

HOW TO TALK ABOUT BODY SAFETY



The Child Advocacy Center
of Northeast Missouri, Inc.

TheChildCenter.com

Body Safety Rule: “My Body Belongs to Me”

This rule teaches a child ownership of their body. It is their body and belongs to them.

The only exceptions are when they are hurt or they need help. Have open communication and discuss real life situations.

- Doctors help us during check-ups.
- Parents help during baths, getting dressed, or when we are hurt.

Have this conversation often. You want your child to feel comfortable coming to you when they have questions about their bodies. These conversations will help build a trust that you are an adult they can come to if their rule is broken.

My Body Belongs to Me

It's not ok for anyone to touch or look at my private body parts.

Body Safety Steps:

It is important to have a plan in place of what to do if their Body Safety Rule is broken.

1. Practice saying “NO” in a strong voice. Act out how it looks and sounds. Use “what if” scenarios when practicing.
2. Discuss Safe Places where your child can go to get help. Again do “what if” scenarios with your child. Does this mean going to a different place, calling a parent to come get them, or creating a reason to leave.
 - Create a safe word or phrase to be used when they feel unsafe.
3. Discuss the importance of telling a trusted adult. Together with your child create a list of trusted adults (3-5) they feel safe telling if their Body Safety Rule is broken.
 - 90% percent of the time, abusers are more likely to be someone you know and trust. When establishing your child’s trusted adults, in addition to yourself, choose adults outside of the family. Examples include counselors, teachers, neighbors, friend’s parent, doctors, etc.

My Body Safety Steps

1. Say NO!



2. Get Away to a Safe Place



3. Tell an Adult



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Why is this conversation so important?

When a child has been taught Body Safety and it's reinforced like other safety rules, it informs others the child is empowered with Body Safety knowledge and the child is less likely to be targeted by abusers.

Did you know?*

- 1 in 4 girls & 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18.
- 1 in 5 children are solicited sexually while on the internet.
- 60% of child sexual abuse victims never tell anyone.
- 90% of child victims are abused by someone they like, love, or live with.

*National Children's Advocacy Center

Should I teach the correct names for private body parts? Yes!

1. Gives your child the correct language to use if they need to tell a trusted adult.
2. Normalizing private body parts allows your child to have conversations without embarrassment.
3. It informs others that Body Safety is being discussed at home.

Secrets vs. Surprises

What is the difference?

SECRETS are meant to be kept quiet forever, and often to protect something which would make people unhappy.

SURPRISES are kept quiet temporarily, and when you share a surprise people are happy.

Establishing a **NO SECRET RULE** in your family will help keep open communication in your household.

Important Tips:

- ✓ ONCE IS NOT ENOUGH. Continued conversations help protect your child.
- ✓ Hugs and kisses are always OPTIONAL.
- ✓ TRUST YOUR GUT! If something doesn't feel or look right, it probably isn't.



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