



Talking to Children about Sexual Abuse: Resource Sheet

Tip #1: Teach correct body part names

Using pet names for private parts leads to children feeling shame around those body parts, and also makes it more difficult for adults to understand what a child is trying to tell them if they are ever abused.

Tip #2: Teach respect for the word "no"

Children need to understand that when someone tells them no, they should stop what they are doing immediately. Encourage them to also say no, and keep saying it loud and clear. If someone is not respecting their "no", tell them it's ok to not want to spend time with that person.

Tip #3: Teach body consent

Empower kids to make decisions about their body and to say when parents or other trusted adults can show affection. Instead of "go give your aunt a hug!", try "would you like to go hug your aunt? Why don't you go ask her if she'd like that?"

Tip #4: Believe the child

If a child discloses something to you, believe them. Demonstrate that you understand and take very seriously what they are telling you. Stay calm and don't pass judgment: "Thank you for telling me. I believe you." Avoid: "Why didn't you tell me before?" or "Are you sure that's what happened?"

Tip #5: Find Support

Don't investigate abuse on your own. When talking with a child, ask only open-ended questions, and as soon as you suspect abuse inform the appropriate agency, such as law enforcement or an advocacy or child advocacy center. It's very important for trained child interviewers to handle the investigation.

Links to Online Resources

[Child Sexual Abuse Fact Sheet](#)

[Age-specific Sexual Abuse Conversation Guide](#)

["My Body is My Body" animated musical video for young children](#)

["Consent for Kids" video](#)

[TEDI BEAR Children's Advocacy Center Resources—videos and more](#)

["Sexual Behaviors in Young Children: What's Normal, What's Not?" article](#)

[Age by Age Guide to Sex Education](#)