

Tips to Help Protect Children from Sexual Abuse

- Teach children accurate names of private body parts.
- Avoid focusing exclusively on “stranger danger.” Keep in mind that most children are abused by someone they know and trust.
- Teach children about body safety and the difference between “okay” and “not okay” touches.
- Let children know that they have the right to make decisions about their bodies. Empower them to say no when they do not want to be touched, even in non-sexual ways (e.g., politely refusing hugs) and to say no to touching others.
- Make sure children know that adults and older children never need help with their private body parts (e.g., bathing or going to the bathroom).
- Teach children to take care of their own private parts (i.e., bathing, wiping after bathroom use) so they don’t have to rely on adults or older children for help.
- Educate children about the difference between good secrets (like surprise parties—which are okay because they are not kept secret for long) and bad secrets (those that the child is supposed to keep secret forever, which are not okay).
- Trust your instincts! If you feel uneasy about leaving a child with someone, don’t do it. If you’re concerned about possible sexual abuse, ask questions.

The best time to talk to your child about sexual abuse is NOW.

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