

Five Reasons to Talk with Your Kids About Personal Safety

1 Kids who know about personal boundaries, private parts & body ownership are less likely to be abused.

Start conversations young, using anatomically correct names for private parts. Begin when changing baby's diaper and continue open dialog about personal safety through elementary school, middle & high school and right into college, military training and/or the job force.

Recommended video, **My Body Belongs to Me:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-5mdt9YN6I>
(For young children, by Jill Starishevsky)

2 Children who know that sexual abuse is against the law - and not their fault - are more likely to speak up and report inappropriate behaviors and/or abuse.

Establishing that child sexual abuse is against the law – and not their fault – teaches kids that they have a right to stand up to, and report, anyone who attempts to touch them inappropriately, or force the minor to touch them. Children also have a right to privacy (make it a Family Rule to knock on closed doors and ask for permission before entering) and to say “No” to anyone who tries to abuse them – even important authority figures – without getting into trouble for doing so.

To effectively teach the concepts of law and personal safety, say to your child: “There are 4 VERY important rules I want to tell you about the private parts of the body. It is against the law for:

- someone to **look at** your private parts.
- someone to **touch** your private parts.
- someone to **take pictures/video** of your private parts.
- someone to **ask you (or tell/force you) to look at, touch or take pictures/video of**, their private parts.”

3 Kids who are encouraged to recognize & trust their instincts about people and situations are more likely to stay safe. *(Not all children can feel their instincts.)*

Trust your instincts, and teach your child to trust their gut feelings. Let them know that if they have a funny or weird feeling about a person or situation, **they don't have to wait until something happens – they can tell a Trusted Adult right away.**

4 Kids who know they can talk to you about anything - and won't get in trouble - are more likely to disclose inappropriate behaviors and sexual misconduct.

When children can identify trusted people in their lives, it makes it easier for them to ask for help when needed. Help your child identify two Trusted Adults (preferably one inside the home, one outside the home) whom they can talk to about anything.

Tell your child they can tell you, or another Trusted Adult, anything and you will help them. Give children specific words to use, such as “I need to talk to you about a safety problem. Can you please listen?”

5 Children who know that All Secrets Can be Told are less likely to be groomed for abuse.

Secrets play a significant role in child sexual abuse. Keeping secrets – even seemingly innocent ones – is not healthy because secrets often lay the groundwork for future abuse. Talk with your child often about secrets, and remind them there are no secrets, ever. Surprises? Yes, because all surprises are eventually told.

Keep in mind, too, that when your child tells you about a mistake they have made (like breaking something or drawing on the wall), they are gauging your reaction to broken rules or a crisis situation. Try to set an example that you can be trusted to stay calm, help them and support them in a positive way.

Recommended video, **Tom's Secret:**
<https://childluresprevention.com/global-partnership>

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