

Discussion Topics for Parents and Educators

As parents, we need to be able to discern when something is wrong with our children. The #1 reason why most children don't tell anyone when they are abused is due to lack of belief. Below are some topics you can discuss with your child to help build the line of communication.

1. Good Touch Bad Touch

Feelings can be confusing at a small age. Talk to your child about all different types of feelings as you are discussing inappropriate touch, safe and unsafe. Discuss what it feels like to be happy, sad, angry, etc. Make a habit for your child to open up and share their activities and feelings on a daily basis so that you are building a line of communication and they are being able to talk more comfortably with you.

2. Using Correct Names

Children should learn the proper names (not pet names) of their body parts including the genitals. This way, if a child is touched inappropriately, they can clearly state where they were touched. Note: a child's mouth is also known as a private zone.

3. Safety Network

Remember, children can feel scared to alert an adult due to lack of belief. Help your child identify five adults that includes a family member they can trust to tell right away if:

- They feel unsafe or uncomfortable of a person who wants to touch them.
- They are being asked by a person to touch their body parts.
- They are being shown images of private parts.

4. Don't Keep the Secret

Keeping a secret is a NO NO. Share with your child the difference between a good secret vs a bad secret. Like a birthday surprise vs a secret of someone touching their private parts. A bad secret empowers the abuser not the victim and should be told immediately if a unsafe secret is asked to be kept.

5. Warning Signs

Our children should always feel safe. It is our job to protect them. There are **Early Warning Signs** to look for when they feel unsafe like:

- heart racing
- sick tummy
- sweaty palms
- loss of appetite

Let them come up with some ideas of their own like a safety word that only the five people in their safety network know.

6. Empowerment

Encourage your child to speak up if something feels wrong. Explain that if someone does touch their private parts (without you there) that they have the right to say, 'No!' or 'Stop!' Share with them that their 'private parts' are the parts under their clothes, that are only shown or touched by a physician when they are sick or during a bath by a parent. A good example to help your child understand the meaning of private is to compare the bathroom (private) vs the kitchen (public). Note: Our children are sometimes sexually abused by a family member like mom or dad. This would be a good time to encourage them that if one parent has touched them in anyway uncomfortably, they are to tell the other parent or a person in their safety network.

7. Reinforcement

Your child is the 'boss of their body and they do not have to kiss or hug a person if they don't want to. Explain we all have a 'body boundary and that no one can cross another person's body boundary unless they allow it.

My Body Is My Body and I Have Rules!