



# Finding a Place to Play Together

## Connect with children

This story is intended to support you as you create your own special moments of connection with your child/children. One of the greatest gifts you can give your children is a healthy self esteem. **Children who feel valued and who trust themselves and the adults that care for them, have the tools to develop healthy self esteem.** As a parent or carer, you can help your child/children to feel valued by spending time with them, playing games, reading books or just listening to them.



The **Safer Communities For Children** approach is all about sharing stories that can be used to **start important conversations** with children about safety. Each of the six available stories has important messages for our children about how they can think and talk about safety with trusted grown ups.

The stories also help adults to understand what makes children feel safe and unsafe. **Within the stories you will find questions that may help children to share their feelings with you.** There are also links to activities you can use to continue these important conversations.

We hope this book provides you with another special opportunity to **connect with the children you care for** and that in that connection, you recognise how important you are in their lives and the positive impact you can have in keeping them safe.

# STORY 4

## THE BIG IDEA

Children do well when they have places where they feel safe





Frankie was relaxing on a lily pad.

It was cool and damp, and he could hear all the other frogs croaking loudly around him.

"Frog Billabong is my favourite place of all," he thought.

"Nanna," he asked, "can I invite my friends over to play?"

"Of course," croaked Nanna.

"Would you like to go and ask them now?"

"Great!" said Frankie.

So he went to find his friend Elly.



# Elly Eagle was gliding high on the breeze.



"Hey Elly, I want to ask you something," called Frankie. Elly swooped down.

"Would you like to come and play at Frog Billabong?"



"I'd like to, Frankie," whistled Elly, "but I wouldn't feel safe in a damp and slippery place on the ground. I feel safe high in the sky, or in a tree where I can feel the breeze."



So Frankie went to find his friend Kasey.

Kasey Koala was sitting  
in a gum tree, munching  
on some leaves.

"Hey Kasey, I want to ask you something," called Frankie.  
Kasey yawned sleepily and looked down.

"Would you like to come and play at Frog Billabong?"

"I'd like to, Frankie," replied  
Kasey, "but I wouldn't feel safe on  
the ground where it's damp and  
smells muddy. I feel safe when I  
can sit in the fork of a tree and  
smell the gum leaves."

So Frankie went to find his friend Sasha.





# Sasha Snake was coiled up under a dry log.



"Hey Sasha, I want to ask you something,"  
called Frankie. Sasha slithered over.

## "Would you like to come and play at Frog Billabong?"



"I'd like to, Frankie," hissed Sasha, "but I  
wouldn't feel safe in a crowded place  
with lots of noise. I feel safe when I can  
coil up somewhere quiet if I need to."

Frankie was starting to worry that none of his friends  
would come to play at Frog Billabong.

## He decided to go home and talk with Nanna...





"I don't know if I'll get to play with my friends," he said to her.  
"No one feels safe to come to Frog Billabong."



WHAT MAKES  
PLACES FEEL SAFE  
FOR FRANKIE'S  
FRIENDS?

"That must be disappointing," replied Nanna,  
"but not everyone feels safe in the same places.  
Do you have any other friends you could ask?"



"Mmmm..." thought Frankie.  
"Maybe I could ask Dani and Kenny!"

WHAT THINGS HELP  
YOU FEEL SAFE AND  
WELCOME?

Frankie found his friends resting in the shade.

"Hey, Kenny and Dani, I want to ask you something," called Frankie. Kenny and Dani stretched and looked over.

"Would you like to come and play at Frog Billabong?"

"We'd like to, Frankie," said Kenny, "but we wouldn't feel safe away from the adults we know and trust. We feel safe when our families are nearby."



"Why don't we play right here?"

"Okay," said Frankie, feeling relieved.

"At least I'll get to play with two friends, even if it's not at Frog Billabong."

"But what about our other friends?" asked Dani.

Just then, Elly flew over. She swooped down, perched in the top of the tree and listened to her friends.





Frankie explained what everyone had told him.



"Elly, you feel safe up high, where you can feel the breeze.  
Kasey feels safe where she can smell the gum leaves, and Sasha feels  
safe where he can coil up somewhere quiet."

The friends thought about this.

They wanted to find a place where they could  
ALL feel safe to play together.



Dani looked up.

"Hey! This gum tree has a fork in it, where Kasey would feel safe!" she yapped.

And there's a dry log under it, so Sasha could coil up there," added Kenny.

"I feel safe up here in this tree," whistled Elly. "And guess what?" she exclaimed, "I can see a gentle part of the creek that looks cool and safe for you, Frankie!"

'Yes' called out Frankie, 'This looks perfect.'

He couldn't wait to invite everyone.





That afternoon at Frog Billabong,  
Frankie felt excited. "Nanna!" he  
shouted. "We found a place where we  
can ALL feel safe to play together!"

CAN YOU THINK OF  
PLACES WHERE  
YOU FEEL SAFE?

"That's great," said Nanna.  
"I can't wait to see it."

The next day, Nanna took Frankie there to play  
with all of his friends.



# CREATE SPACES WHERE CHILDREN FEEL SAFE

Things that can make  
places feel unsafe  
and unwelcoming

What adults could  
do to help them feel  
safe and welcoming





Invite children to look and walk around the space where you have read the story.

SAFETY  
CHECK.

Talk to them about the things that help them to feel and be safe there (eg. what it looks like, who is there, the atmosphere, how people treat children, things for children to do).

Explain to children that it is the job of adults to help make places feel safe for children.

Ask them about things that adults could do or change to help children feel safer or be safer in this space.

If needed, make a plan with children about things that can be done.



## EXPLAIN TO YOUR CHILD THAT ITS OK TO SAY NO TO SOMETHING IF THEY FEEL UNSAFE OR UNSURE.

**You might want to say that it's always ok to tell someone they trust that they are feeling unsure/unsafe.**

Ask your child if they recently faced a challenging or difficult situation that they were able to manage to solve with someone else's help? How did that make them feel? What about a situation that they tried to solve alone and were not able to - what could they have done differently?

**Encourage your child to think about the people in their life can help them with difficult things.**

It might be a coach who can help them to play cricket better or a teacher who can help them with spelling tricky words. It can be useful to tell them about skills you might have found hard to do when you were a child but with support and practice you can now do those things.



LET'S TALK...



NEED A BIT OF  
EXTRA SUPPORT?

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