



## Tips for Talking to Children About Body Safety

Discussing sexual abuse with your children may be an uncomfortable and difficult thing to do, but it does not need to be – and the alternative puts them at risk of potential harm. Speaking freely and openly with your children is the best approach. Treat this like any other body safety rule such as wearing a seat belt in the car or wearing a helmet when riding a bike. This should be an on-going conversation with your children, starting as young as 2 years of age.

- **My body belongs to me:** Children often do not realize they are the boss of their bodies. They need to know that when it comes to the touching of their bodies, they are in charge. No one can touch them or ask them to touch someone else's private body parts. IT IS NOT OKAY.
- **Privacy means just for me:** There are a lot of private things in our lives. Purses, wallets, diaries, and passwords to things. We have private body parts as well.
- **Proper names:** Teach your children where their private body parts are and the proper names of them. It is important to teach your child about the anatomy of both genders as offenders can be of either sex. If abuse is occurring, it is essential that the child have appropriate language to disclose. This eliminates confusion and allows adults to get the child help.
- **If I don't like a touch, I can say "STOP":** You can say STOP to anyone who tries to touch you on a private body part: ANYONE—even someone you know, love, and trust. It is not okay for them either.
- **Anyone can break body safety rules:** Anyone can break these rules. Children have the strong misconception that only strangers break these rules. Because over 90% of abusers are someone the child knows, loves, and trusts we must teach children that anyone can break body safety rules. We teach children in our program that it CAN be anyone and it is OKAY to say 'STOP' – even to someone you know, love, and trust.
- **Share times an adult may have to touch a private body part:** Sometimes there may be a reason for a private body part to be touched. This could be changing diapers or helping young children use the restroom, helping bathe a child, or in a medical situation. Make sure the children know even in these times, if the child feels uncomfortable or uneasy, they have the right to say "STOP".
- **Tell a trusted adult:** Tell an adult you trust if anyone ever touches, tries to touch you on a private body part, takes pictures of private body parts, or asks you to touch them. If someone does not believe you, keep telling. Someone will help you. Trusted adults are there to care and help us. It is their job to help. Who are some trusted adults that you can tell besides Mom or Dad?
- **It can never be a child's fault:** People who break body safety rules often threaten or scare children to keep them from telling an adult. No matter what a person says, tell an adult anyway. It can never be the child's fault - no matter what. Surprises can be fun, but no one should ask a child to keep secrets – especially from their parents.

**For more information and resources for talking with your children, please visit or call Chaucie's Place.**

[www.chauciesplace.org](http://www.chauciesplace.org)

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