

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS

TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT BODY SAFETY

Stewards of Children® is a training program that teaches adults how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse using the *5 Steps to Protecting Our Children™*. Step 3 of the *5 Steps*, “Talk About It,” teaches adults to have open, age-appropriate conversations with children about topics like body safety, sex, and boundaries. Take *Stewards of Children* for in-depth insight and training.

For Children 6 and Under - Start when children are young by teaching them:

- Proper names for body parts - nose, arm, penis, vagina.
- Private body parts that others should not touch. Where a bathing suit covers is an easy example for young children to understand.
- What touch is okay, such as bath time or at the doctor's office.
- Touching boundaries are for everyone, even parents, family members, older friends, cousins, and babysitters.
- Good touching boundaries, by demonstrating them yourself.
- They have the right to tell anyone “NO,” and refuse unwanted or uncomfortable touch. Never force a child to hug, sit on a lap, or give affection.
- Secrets can be harmful and if anyone asks them to keep a secret, they should tell you.
- Safety and boundary rules whenever they are in a new situation.

For Children 7 and Over - As children age, these conversations should continue and grow to match their development and understanding.

- Use real-life conversation starters - events in the news, a question from a child, an activity.
- Explain about sex and sexual abuse in an age-appropriate way.
- Tell them it is your job to protect them.
- Help them determine who their trusted adults are at school and other settings.
- Tell them it is not okay for others to use sexual words with them, or to act in a sexual way.
- Tell them to trust their gut feelings.
- Teach them to distance themselves from people who make them feel uncomfortable.
- Teach them not to give out personal information like home or email address in person or online.
- Ask them about their online experiences including smart phone and device use, and learn about the apps, sites, and games they use.
- Tell children if they have questions about someone’s behavior, the best thing they can do is come to you.

Remember to speak and listen calmly. It’s important that children feel safe and loved in these discussions. By starting young, you can create dialogue that will enrich your relationship with your children while keeping them protected.

“I tell my daughters, ‘Surprises make people happy. We don’t want to keep a secret, though, because secrets can make people upset or unhappy...If anyone wants you to keep a secret, tell mommy or daddy.”

Tiffany Sawyer, Director of Prevention Services, Georgia Center for Child Advocacy



DARKNESS TO LIGHT

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This information is intended only as a supplement to Darkness to Light's *Stewards of Children®* training, which provides in-depth learning, tools, and practical guidelines to help adults prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. For more information on *Stewards of Children*, visit www.D2L.org/Stewards.