

Sexual Abuse Awareness Night

*Communication and Education are key! Talk, talk, talk to your kids!

*Teach anatomically correct body parts to your children.

*Permission to touch and the child giving consent when they want to hug, kiss, etc family members.

*Secrets and Surprises

*One option: Secrets make you feel bad, especially if a person says you must never tell. Surprises are things that are happy and fun are always to be told.

*Another option: teaching the difference between good and bad secrets.

*Good/Safe Touch, Bad/Unsafe Touch, Unwanted Touch

*Safety Rules:

*Safety Circle/Safety Network

*Crista is using the language of Safety Circle and is working with the kids on this. One of the books uses Safety Network.

*Variety of people that the child feels safe with that they can talk to if something is bothering them or someone did something to them.

*What to do if someone touches you the wrong way

*What to do if your child discloses that they have been touched or treated inappropriately

*If you feel comfortable: call the police or the DHS Child Abuse Reporting Hotline: 1-800-362-2178

*Get your child in for services. Therapy can be very beneficial and needed to work through the messages that have been sent through the abuse and the behaviors that will result from it.

*Disclose the information to a mandatory reporter: Teacher, school personnel, therapist, doctor. These entities are required by law to report any child abuse or neglect.

*Other things to consider:

*Sleepovers:

-Do you feel comfortable having them?

-If so, how are they structured?

-Are older kids around the younger kids?

-How are you teaching your child to protect themselves if they do go to sleepovers?

-Incorporating what they would do if a friend asked them to show their private parts or dared them to do something else sexually inappropriate. Having conversation about these things and reminding your child of them before they leave just like you remind them of their manners.

*Family Get Togethers or gatherings where there is an age range of children together supervised by older children:

-What is the supervision like?

-Not always sexual abuse but sexual inappropriateness.

*Question you may hear from your child: Why is sexual talk now not wrong but it is when I talk with my friends?

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Teaching Good Touch Bad Touch

(Kids Safety Council)

- There are three things you can teach your children before you begin to teach them specific touching safety rules.

1. Teach children the correct names of all their different body parts, including their private body parts. Children often find it hard to tell about sexual abuse because they don't know the words to use. Learning correct (anatomical) words for private body parts gives children the words to use and helps them know that it is okay to talk about those body parts.

When teaching your young child the different body parts, consider using the correct words for private body parts along with words such as "tummy" and "ears." You can give older children more information because they are able to understand more. You can also explain that the parts of their bodies covered by a swimsuit are their private body parts.

2. Teach children that "they are the boss of their body."

Let your children know that they are in control of who touches their bodies and how. Model this for children: "I don't want you to jump up and down on me. Please stop." Likewise, immediately respect their wishes not to be touched in certain ways. "Looks like you don't want me to pick you up right now. Okay." As you supervise your children's interactions, make it clear that they need to stop tickling or roughhousing if a sibling says "Stop!"

In addition, do not insist that your children give or receive hugs or kisses from relatives and friends if they do not wish to. This teaches children that it's okay to say no to touches from people in their family and others they know. Some relatives might expect a hug from your children every time they see them. Tell relatives that you are teaching your children to be bosses of their bodies as part of teaching them safety about touching, so they are not offended by your children's behavior.

3. Explain to your child that there are three kinds of touches.

The three kinds of touches are:

- **Safe touches.** These are touches that keep children safe and are good for them, and that make children feel cared for and important. Safe touches can include hugging, pats on the back, and an arm around the shoulder. Safe touches can also include touches that might hurt, such as removing a splinter. Explain to children that when you remove a splinter, you are doing so to keep them healthy, which makes it a safe touch.
- **Unsafe touches.** These are touches that hurt children's bodies or feelings (for example, hitting, pushing, pinching, and kicking). Teach children that these kinds of touches are not okay.
- **Unwanted touches.** These are touches that might be safe but that a child doesn't want from that person or at that moment. It is okay for a child to say "no" to an unwanted touch, even if it is from a familiar person. Help your children practice saying "no" in a strong, yet polite voice. This will help children learn to set personal boundaries.

Touching Safety Rules

- **Once children can name their private body parts and know about different kinds of touches, you can teach them that there is another kind of unsafe touch that is also not okay. This kind of touch is when someone older or bigger touches their private body parts. How you explain this will depend on the age of your child.**

For a young child you might say, "Another kind of unsafe touch is when a bigger person touches you on your private body parts and it is not to keep you clean or healthy. So we have a family safety rule that it is never okay for a bigger person to touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy."

Parents should understand that the "clean" part of this rule applies to young children at an age when an adult might help them with diaper changing, going to the toilet, or bathing. The "healthy" part of this rule refers to doctor visits; for example, when the doctor gives a child a shot. An adult family member should always be present at doctor appointments. At some point during the teenage years it will become appropriate for your children to handle their own doctor appointments.

For an older child you might say, "Another kind of unsafe touch is when someone touches you in a "wrong way" on your private body parts and it is not to keep you healthy. So a good family safety rule about touching is that no one should touch your private body parts except to keep you healthy."

Teach your children the following safety rules:

- It is not okay to touch someone else's private body parts.
- It is not okay for someone to touch his or her own private body parts in front of you.
- It is not okay for someone to ask you to touch his or her private body parts.
- It is not okay for someone to ask you to take your clothes off except if they are a doctor helping to see if you are hurt or sick
- It is not okay for someone to take photos or videos of you with your clothes off.
- It is not okay for someone to show you photos or videos of people without their clothes on.
- You can decide who can touch you, who can kiss you, or who can give you a hug. You have the right to say, "no."

What do you do when someone touches you in the wrong way?

- Say no! Tell the person that you don't like it and you don't want to be touched.
- Get away fast! Run away from the person whose touch you don't like. Never stay alone with that person ever again.
- Call for help. You can scream.
- Believe in yourself. You did nothing wrong.
- If someone touches you in the wrong way, tell someone you trust what has happened. Don't let threats scare you into running away or keeping quiet. When a person touches you and asks you to keep it a secret between the two of you, ask yourself, "Does the secret bother me?"
- Don't keep secrets that make you feel uncomfortable. Go to a person you trust-a parent, a relative, a teacher, or your doctor. If the person you go to doesn't believe you, go to someone else you trust until someone believes you and helps you.

- Do everything you can to stay away from the person who is touching you in the wrong way or making you feel uncomfortable. Don't stay alone with a person who touches you in a way that makes you uncomfortable or makes you feel unsafe.

Good Touch

It feels good to be hugged and kissed by the people you love. For example:

- When Mommy gives you a hug and kiss after you wake up.
- When Daddy gives you a good-night hug and kiss.
- When Grandma and Grandpa come to visit and everyone gets hugs and kisses.

Bad Touch

Touches that make you feel uncomfortable are usually bad touches. You don't have to keep a secret when someone gives you bad touch. Don't feel that you are bad. Whoever gives you a bad touch is the one who is bad, not you. Your body belongs to you. Nobody should touch you if you don't want to be touched. Do you know what a bad touch is?

- It is a bad touch if it hurts you.
- It is a bad touch if someone touches you on your body where you don't want to be touched.
- It is a bad touch if the person touches you under your clothing or tickles you under the clothing.
- It is a bad touch if a person touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.
- It is a bad touch if that touch makes you feel scared and nervous.
- It is a bad touch if a person forces you to touch him or her.
- It is a bad touch if a person asks you not to tell anyone.
- It is a bad touch if a person threatens to hurt you if you tell.

Message to parents and concerned adults such as relatives, neighbors and friends of the family: Unfortunately, some adults may abuse the trust you give them. The person who touches your child in a way you don't like is the person who is doing something wrong, not your child. Sexual abuse is always the fault of the bigger, older, or stronger person

