
3	School	Watch where you are going	Be careful where you play and where you go. Safe locations and routes. <i>Stay where there are other people, don't take short cuts, stay where it is light, ask your parent or carer first</i>
4	Backyard	Trusted adults	Knowing who you can turn to if there is a problem. <i>5 trusted adults</i>
5	Shopping Centre	Finding help if you're lost	Who can help you if you get lost. What should you do and say. Who should you ask for help. <i>First call your parent or carer, do not go looking for them, go ask a mum with kids for help, ask a police officer. Recognising police officer, recognising a police car</i>
6	Sports Club House	Knowing and using your codeword	Using your codeword safely. When to use it, what should you say to someone you don't know. <i>You and your parent or carer should agree to a codeword, don't go with anyone if they don't know your codeword, never tell codeword to anyone even to friends</i>
7	Park	Being safe when out and about	How to be safe when you are out with friends including when cars approach, strangers asking for help etc. <i>Never talk to, accept gifts, never get into cars, never go to someone who asks for help, grownups shouldn't ask for help, it's okay to say No, tell your parent or carer straight away</i>
8	Playground	It's okay to shout and tell	You shouldn't keep secrets and you don't have to do everything adults tell you to do. <i>It is not what people look like, but what they ask you to do, don't keep secrets, if the person says don't go – then go, it always okay to come home, tell parent or carer, how to remember people</i>

## 6 Program Delivery

Being Safety Smart contains 8 levels and is designed to be delivered over 8 weeks. Each level includes i) repeated presentation of the key messages; ii) role-play to test skills and strategies in a safe and secure environment; iii) game-play to reiterate key messages; and iv) summaries which can be printed as awards. The resource can be delivered in a shorter, block teaching mode, or over a longer period of time. Feel free to discuss with us or your Head of Curriculum how best you can fit the program into your teaching.

## 7 Why use an online game to teach safety messages?

The online game is design to meet 7 key features associated with children's acquisition and retention of prevention concepts and skills (Sanderson 2004):

- 1) Active participation. Programs that encourage active participation of children (eg through role-play) are more effective than those that use either passive methods (eg traditional teaching, classroom discussions) or no participation (eg videos, written materials, self study) (Davis and Gidycz 2000; Finkelhor and Strapko 1992; Rispens, Alman and Goudena 1997).
- 2) Explicit training. Allowing children to rehearse appropriate behaviours is associated with greater gains in skills and knowledge over non-behaviour techniques (eg lectures, videos, puppet shows) (Davis and Gidycz 2000; Finkelhor and Strapko 1992; McCurdy and Daro 1994; Rispens, Alman and Goudena 1997; Wurtele, Marrs and Miller-Perrin 1987).
- 3) Standardised materials. Programs are more effective if they involve standardised materials and are taught by trained instructors (Finkelhor and Strapko 1992; MacIntyre and Carr 2000).
- 4) Integrated into schools curriculum. Programs are more effective if they are integrated into the school curriculum with designated times for delivery and support (McCurdy and Daro 1994).
- 5) Longer programs. Longer programs involving repeated presentations and followed by summaries to reinforce training are more effective than shorter programs (Daro 1991; Finkelhor, Asdigian and Dziuba-Leatherman 1995; Finkelhor and Strapko 1992; Hazzard, Webb, Kleemeier, Angert and Pohl 1991; MacIntyre and Carr 2000; Whetsell-Mitchell 1995; Rispens, Alman and Goudena 1997; Wurtele 1998).
- 6) Parental involvement. Children benefit more from prevention training if their parents are also included in the program (Conte and Fogarty 1989, Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman 1995; Finkelhor, Asdigian and Dziuba-Leatherman 1995; Wurtele, 1993, 1998; Wurtele, Currier, Gillespie and Franklin 1991; Wurtele, Kast and Melzer 1992).
- 7) Teacher education. Programs that include teacher education are more effective in helping children to retain their prevention training (Finkelhor 1984; MacIntyre and Carr 2000).

Being Safety Smart has been developed around the key features associated with improved child learning and retention of prevention knowledge and skills above. The resource includes active participation, explicit training, standardised materials designed with involvement of parents, carers and the wider community. We wish to work with your school to integrated Being Safety Smart into the school curriculum and help your teachers deliver the program in the classroom.

### 7.1 Active participation

Being Safety Smart is design to allow children to role-play skills and scenarios in the safe and secure environment of the classroom. Children can experiment to find the appropriate response in situations, without experiencing fear or anxiety. The stories and scenarios are based on real-life abduction attempts and are designed to be realistic and relevant to the child, see Figure 3.



Figure 3: Example 'active participation' screenshot from Being Safety Smart

### 7.2 Explicit training

Being Safety Smart is designed to allow children to rehearse appropriate behaviours using different interaction styles, see Figure 4. Each key child safety message is reinforced, and skills rehearsed, by multiple choice selections stories and interactive games. Message content, language, presentation and interaction are age appropriate. The content of other programs are often designed primarily to meet the protection needs of girls, and may not provide adequate prevention training for boys (Bagley, Thurston and Tutty 1996). Gender differences need to be incorporated into prevention training as boys are less likely to believe that they can be abducted, so they often engage in more risk-taking behaviour. Being Safety Smart contains both girl and boy scenarios and activities, and all text displayed on screen is voiced by girls and boys.



Figure 4: Example 'explicit training' screenshot from Being Safety Smart

### 7.3 Standardised materials

The key child safety messages are based on existing programs and the experience of QPS, the CMC and Education Queensland. The development team has worked in collaboration with Teachers, Behaviour Support staff and Guidance Officers from Education Queensland to develop the resource.

### 7.4 Integrated into school curriculum

The development team has worked in collaboration with school teachers to align the resource to school curricula for ages 6 to 8, around self, family and health. We wish to work with your school to support the inclusion of Being Safety Smart into your program.

## 7.5 Parental involvement

Parents and carers are involved in the program through: i) information handouts to discuss with their child (prior to a level); ii) additional parent/carer information sheets become available when the child completes a level which can be printed and taken home; iii) parents and carers can access the resource online and learn the skills and strategies themselves and discuss with their child.

## 7.6 Teacher education

Teachers have been involved in the research, design, implementation, and evaluation of the project. Teachers have suggested how they can embed the program into classroom activities with worksheets and exercises, and that teacher created activities and support materials can be shared with other teachers to support training. Please let us know if you develop any classroom activities, worksheets or exercises which may benefit other teachers in their delivery of Being Safety Smart. We would like to support you, as best we can, to deliver Being Safety Smart in your classroom.

## 8 What does Being Safety Smart look like?

The key safety awareness messages are presented as eight distinct levels in an online cartoon-style game environment, where each level (see Table 1) is located within the child's virtual world. The child selects levels from an interactive map representation of their virtual world, see Figure 5. Locations become available on successful completion of a previous level such that the child progresses sequentially through the key messages, building on prior learning with more complex skills, behaviours and strategies.

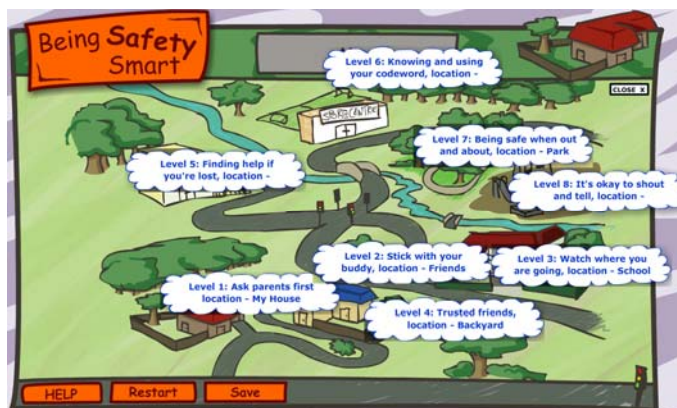


Figure 5: Map view (with all mouse roll over messages displayed) allowing child to select each level in turn

On first entering the child safety awareness game environment, and on completion of each game level, the child is placed in their personal virtual lounge room, see Figure 6. From here the child can access levels (by selecting the TV displaying the map), and view their awards (on the wall) and parent or carer additional information (on the bookshelf). Progress through the levels, the child's award and their profile characters are saved automatically so that the child can return to game from where they left off.



Figure 6: Lounge room 'home' screen allowing child to select levels, create profile, and view awards and parent information

On first login the child creates a virtual Sims-style character to represent themselves in the game. This virtual character and the child's name are displayed throughout the environment in both the presentation of child safety messages and the interactive games. The personalised character has been found to offer greater engagement of the child with the content. Once the virtual character has been created the child selects the map view and then enters 'level 1: Ask parents first', located at 'My House'.

Each level comprises of:

- 1) an instructional section
- 2) activity/game sections
- 3) and summary of key points

### 8.1 Instructional Section

The instructional section presents the key child safety awareness messages for the level using magazine-style cartoon windows and fonts, together with dynamic animations of scenarios, see Figure 7. All textual information is also presented as an audio track spoken by children of the same age.



Figure 7: Level 6 screenshot showing key codeword message

### 8.2 Activity/Game Section

The activity/game section reiterates the message presented in the instructional section and tests the child's understanding through interactive role-play and games. There are three main styles of activities: i) choice from three options as to 'what to do next', see Figure 8; ii) selection of correct items from display of multiple items; iii) and interactive games. The child is given additional information for each incorrect and correct selection to reiterate the appropriate behaviour.



Figure 8: Level 6 activity 'What should you do now?'

### 8.3 Summary Section

On completion of the messages and interactive activities the child is presented with a summary page for the level with images and animations to reiterate the key safety awareness messages, see Figure 9.



Figure 9: Level 1 summary page to reiterate key messages

The child is returned to the lounge room where a printed award for the level is hanging on the wall, see Figure 10. Additionally, an information sheet for parents or carers accompanying the level is now selectable on the bookcase. The child award is image based with few words but includes the child's name and virtual character. The parent/carer sheet explains in more detail the messages of the level.



Figure 10: Child award for level 6 (for printing)

There are interactive game elements throughout the 8 levels (activity style iii). These include drag and drop recognition of a Police Officer and Police car, photo fit game to create people; maze games to navigate from home to school along safe routes; and Trusted Adults that can lend a hand, see Figure 11.



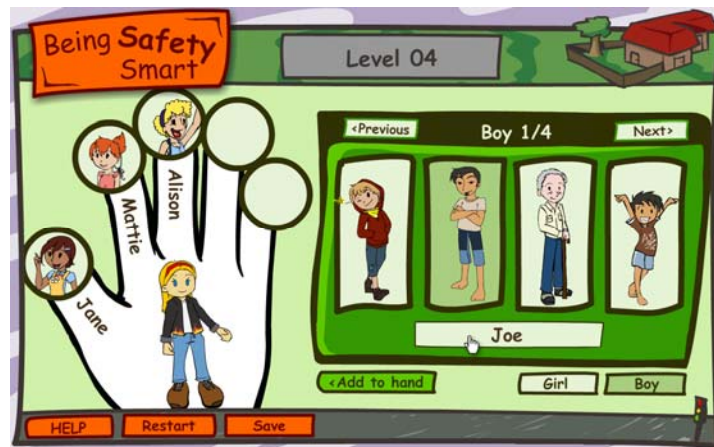


Figure 11: Level 4 game – My Trusted Adults

## 9 Personalising the child awards and parent and carer information sheets for your school

The child award certificate is designed to be printed by the child to take home and displayed. The certificate is a reminder of the key safety message of the level and also can facilitate discussion within the home around child safety. The bottom left hand side of the child award certificate has been left blank so that your school can add their stamp and/or have the principal or teacher sign, Figure 12. Also if the school has an 'Adopt-a-Cop' they could sign the child certificate. It is our recommendation that the certificates are signed to confirm the schools support and demonstrate the importance of the messages for the child.

The parent and carer information sheets also allow for a school stamp, signature and school contact information.



Figure 12: Blank section (shown in red) of child certificate for school stamp and signature

## **10 Evaluation of Being Safety Smart at your school**

We have evaluated Being Safety Smart in schools with teachers, parents and children. Feedback on Being Safety Smart has been very positive, with children enjoying working through the program and wanting to play again and again. Our evaluations have shown that children on the program are much more aware of their personal safety and know how to act to keep themselves safe.

We wish to evaluate Being Safety Smart with more schools, teachers, parents and children. With a larger number of people using the resource we will have more evidence to support rolling out Being Safety Smart beyond Queensland. Therefore, we would like for your teachers, parents and children to complete some questionnaires as part of their participation in Being Safety Smart. These questionnaires have been developed by our team of psychologists, educators and social workers and have been used successfully in other programs. All collected data is confidential and we will comply with the University of the Sunshine Coast Human Ethics requirements for the project, as well as any requirements by your school and Education Department.

The evaluation stage will assess the effectiveness of the program in providing safety awareness knowledge to children and the retention of knowledge after 3 months. The children will form two groups i) training (access to the Being Safety Smart program), and ii) control (no access to the Being Safety Smart program). The control group will complete the training once the training group has completed it, thereby minimising any chance that they be less well prepared for potential abductions. Child, parent/carer and teacher data will be collected before and after the program (and at the three month follow-up).

To appropriately evaluate the Being Safety Smart program, measures need to be taken prior to the commencement of the program, immediately after the end of the program, and 3 months after the end of the program. Each questionnaire will take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Children may need teacher assistance to complete their questionnaires.

## **11 Need more information**

For more information please contact the Being Safety Smart team via at [info@beingsafetysmart.com.au](mailto:info@beingsafetysmart.com.au)

## **12 Acknowledgement**

Being Safety Smart is supported by a grant from the Queensland Police Service. The development team would like to thank the Queensland Police Service, the Crime and Misconduct Commission, Educational Queensland, Always Interactive, and the teachers, parents and students of Chancellor State College for their support and involvement in the development and evaluation of the project.

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