

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION GUIDE

FOR CAREGIVERS

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
Silicon Valley

YWCA SILICON VALLEY HOPES THIS GUIDE TEACHES YOU...

...open, honest conversations with the child(ren) in your life is the best way to help them develop healthy attitudes and behaviors around relationships, boundaries, and sex.

Continuing the conversation at home is a crucial part of keeping your child safe.

Unfortunately, over 99% of reported child sexual abuse cases are perpetrated by someone known to the child such as a family friend or a family member (DOJ, 2000).

This handbook provides tips for each stage of early development, responses to common questions a child may ask, offers advice for preventing sexual abuse, and presents additional resources. Teaching children the skills provided in this handbook can help reduce sexual coercion, harassment, and abuse.

**If any questions arise, we are here for you.
Call our 24/7 Support Line at 1.800.575.2782**

WHERE CAN I RECEIVE ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

WEBSITES & SUPPORT LINES

YWCA SILICON VALLEY | 375 S. 3rd Street San Jose, CA 95112
24/7, Free & Confidential Support Line 1.800.575.2782
www.ywca-sv.org

RAINN (Rape Abuse & Incest National Network)
24/7, Free & Confidential Hotline 800.656.HOPE (4673)
www.rainn.org

Loveisrespect
Text: LOVEIS TO 22522
<https://www.loveisrespect.org>

Stop It Now!
Great resources for adults
<https://www.stopitnow.org/>



BOOKS FOR ALL AGES

MY BODY BELONGS TO ME | JILL STARISHEVSKY
Suggested: Ages 3-5

WHAT MAKES A BABY | BY CORY SILVERBERG
Suggested: Ages 3-7

THE RIGHT TOUCH | BY SANDY KLEVIN
Suggested: Ages 4+

SEX IS A FUNNY WORD BY CORY SILVERBERG
Suggested: Ages 7+

THE PARENTS GUIDE TO TALKING ABOUT SEX | BY JANET ROSENZWEIG
Suggested: Caregivers



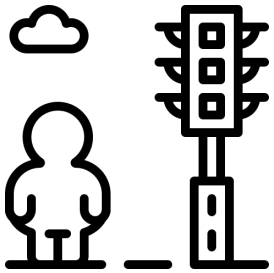
BEFORE WE DIVE IN...

It is common for parents to feel uncomfortable when addressing these issues with their children; however, these conversations do not have to be intimidating.

While these topics are important, **It is okay to have fun and laugh when talking to children about difficult subjects.** Humor is proven to strengthen children's engagement, create a longer lasting impact, and can also encourage children to be honest with their parents during open conversation.

Laughter does not devalue the content of your conversations with children.

5 TOOLS FOR INCREASING YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY



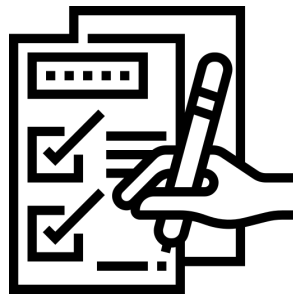
1. Teach Body Ownership & Boundaries



2. Talk about Consent



3. Use Open Communication



4. Safety Plan



5. Be an Active Bystander

Talking about Body Ownership & Boundaries

What does this mean?

Body Ownership:

You should get to decide what happens to your body. Everyone's body deserves to be respected and feel safe.

Boundaries:

Creating clear limits that define what feels safe or unsafe. Identifying and communicating if you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.



By teaching children about body ownership and setting boundaries, we give them a sense of self-confidence and autonomy when expressing their safety needs. This helps children establish a strong sense of self which decreases their risk of exploitation.

Why it's important:

Middle Parts:

Middle parts are the parts of our bodies often referred to as private parts. We choose to use the word "middle" instead of "private" to reinforce the idea that our entire bodies are private and deserve safety. In addition, the word "private" can often be associated with a sense of shame, and we strive to eliminate any shame that may be associated with a person's body.

- ◆ "The parts of our bodies covered by a bathing suit are called our middle parts. These parts of our bodies need extra privacy."
- ◆ "One other part of our body that needs extra privacy - Lips! We get to decide who we give our kisses to."

Our words matter:

Conversation-starter Ideas:

- ◆ "Your entire body is private from head to toe, because it belongs to you and only you."
- ◆ "Everyone is the boss of their own body, which means you are not the boss of anyone else's body. We should always be respectful of other people's boundaries."
- ◆ "You are the only person who can decide what makes you feel safe and unsafe."
- ◆ Discuss family rules and practices: "When friends come over, we always leave the door open..."



- ◆ "Is there anyone in your life you don't feel comfortable hugging?"
- ◆ If your child does not want to hug or kiss a relative, you can talk about other alternatives that your child would be more comfortable with: "Would you like to blow Grandma a kiss instead?"
 - ◆ Some alternatives to offer: High-fives, fist bumps, waving, giving flowers

Try and write your own conversation-starter here!

Talking about Consent

What does this mean?

Consent: An active, willing, enthusiastic **YES** free of force, fraud, or coercion.

It is not just the absence of no. The only way we can be 100% sure that someone is comfortable with being touched is by asking them first.

Why this matters:

Consent teaches our children that their words matter, and they have the right to speak up when they feel unsafe, uncomfortable, or disrespected.

Giving and receiving permission is a concept most children are already aware of. This is just an extension of that discussion!

Write it out!

Write down a way you can model consent at home:

Conversation-starter Ideas:

- ◆ “If your sister is turned away, she might not want to be hugged right now, and that’s okay!”
- ◆ “Can I give you a hug?”
- ◆ “Would you like a high five?”
- ◆ During bath time, “Do you want me to wash your middle parts or would you prefer to do it?”
- ◆ “Hey, there’s grandpa over there! Let’s go ask him if he wants a hug!”



It is never too early to start teaching your child that they deserve to have their words respected. Often, one of the first words our children learn is the word ‘No’. By listening and responding when a child speaks, we are able to model what giving and receiving consent looks like.

Example: You and your child are playing a tickling game, and your child says “Stop!” You can respect your child’s wish by stopping the game and checking in with your child until they decide whether or not they would like to continue.

Use Open Communication

What does this mean?

BE AN ASKABLE PARENT

An askable parent is someone who listens without judgment, encourages children to ask more questions, and maintains approachability by staying honest and providing accurate answers. Providing accurate answers doesn't mean that you have to know everything about every topic, but it does mean that if you don't know the answer to a question, that you should research an accurate answer and follow up with your child later.

How can I model this behavior?

USE MEDICALLY ACCURATE TERMS

- When talking about middle parts, use medically correct terms such as penis and vagina.
- It's okay to use nicknames but they should always be accompanied by accurate terms

LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

- This one can be tough! But take a deep breath. Take a step back if you need it. *And then* respond to your child. We get it, these questions and discussions can be startling. But remember, they *will* find this information out somewhere. It's best to come from you—an accurate, trusted source.

When is the right time?

ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS/CONVERSATION

You know your child best!

Lookout for teachable moments!

See a commercial about menstruation?
Pregnant woman at the grocery store?
Intimate movie scene? Real-life scenarios can be a great way to ask you child age appropriate questions about what they see and invite them into a conversation.

Why this matters:

Practicing open and honest communication can significantly increase the safety of your child.

One major key to using open communication is to use anatomically and medically correct terms for all body parts, including private/middle parts. Using medical terms for body parts reduces your child's risk of exploitation by giving them the means to accurately communicate if something harmful is occurring.

Example: In one instance, a child was taught to call her vagina a "pocket book". This child told her teacher that her uncle kept putting his hands in her pocket-book. Although this child was trying to communicate to her teacher that she was experiencing abuse, she wasn't taken seriously because she didn't know how to accurately describe what she was experiencing.

Together, we can prevent miscommunication, offer our children a safe space to speak their truth, and deliver accurate/shame-free answers to big questions.

Write it out!

Write down a teachable moment you've experienced in your household and ideas how to talk about it with your child:



Safety Planning

What does this mean?

Safety Planning:

Creating a practical plan to use in times of crisis or emergency.

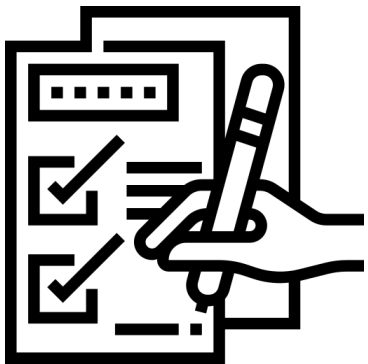
We safety plan for fender benders—this is no different! Discuss a plan with your family and come up with action steps in case they are faced with an unsafe or uncomfortable situation

Why this matters:

We cannot always be with our children to protect them, so we can plan ahead for emergency situations. Many of us already have safety plans in place for other types of emergencies, like fires or earthquakes. We can draw on those skills for talking to children about prevention.

Conversation-starter Ideas:

- ◆ “Let’s practice some different ways to say stop.”
- ◆ “If you’re at home or at school, where are some places you can go to feel safe?”
- ◆ “Do you know who you can talk to if you feel unsafe? Can you name 3 people you feel safe with?”



Write it out!

Write down another way you can safety plan with your child?

Be an Active Bystander

What does this mean?

A bystander is someone who is a witness to a situation or event. An active bystander is someone who is present and chooses to step in to prevent or deescalate violence and take part.

Why this matters:

Being able to intervene in potentially harmful situations can significantly increase your child’s safety and the safety of our community.

How do I do this?

Trust your intuition

We teach children about “Uh-Oh” feelings. An “Uh-Oh” feeling is like a warning. It’s our body’s way of telling us when we might be in an unsafe situation. “Uh-Oh” feelings could feel like butterflies in our stomachs, goosebumps, or feeling nervous. Whatever it feels like for you, it’s okay to trust what your body is telling you.

It is always okay to take action or leave a situation if something feels unsafe.

Real-life example:

Imagine: You often see an adult hanging out after hours at the school and this makes you feel uncomfortable. What is a safe option you could take?

Possible responses: An active bystander could talk to the person directly or tell a school official about what’s happening.

Any other safe ideas?

