Talking About Touching®

A Personal Safety Curriculum

Preschool/Kindergarten (Ages 4–6)

THIRD EDITION

Teacher's Guide

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Talking About Touching® Teacher's Guide

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Overview

Program Description

What Is the *Talking About Touching* Program?

The *Talking About Touching* program for preschool/kindergarten focuses on teaching children basic skills designed to help them keep safe from dangerous or abusive situations. Despite good intentions to provide a safe environment for children, adults cannot always be there to protect children from every dangerous or abusive situation. Using the materials provided in the *Talking About Touching* kit, parents, caregivers, child-care providers, and teachers can work together to provide the rules, information, encouragement, and practice that children need to help protect themselves. This curriculum is part of a series that extends from preschool/kindergarten to grade three.

What Approach Does the *Talking About Touching* Program Use?

The *Talking About Touching* curriculum introduces the subject of child sexual abuse within a general framework of safety, starting in Unit I with common safety issues affecting children. Lesson topics include car safety, traffic safety, and fire safety. This basic context of safety is reinforced in Unit II, in which lessons about touching safety are introduced. Unit II opens with lessons that emphasize the positive aspects of touch in children's everyday lives. The overall focus on safety, rather than sexuality, helps defuse the potentially difficult nature of talking to children about sexual abuse. This safety focus provides a straightforward way for adults and children to communicate about the subject.

The *Talking About Touching* program recognizes the key role that parents play in protecting children from abuse. The curriculum includes *What Do I Say Now?,* a parent education video designed to provide parents with knowledge and skills for abuse prevention. Parents and caregivers are reminded of the positive aspects of touch in healthy child development. By using a safety orientation when talking with children about sexual abuse, teachers and parents are able to reinforce the same strategies and vocabulary at school and at home. The program encourages parents to use anatomically correct language and a natural, matter-of-fact tone when talking with their children about their bodies. By doing so before the topic of sexual abuse is introduced, the children will be better able to report any abusive situation to their parents if it ever becomes necessary.

Scope and Sequence

Optional parent handout

Unit I
Personal Safety

The goal of this unit is to increase children's knowledge of and adherence to rules that will help keep them safe.

Lesson 1: Learning Car Safety
Following safety rules helps keep people safe. Always wearing a seatbelt helps keep people safe in a car.

Lesson 2: Learning Traffic Safety
Following safety rules helps keep children safe. Children should cross the street safely by looking in all directions first and holding hands. Children should say "No" to breaking safety rules.

Lesson 3: Learning Fire Safety
Following safety rules about fire is very important for children. Children should say "No" to breaking safety rules. When someone breaks a safety rule, children should tell a grown-up.

Lesson 4: Learning Gun Safety—Never Playing with Guns
Handling or playing with guns is dangerous for children.

Lesson 5: Getting Found
Children need to know how to stay safe when they are lost.

Lesson 6: The Always Ask First Rule—Getting Permission Before Going with Someone
An important people safety rule is: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants you to go somewhere with him or her.

Lesson 7: The Always Ask First Rule—Getting Permission Before Accepting Gifts
An important people safety rule is: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants to give you something.

Unit II
Touching Safety

The goal of this unit is to strengthen children's ability to distinguish between safe touch and unsafe touch and to increase children's knowledge of safety rules about touching.

Lesson 8: Getting and Giving Safe Touches
Safe touches help people feel cared for and loved. They are good for your body.

Lesson 9: Dealing with Unsafe Touches
Children can develop skills to help them resist or avoid unsafe touches.

Lesson 10: Saying "No" to Unwanted Touches
Children (and adults) have a right to say how and by whom they are touched. Children can develop skills and vocabulary to help them avoid unwanted touches.

Lesson 11: Learning the Touching Rule
Learning the Touching Rule will help children stay safe. The Touching Rule is: A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.

Lesson 12: Learning the Safety Steps (Booster Lesson)
Learning the Safety Steps will help children stay safe. The Safety Steps are (1) Say words that mean "No"; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up.

Lesson 13: Using the Touching Rule
Children should use the Safety Steps if someone breaks the Touching Rule.

Lesson 14: *Joey Learns the Touching Rule* (Booster Lesson; video used)
Children should use the Safety Steps if someone breaks the Touching Rule. Children should not keep secrets about touching. It's never the child's fault.

Lesson 15: *Sam's Story* (Big Book used)
Children should use the Safety Steps if someone breaks the Touching Rule. Children should not keep secrets about touching.

What Classroom Materials Are Included in the *Talking About Touching* Curriculum?

Lesson Cards

Each lesson builds on and reinforces the skills learned in previous lessons. The basic strategy of the curriculum is to provide information and self-protective skills designed to reduce children's vulnerability in dangerous or abusive situations. Children are taught rules about general safety: for example, wearing a seatbelt, looking all ways before crossing a street, and never playing with fire or guns. Rules about touching safety that focus on preventing sexual abuse are then introduced. The messages are simple and straightforward. Using lesson cards with stories and photographs, the teacher introduces each concept. Children are then given the opportunity to practice each skill.

Sam's Story (Big Book, Small Book, CD)

The curriculum includes a Big Book entitled *Sam's Story,* which tells about Sam and how she learns to use the Touching Rule. The Big Book is intended to be read aloud. A small book version of *Sam's Story* is also included with the materials, both for children to "read" to themselves and for parents or caregivers to check out and read to their children at home. *Sam's Story* is available on CD as well so that children can listen to the story and songs in a learning center or listen while the teacher turns the pages of the Big Book. The songs are taught to the children as part of the curriculum lesson.

Joey Learns the Touching Rule (Video)

Joey Learns the Touching Rule tells the story of Joey and how he uses the Touching Rule to prevent a potentially abusive situation. It is presented in the last lesson in the *Talking About Touching* curriculum. The video can also be used as a review of the touching safety lessons.

Safety Steps Poster

A poster is included with the curriculum kit to provide a visual cue for children as they learn the Safety Steps.

How Are Families Involved?

Family Education Night

Family involvement is essential to the success of any personal safety program. Committee for Children recommends that you schedule a meeting with parents and caregivers before the implementation of the curriculum. Parents are encouraged to support and reinforce the program's safety messages and rules at home and to initiate discussions about family safety rules with their children. An easy-to-follow outline for a family education night is included in the Involving Families section of the Teacher's Guide (see page 42).

What Do I Say Now? (Video)

What Do I Say Now?, a video for parents and caregivers, covers the basic points of how to protect children from child sexual abuse. The video provides information about child sexual abuse, guidelines

for talking to children about personal safety, and ideas for responding to disclosure. The video can be shown at the family education night or be made available to parents and caregivers to check out for viewing at home. Guidelines for using the video, discussion questions, and a handout master are included with the video.

Take-Home Letters

Master copies of Take-Home Letters are provided in the Involving Families section of the Teacher's Guide (see page 31). These letters are an integral part of the program—they describe essential themes of the lessons and offer suggested activities for parents or caregivers to do at home with their children. The letters play a key role in the effectiveness of the curriculum, so be sure to send them home when suggested on the lesson cards.

Background Information

What Is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse is the exploitation or coercion of a child by an older person (adult or adolescent) for the sexual gratification of the older person. Child sexual abuse involves a continuum of behavior ranging from verbal, nonphysical abuse to forcible touching offenses. It can take the form of a single encounter with an exhibitionist, occasional fondling by a casual acquaintance, years of ongoing abuse by a family member, rape, or exploitation through pornography and/or prostitution.

How Big Is the Problem?

Studies indicate that about 20% of America women and 5%–10% of American men experienced some form of sexual abuse as children. The peak ages of vulnerability are from 7 to 13, although reports also indicate that one-third to one-half of child sexual abuse victims are under the age of 7 (Finkelhor, 1994; Briere et al., 1996). The incidence of child sexual abuse for children with disabilities is 1.75 times greater than for children without disabilities (National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1993). The sexual abuse of children occurs in every class, race, religion, neighborhood, cultural group, and ethnic group.

What Are the Dynamics of Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse is rarely committed by the "dangerous stranger" about whom children have traditionally been warned. Based on general population surveys, in 70%–90% of the reported cases, the perpetrator is actually someone the child knows. Of all offenders, 90% are male, and teenagers represent up to 40%. Abuse by parent figures constitutes between 6% and 16% of all cases, and abuse by any relative is reported in approximately 25% of all cases (Finkelhor et al., 1990; Saunders, Kilpatrick, Resnick, Hanson, and Lipovsky, 1992). In clinical studies, parent figures make up a third of the offenders, and all relatives constitute half of the offenders (Elliott and Briere, 1994; Gomes-Schwartz, Horowitz, and Cardarelli, 1990).

Most often, the abuse begins at a very young age with the handling of the child's genitals, and it is kept secret through bribes, threats, or special attention. The "average" sexual abuse "incident" is not a one-time event. Rather, it is an ongoing cycle of exploitation that lasts for one or more years. Often, the abuse escalates to penetration and/or oral-genital contact (Conte and Schuerman, 1987; Elliott and Briere, 1994; Finkelhor et al., 1990; Russell, 1984; Gomes-Schwartz et al., 1990).

Why Don't Children Tell About Abuse?

Children don't tell about sexual abuse for a number of reasons. In the early stages, they may simply be unaware that the touching is inappropriate. Later, they may be bribed or coerced into keeping it secret by threats of frightening consequences to themselves or their families. Children are often made to feel responsible not only for the abuse itself, but also, if they should tell, for any consequences to their families. Finally, children may conceal the abuse because they simply do not know how or whom to tell.

What Is the Impact of Child Sexual Abuse on the Child?

Early sexual victimization can result in life-long problems. The degree of trauma depends on the age and personality of the child, the offender's relationship to the child, the nature and duration of the abuse, and the way disclosure is handled (especially the degree of support that the family offers the victim). Increased vulnerability to re-victimization, prostitution, delinquency, suicide or suicide attempts, and depression are often associated with early and long-term abuse.

Prevention Research

Can Young Children Learn Personal Safety Skills?

A wide variety of child sexual abuse prevention programs have been evaluated in the last 15 years. A meta-analysis of 27 studies indicates that children who participated in prevention programs had statistically significant improvement of their knowledge of personal safety skills over control group children (Davis and Gidycz, 2000). In studies of elementary students, researchers found that program participants exhibited more knowledge and skills, plus more ability to discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate touch, compared with controls. These results were also true for preschool programs that involved more active modes of training. Although very young children did not achieve 100% accuracy in recognizing and responding to potentially abusive situations, they did score much higher than control children in most studies (Wurtele and Saslawsky, 1986; Woods and Dean, 1986; Wurtele, Marrs, and Miller-Perrin, 1987). The meta-analysis of studies shows that children in early elementary school and preschool learned most from prevention programs (Davis and Gidycz, 2000).

Although knowledge measures show improvement in student learning (Conte, Rosen, Saperstein, and Shermack, 1985; Wurtele and Miller-Perrin, 1992), not all concepts are equally well understood

due to developmental variation in comprehension. Resistance skill scores are higher when children participate in active-learning programs that provide multiple opportunities for children to practice the skills during the program (Blumberg, Chadwick, Fogarty, Speth, and Chadwick, 1991; Wurtele, Marrs, and Miller-Perrin, 1987).

What Kinds of Prevention Programs Help Children Learn Skills Best?

Children are more likely to learn self-protection strategies if they have received comprehensive prevention instruction, including opportunities to practice the skills in class, multi-day presentations, and materials to take home and discuss with their parents (Davis and Gidycz, 2000; Finkelhor, Asdigian, and Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995). Programs incorporating more active modes of teaching (modeling, rehearsal, and reinforcement) have resulted in greater gains in knowledge and skills than those employing a didactic approach (Davis and Gidycz, 2000; Wurtele and Saslawsky, 1986; Woods and Dean, 1986; Wurtele, Marrs, and Miller-Perrin, 1987). Resistance skill scores are higher when children participate in active-learning programs that provide multiple opportunities for children to practice the skills during the program (Blumberg, Chadwick, Fogarty, Speth, and Chadwick, 1991; Wurtele, Marrs, and Miller-Perrin, 1987).

What Kinds of Prevention Programs Are Found to Be Ineffective?

In general, one-time presentations focused on personal safety, such as single puppet shows or video presentations, have been found to be ineffective in teaching children personal safety skills (Davis and Gidycz, 2000). The approach that teaches children to use their feelings as a guide to determine whether a situation is unsafe has also been found to be ineffective with young children. When children are taught to use a safety rule as the primary decision-making tool, they demonstrate a greater ability to recognize unsafe situations (Wurtele, Kast, Miller-Perrin, and Kondrick, 1989).

Do Children Use Prevention Skills?

When researchers at the University of New Hampshire asked 2,000 young people between the ages of 10 and 16 this question, they found that a surprisingly high percentage (40%) reported specific instances in which they used information or skills that they had learned in an anti-victimization program to protect themselves (Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995).

One goal of personal safety programs is to encourage children to report past or ongoing abuse. One method of assessing this skill is to ask children whether they should tell someone if they were involved in an abusive situation. Prior to participating in a personal safety program, few participants thought they should report secret touching (Wurtele and Sarno, 1996). Post-program findings indicate that both preschool- and school-aged children were more willing to tell; however, preschoolers had difficulty describing the abusive situation to a resource person (Wurtele and Sarno, 1996).

These studies suggest that well-conceived and well-implemented programs may influence children's ability to use abuse prevention skills. More research would be helpful on this subject, although there is difficulty in implementing a study that would accurately test children's use of prevention skills

without exposing them to realistic role-play of unsafe situations. This, of course, is neither ethical nor appropriate.

Are There Unintended Negative Effects of Personal Safety Instruction?

The majority of studies to date (Wurtele, 1989; Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995) do not support the contention that personal safety instruction produces fear and anxiety about safety issues in children exposed to such programs. Children's appropriate-touch recognition scores did not decrease significantly, indicating that program participants are not likely to misinterpret nurturing touches or make false accusations (Wurtele, Kast, Miller-Perrin, and Kondrick, 1989). In their nationally representative study of youth, Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman found that some respondents reported that exposure to personal safety training resulted in more worry about abuse and more fear of adults. However, the children with increased worry and fear were also the children who, along with their parents, reported having the most positive feelings about the programs and the greatest utilization of skills. This data suggest that the level of worry and fear induced by the programs was appropriate to the subject (Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995). Exploring this topic in greater depth, one initial study (Casper, 1999) looked at characteristics of children with positive or negative reactions to a prevention program. One finding of this study was that children who are generally more anxious and who feel that they have no control over what happens to them, especially girls, are more likely to become afraid of being touched inappropriately. This study recommended careful preparation and debriefing for these children to alleviate anxiety aroused by the program.

Has the *Talking About Touching* Program Been Evaluated?

The 1996 edition of *Talking About Touching: A Personal Safety Curriculum* was evaluated using pre- and post-interviews with students receiving the program. The interviews included questions regarding specific safety skills presented in the program, assessing both comprehension and skills. Scores from the interviews showed a statistically significant improvement in the knowledge and application of the safety skills taught (Sylvester, 1997).

The *What Do I Say Now?* family video was evaluated as part of a one-hour child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention workshop. Forty-five parents with children ages two to six were randomly assigned to either the CSA or a home-safety workshop (control group). A posttest survey was given to parents assessing beliefs related to CSA, and telephone interviews regarding parent-child communication about CSA were conducted two to eight weeks later. Parents attending the CSA workshop were more likely than control parents to believe child education could be effective in preventing abuse. CSA-group parents also reported significantly greater communications with their children about CSA at follow-up. Results offer early support that the *What Do I Say Now?* video can increase parent-child communication about this important topic (Burgess and Wurtele, 1998).

An evaluation of the *Talking About Touching* program was conducted in five urban elementary schools in midwestern Canada. Student knowledge gain was evaluated using knowledge pre- and posttests (n = 883 in grades two through six) and brief interviews (n = 37 in kindergarten through grade one). T-tests indicated significant gains in personal safety knowledge for grades two through six. Similar

improvements were shown for kindergarten through grade one students through descriptive analysis. Parent surveys following implementation revealed considerable support for the program with little negative feedback. Teachers reported that *Talking About Touching* training offered useful information and indicated overwhelming endorsement of the program (Madak and Berg, 1992).

Curriculum Foundation

The content and method of instruction in the *Talking About Touching* curriculum were developed using information from current research on child abuse prevention. According to this research, the most effective prevention programs are comprehensive and include multi-day presentations, active-learning strategies, and supporting materials for parents. The *Talking About Touching* program is based on this model.

Information About Offenders

Because the majority of child molesters are people known to the child, prevention efforts should not be focused on "stranger danger." The *Talking About Touching* curriculum teaches children to recognize, resist, and report specific unsafe behaviors, regardless of the person's relationship to the child. Lesson stories are based on what we know about how offenders commonly groom children to be victims; for example, by buying children gifts, telling them to keep the touching a secret, and giving them special attention.

Integration with Safety Instruction

The *Talking About Touching* curriculum teaches basic rules and skills for protective action in a variety of dangerous situations. Car, traffic, and fire safety lessons are taught first, establishing a parallel logic to the later touching safety lessons. This allows teachers and students to establish a comfort level with the instruction format before introducing touching rules. It also enables adults and children to view abuse prevention within the context of safety education rather than sex education.

Rules-Based Approach

Research indicates that young children are more successful in applying a rules-based, rather than a feelings-based, approach to safety (Wurtele, Kast, Miller-Perrin, and Kondrick, 1989). Instead of relying on feelings as a measure of safety, the *Talking About Touching* curriculum emphasizes learning and applying simple safety rules.

Social Learning Theory

Talking About Touching teaching strategies are based on Social Learning Theory, which was first outlined by Bandura (1973). According to this theory, children learn best by first observing a

skill demonstration and then practicing the skill while receiving feedback and reinforcement. In *Talking About Touching* lessons, the teacher models the skill or skills being taught, then provides an opportunity for the students to practice. The teacher gives feedback on performance and reinforces effective use of skills through "transfer of learning" suggestions.

Booster Lessons

Periodic review of safety rules and skills contributes greatly to retention. Two lessons in the *Talking About Touching* curriculum are identified as Booster Lessons: Lesson 12 and Lesson 14 in Unit II. Present them in sequence with the rest of the lessons. Then, following the completion of the program, present each Booster Lesson twice more during the year.

Family Inclusion

The most effective prevention programs are those in which parents are actively involved. While children can be taught skills that will help protect them from molesters, they cannot be expected to always protect themselves on their own. Parents and caregivers need to be actively involved in creating a safe environment for their children. The *What Do I Say Now?* video, discussion questions, and handout, were all developed to support adults in becoming active participants in prevention. The *Talking About Touching* curriculum also includes Take-Home Letters for parents, an outline for a family education night presentation, and a small book version of *Sam's Story,* which can be checked out by parents for reading to their children at home.

Private Body Parts

When teaching touching safety rules, you will have to decide what terminology to use for private body parts. It is recommended that you use anatomically correct names. For boys, the private body parts are the penis in the front and the buttocks, or bottom, in the back. For girls, the private body parts are the vulva, vagina, and breasts in the front and the buttocks, or bottom, in the back. By using these terms in a natural, matter-of-fact way, you will help children communicate accurately about any touching problems or questions they may have. The video *What Do I Say Now?* also encourages parents to use anatomically correct terms with children.

In some communities and schools, using these terms may be difficult. The *Talking About Touching* program, therefore, offers the option of simply referring to private body parts simply as "those parts of the body covered by a bathing suit." You will need to decide which approach is most appropriate for your classroom and community.

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Implementing the Program

Implementation Planning

Schoolwide Implementation

The *who, where,* and *when* of implementing the *Talking About Touching* program are critical issues for ensuring its effectiveness. Committee for Children recommends that students receive the program at each primary grade level (K–3) and that all school staff receive training. There are many advantages to instituting this approach. It takes time to change behavior and learn new skills. The program is most effective when students receive consistent instruction for several years. Not only will the safety skills be reinforced each year, but the children will also process the information differently as they mature. If schoolwide implementation is not possible, it is helpful to have at least two teachers within a school teaching the *Talking About Touching* curriculum so they can support each other and share concerns and successes. In addition, certain skill practices are best modeled with the help of another adult in the classroom.

Creating a *Talking About Touching* Support Team

If your school has decided to implement the curriculum schoolwide, Committee for Children recommends creating a support team to provide leadership and coordination in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum. When choosing support team members, look for staff and parents who are committed to the successful implementation of the *Talking About Touching* program and who have enough flexibility in their work schedules to be able to offer support. Support team members might include the following:

- Principal or vice principal
- Counselor, social worker, or school psychologist
- Nurse
- Parent representative(s)
- Classroom teacher(s) representing those who teach the curriculum

Who Should Teach the Curriculum?

Committee for Children has found that classroom teachers are usually the most effective curriculum presenters. There are several reasons for this:

- Teachers have established themselves as support people to whom the students can turn at any time.
- Teachers can ensure that all students receive the same information and can follow up when a student has missed a lesson.
- Teachers' knowledge of individual students enables them to respond to behavioral indicators of changes.

- Teachers notice when a child hasn't grasped the concepts of a lesson, and, if necessary, they can reteach or review concepts.

If a particular classroom teacher feels uncomfortable with the materials, it is better for someone else, such as the school counselor, social worker, or nurse, to teach the curriculum. Ideally, the teacher would still familiarize him- or herself with the materials and be present when lessons are taught so students know that the teacher is supportive. The teacher would also be able to identify classroom opportunities for skill practice and activities, and to facilitate the transfer of learning. School counselors, social workers, and nurses will often help facilitate implementation. They can provide assistance in planning for training, organizing discussion groups for teachers, assisting teachers in modeling skill practices, observing lesson presentations, and giving feedback. They can also inform classes about the services that school counselors, social workers, and nurses provide to the students.

Family Involvement

Research suggests that children will learn more and feel less anxious about the subject of sexual abuse if their parents talk to them and help them practice prevention skills (Casper, 1999). Therefore, parental support is crucial to the success of the *Talking About Touching* curriculum.

Involving parents in both planning and implementation will strengthen parent cooperation and support. Ways to involve parents include:

- Offering an overview of the curriculum at a Family Education Night (or during individual parent conferences).
- Presenting the video *What Do I Say Now?* at the Family Education Night (or making it available for parents to check out).
- Sending home the Take-Home Letters that accompany certain lessons.

An outline for a Family Education Night presentation and master copies of the Take-Home Letters are in the Involving Families section of this Teacher's Guide (see page 31).

Staff Training

All school staff should understand their role in identifying and reporting child abuse. A written reporting procedure should be distributed to all staff. Each year, the school's reporting procedures should be reviewed, and a complete training on issues of abuse should be offered to new staff. Committee for Children offers training for teaching the *Talking About Touching* curriculum more effectively. This should be offered to teachers and other staff who will teach the curriculum. Committee for Children also offers training for trainers.

All staff should learn to recognize the signs of child abuse and be trained in how to respond to disclosure. Students are more likely to use self-protection strategies if they are supported by the entire school staff through teaching, monitoring, and reinforcement of the skills presented in the curriculum.

Many states have produced their own training videotapes that outline individual state guidelines for reporting. Contact your state or local office of the Department of Health and Human Services, the appropriate Child Protective Services agency, or your state Attorney General's office for more information. Other resources are listed in Appendix D (see page 54).

Following are elements to consider when planning staff training.

Include the Following People:

Teachers	Bus drivers
Parents	Food service personnel
Volunteers	Special education assistants
Teaching assistants	Substitute teachers
Custodians	Specialists
Secretaries	Other

Be Sure to Cover the Following Topics:

- Basic knowledge of child abuse and neglect
- Physical and behavioral indicators of child abuse and neglect
- Local and state laws regarding reporting
- Child abuse and neglect reporting policies
- Overview of the concepts and skills taught in *Talking About Touching* lessons
- Modeling and practice of key teaching strategies, such as facilitating student skill practice

Additional Topics You May Wish to Cover:

- Overview of age-appropriate touching of students by staff
- Childhood growth and development, including what constitutes normal sexuality in children
- Positive discipline techniques
- Setting limits
- Presentation by local Child Protective Services representative to familiarize staff with CPS procedures and personnel

How to Teach the Curriculum

The Lesson Cards

The lessons are designed to provide ease of presentation and to ensure that the concepts and strategies are presented in a straightforward and consistent manner. The lessons should be taught in sequence, as each builds upon skills presented in previous lessons. The preparation section (in the left column of each card) contains the following:

- Concepts
- Objectives
- Materials
- Notes to the Teacher

The body of each lesson (in the center and right columns) contains the following:
- Warm-Up/Review
- Story and Discussion
- Skill Practice
- Activities
- Summary

The final section of each card (at the end of the right column) guides the teacher in providing follow-up and reinforcement of the concepts and skills presented in the lesson. This section includes the following:
- Transfer of Learning
- Additional Activity Ideas
- Take-Home Reminder

Preparation

Prepare for each lesson by first reading the preparation section (in the left column of each card), which includes the following:

Concepts. The concepts identify the main ideas and skills taught in the lesson.

Objectives. The objectives are framed in terms of skills that the students should be able to perform after learning the lesson. Teachers should keep these objectives clearly in mind when teaching each lesson.

Materials. Here you'll find a list of all the materials you will need to teach the lesson and do the activities.

Notes to the Teacher. This section provides background information related to the safety skills taught in each lesson. After you have reviewed these topics, consider the Story and Discussion questions, noting especially how they present and reinforce each of the safety skills. Prepare for the Skill Practice, being sure that you have all necessary materials. Familiarize yourself with the Activity. And prepare for the Transfer of Learning by choosing which classroom activities you could target for practicing the new skills. You may also wish to try one of the Additional Activity Ideas. These usually include reading selected books to the class or having students read them on their own (see Appendix C, page 51) as a means of reinforcing key concepts presented in the lesson.

Using Puppets

Educators have long observed young children's captivated response to puppets. When it comes to children's engagement in a topic, puppets can have a compelling effect. Preliminary research indicates that use of puppets can increase the effectiveness of programs (Davis and Gidycz, 2000).

The Warm-Up/Review and Skill Practice sections of the *Talking About Touching* curriculum are designed so that a puppet can be used to speak the words the teacher normally would. A puppet can also

be a character in the role-plays. Keep in mind that the children do not need a perfectly polished performance. The mere presence of a puppet, accompanied by the use of simple movements and a normal voice, will delight them.

A puppet icon appears on the lesson cards wherever a puppet might be used. A hand puppet with a kindly demeanor, arms, and recognizable face is recommended. The arms are necessary so that the children can identify different kinds of safe touch (for example, holding or shaking hands, patting on the back).

Teaching a Lesson

Following are some tips for handling the various lesson sections in the classroom.

Warm-Up/Review. This section provides a brief review of the previous lesson or a warm-up activity to help set the tone for the current lesson. By observing the children, you will be able to determine whether you need to reteach the previous lesson or provide additional time for skill practice.

Story and Discussion. When presenting a lesson, direct the students to look at the photograph on the front of the lesson card while you read the text of the story and discussion questions on the back. Make sure that each student can see the photograph clearly. On the text side of the card, all the lines that you will say to the students during the lesson appear in **bold type.**

The success of the program hinges on your ability to successfully facilitate classroom discussion. The format of the suggested discussion questions discourages simple yes/no responses—they begin with phrases like "What might happen if . . . ?" or "How do you think . . . ?" or "How can you tell . . . ?" Do not to become sidetracked in discussions that are not directly related to the lesson objectives.

When responding to students, refrain from placing value judgments on their answers. Saying, for example, "That's one idea. What is another?" encourages more participation than "That's a good idea. Does anyone have another one?" The latter response may inhibit students who fear that their own suggestions may not be as "good."

Possible responses appear in parentheses after each question. These are meant as suggestions, not absolutes—the children will naturally generate additional ideas.

Skill Practice (Teacher Modeling). After presenting the story and discussing the targeted skill, you will often need to first demonstrate, or model, the skill to be practiced. Research has shown that modeling is an effective means of promoting the learning of prosocial skills (Bandura, 1986; Gresham and Elliot, 1993). Modeling is also valuable because it allows teachers to share their human side, and it shows that modeling can be fun and that mistakes are okay.

You and a student can model most skills, although you may want to enlist another adult to help with some of the skill practices. Ideally, you'll want to rehearse the skill with the student or adult assistant. If this isn't possible, at least spend some time before each lesson thinking about how you

plan to model the particular skill. Whenever you (or the other adult) play the role of someone who is trying to get the child to do something unsafe, you may want to have that person wear a hat or scarf to clarify that this is just a role-play. Another option is to use a puppet to play the role.

When modeling a particular skill, keep in mind the following guidelines (some will not apply to every situation):

- Model the skill by playing the role of the child in the story.
- As you model the skill, use language a child would use. You can also adapt the situation to allow for regional or cultural differences.
- Model the behavioral steps. You may want to replay the scene, pointing to the steps on the poster as you do them.
- Keep the skill demonstration simple by performing the steps without a lot of extraneous dialogue or action.

After modeling the skill, doing the following can be beneficial:

- Have the class identify the steps you followed.
- Discuss the outcome of using the skill.
- Invite a critique by asking what you did well and how you might improve.
- Model self-reinforcement. Say, for example, "I think I did a good job."

At first, you may feel uncomfortable modeling skills. With practice, however, modeling can quickly become an enjoyable activity.

Skill Practice (Student Practice). Without student practice of a skill, the positive effects of modeling are usually short-lived. Student skill practices provide an effective means for practicing behavioral skills (Gresham and Elliott, 1993). Suggested skill practice scenarios are listed on the lesson card.

Students who perform with you or another student in front of the class should receive immediate feedback from you and the rest of the class. Phrase your questions to elicit constructive comments. For example: "Did Diane follow the safety rules?" "What did Diane do well?" "What could she do differently?"

Provide reinforcement in the form of encouragement when skill practices are done well. Make comments specific, such as, "You did a good job of looking right at me when you said that."

Be prepared—many students may want to be on stage. If your class size is greater than ten, some children may not be able to sit still through all the student skill practices. Additional skill practices can be performed during the week, and thus serve as reinforcements of the lessons.

Be sure that every student has a chance to participate in a skill practice with you or another child to ensure that they all learn the targeted skill. It is not necessary to force every student to perform in front of the class. Instead, the emphasis should be on providing an opportunity for each student to participate in practicing the new skill, either individually or in groups.

Activities. Activities appear on the lesson cards after the Skill Practice section. They include physical exercises, games, project suggestions, and other ideas for providing closure to the lesson. Items needed for activities are noted in the Materials list.

Summary. To provide a review and closure, a summary script is included in each lesson.

Transfer of Learning. The long-term effectiveness of the skills presented in this curriculum requires applying the skills to real-life situations. While this section is short and appears at the end of the lesson, it is nonetheless one of the most critical. It offers the teacher ideas for how to facilitate the students' use of the newly taught skill in the classroom, on the playground, and at home.

Additional Activity Ideas. For some lessons, additional activities are suggested. Ideas often include the option of sharing recommended books with the class. An annotated list of children's books that reinforce lesson themes and concepts is located in Appendix C (see page 51). You may choose to read any of the books aloud in class and/or to send books home with children for independent reading or as read-alouds with parents. If you decide to incorporate classroom read-alouds, it's best not to do so immediately following a lesson so children aren't sitting too long at one time.

Take-Home Reminder. Parents and caregivers must be informed about the *Talking About Touching* program so they can support their children's learning and use of safety and touching rules. The Take-Home icon appears at the end of those lessons that include Take-Home Letters. Master copies of the letters are located in the Involving Families section (see page 31).

Classroom Guidelines

Below are suggestions to help maximize your efforts at making the *Talking About Touching* program an integral—and meaningful—part of your curriculum.

Setting up the classroom. The physical setup of the classroom can affect students' involvement and interaction during the lesson and have a direct bearing on the quality of their learning experience. If possible, arrange the classroom so that the lessons can be presented in a circle or horseshoe arrangement. This allows students to see each other and the teacher clearly, encouraging involvement and inviting discussion. This arrangement also provides a stage for the skill practice in the center of the circle or at the open end of the horseshoe.

Some teachers have found it helpful to teach *Talking About Touching* lessons at a "station" with a small group of students, while a teaching assistant or parent monitors the rest of the class in other activities. This provides the opportunity for more students to be actively involved in the lessons, and it can help keep behavior-management problems in check.

Establishing ground rules. Establish clear behavioral guidelines for conduct at the beginning of the program. Encourage students to participate in making the rules. Practice phrasing each rule in a

positive way that clearly defines the expected behaviors. For example, instead of saying, "Don't talk out of turn," say, "Raise your hand and wait until you're called on." Setting a positive tone from the start will be a great aid in the effective implementation of the *Talking About Touching* program.

Setting the pace. The *Talking About Touching* program is designed to appeal to children's physical and intellectual pacing needs. It's up to you to establish a smooth pace while getting the concepts and skills across. Teachers with large classes will find this especially challenging. Sometimes certain students will be so interested in a given lesson that your challenge will become allowing those interested students to be heard while keeping everyone interested and involved.

Encouraging participation. You may have children in your classroom who are generally more anxious than the others or who feel overwhelmed by aspects of their lives that are beyond their control. These children may feel heightened anxiety following *Talking About Touching* lessons. If possible, spend extra time with these children, preparing them beforehand and talking with them afterward. Involving their parents will also help lessen these children's anxiety.

With most lessons, some students will eagerly participate in group discussions and activities; others will hang back and participate very little. As a result, you will want to develop facilitation techniques that encourage all students' participation. When asking questions, for example, pay attention to the wait time. By waiting 5–10 seconds, you can usually double participation—by then, most of the students will have had adequate time to think about their answers.

You may notice that some children thrive on the physical activities and skill practices but "drop out" during discussions. You can encourage their participation by having them physically point to the photograph for certain answers—after you've asked, for example, "How can you tell that Maria is thinking about what to do?" Another method is to include short role-plays in the story section, such as "Can you show me what a sad face looks like?"

To ensure that all students have an opportunity to be heard, you can first have everyone share their answers with the child sitting next to them. Follow this up with an invitation to everyone to share their ideas with the entire group. This is especially helpful when working with large groups. You may also ask a question and, once students' hands are up, say, "I will call on Enrique, Joan, and Samuel this time." If you use this method, assure the students that you will call on everyone at some point during the lesson.

Sometimes students will stay focused on answering a particular question even after you've moved on to another. One way to deal with this is to simply say, "Now I have another question" and proceed to the next one. This will help the students stay with you.

Rephrasing a question is another way to encourage involvement. This can be accomplished by saying, "Think of one thing Jamie can do about his problem and then raise your hand." Wait until all hands are raised before calling on any one student. When you practice these and similar techniques, classroom discussions can be kept lively and flowing, and participation can become the norm.

Handling disruptive behavior. If students give silly answers, redirect them to the task at hand by referring to the question being discussed. You can say, for example, "That's one way of looking at it" or "That's one idea. What is another?" Then quickly move on to another student's suggestion.

When one student's behavior threatens to disrupt a lesson, gently remind him or her of classroom ground rules. Restless fidgeting can sometimes be curbed by letting the child hold a stuffed animal or squeeze a soft ball. An extremely disruptive student can be directed to sit nearby but slightly apart from the group. She or he can still benefit from the lesson but be less of a distraction to the other students. If the disruptive behavior seems to be directly related to lesson content, this may be an indicator that the child has been abused. Follow up later by talking with that child one-on-one.

If a child discloses during a lesson, explain that you will talk to him or her privately after the lesson.

If the group as a whole becomes restless, set the lesson aside. You can always come back to it later. Most lessons can be divided into sections if necessary. If restlessness is a recurring problem, however, you may want to schedule the lessons at a different time of day.

Finding the time to teach the program. The *Talking About Touching* program fits well into kindergarten curriculum guidelines. It not only teaches safety skills, but also academic readiness skills and concepts common to health education curricula. The curriculum should not be viewed as an add-on, but as a tool for meeting key grade-level objectives.

Individual lessons provide an appropriate focus for circle time. You may want to schedule lessons for specific days and times. In order to help every child in your class be safe, be sure to provide reviews for any students who miss lessons.

Depending on the class size, each lesson will take approximately 20–35 minutes. The Warm-Up/Review takes 5 minutes. The Story and Discussion section takes 5–10 minutes, depending on the lesson. The Skill Practice, including teacher modeling of the skill and student practice, takes 5–10 minutes. Activities take an additional 5–10 minutes.

Child Abuse Disclosure

Recognizing and Responding to Disclosure

Teachers are in a unique position to recognize and help abused children. A teacher's daily contact with students affords opportunities to observe changes in behavior and to be a resource for students if they need to talk with someone they can trust. Children disclose abuse in a variety of ways. They may come in to talk privately about what is going on, but this is one of the less common ways for children to disclose. More common ways include those outlined below.

Indirect hints: "My brother wouldn't let me sleep last night." "Mr. Jones wears funny underwear." "My babysitter keeps bothering me."

In the case of physical abuse or neglect, a child may say: "I don't see my mom much anymore." "I was alone all weekend." "I don't like my new daddy." "My mom gets mean when she drinks."

A child may talk in these terms because she or he hasn't yet learned more specific vocabulary, feels too ashamed or embarrassed to talk more directly, or has promised not to tell. Gently encourage the child to be more specific, within the limits of his or her vocabulary, but bear in mind that in order to make a report you do not need to know exactly what form the abuse has taken.

Disguised disclosure: "I know someone with a touching problem." "What would happen if a girl told her mother she was being molested, but her mother didn't believe her?"

In the case of physical abuse or neglect, a child may say: "I know someone who gets beaten up by his dad." "What would happen if a girl told you her parents never take care of her?" Here the child might be talking about a friend or sibling, but is just as likely to be talking about her- or himself. Encourage the child to tell you what he or she knows about the "other child." In many cases, the child will eventually tell you whom she or he is talking about.

Disclosure with strings attached: "I have a problem but if I tell you about it, you have to promise not to tell anyone else."

Most children are all too aware that negative consequences will result if they break the secret of abuse. Often the offender uses the threat of these consequences to force the child to remain silent. Let the child know that you want to help and that the law requires you to make a report if any child discloses abuse. Just as the abuse itself is against the law, it is also against the law for you not to report. Respect confidentiality by discussing the abuse only with those directly involved in the legal and support processes. These people might include the school nurse or counselor, school principal, and/or the CPS investigator.

Suggestions for responding to disclosure include:
- Find a private place to talk with the child.
- Do not panic or express shock.
- Express your belief that the child is telling the truth.
- Use the child's vocabulary.
- Reassure the child that it is good to tell.
- Reassure the child that it is not his or her fault, that he or she is not bad.
- Determine the child's immediate need for safety.
- Let the child know that you will do your best to protect and support her or him.
- Tell the child what you will do.
- Report to the proper authorities.

If a child discloses during a lesson, acknowledge the child's disclosure and continue the lesson. Later, find a place where you can talk with the child alone. You may want to schedule the lessons before a playtime or recess so that, if need be, you have a natural opportunity to talk with a child privately.

Remember, your role is not to investigate the situation. It is your responsibility to report the abuse, set in motion the process of getting help for the child, and be supportive of the child.

Reporting Child Abuse

The Law

Child abuse laws vary depending on the state or province, as do those persons or agencies responsible for reporting and/or investigating suspected cases of abuse. For your state or province's reporting laws, contact your local Child Protective Services office or law enforcement agency. Educators who suspect child abuse are ethically and legally obligated to report it. Those who are mandated to report usually include teachers, school administrators, physicians, nurses, medical examiners, mental health professionals, social workers, day care providers, foster care workers, residential or institutional workers, and law enforcement officers.

Reporting laws specify that mandated reporters who "have reasonable cause to believe" that a child is being neglected or abused must report that suspicion to the state protective service or the police. Because each state has its own legal requirements and timelines for reporting, be sure to find out exactly what your state requires. Failure to report can result in a jail sentence and/or a significant fine.

School Policy

Individual schools often have their own reporting procedures. Some schools require that the head teacher or principal be informed so he or she can then make the official report. Other policies require that the principal be informed before the teacher makes the report. Failure by administrators to report does not release teachers who suspect abuse from their legal obligations. By fully understanding your school's policy and local laws about reporting child abuse, you will be able to act appropriately in any given situation.

Reporting Specifics

Reporting is a request for an investigation. Mandated reporters do not need to prove the abuse. It is the role of the state protective services or the police to investigate the report. They will determine the nature and extent of the problem, evaluate the child's condition and safety, and take appropriate action to protect the child. If additional incidents occur after the initial report has been made, make another report. Thorough documentation of injuries or disclosures will help ensure a successful investigation.

Mandated reporters are protected in most states and provinces in terms of liability and confidentiality. Reporters who have acted "in good faith" are immune from any civil or criminal charges that might result. A reporter can ask for confidentiality, in which case the reporter's name will not be released without written consent (except to those directly involved in the investigation) or unless the reporter is called upon to testify in court. Anonymous reports are accepted, but they are discouraged.

If a mandated professional is unsure whether she or he has reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused, she or he should call the state protective services for advice. Recognizing an abused child is often difficult and laden with uncertainty. Some guidelines suggested by many teachers include:

- Resolve doubt in favor of the child.
- Ask other staff who know the child whether they have concerns.
- Let the children in your care know they can talk to you.
- If you sense that a child is trying to tell you something, let the child know that you will believe him or her and help with any problem.
- Be direct. Go to a private place and ask gently whether the child is having a problem and needs help.
- Respect the child's privacy by not discussing the situation with others unnecessarily.
- Call a Child Protective Services worker and describe the situation to get clarification on whether to report.

Ongoing Response to the Sexually Abused Child

Many school personnel are uncertain about how to respond in an ongoing way to the child who has disclosed sexual abuse. The best approach is to acknowledge and try to normalize the situation as you would with a divorce, death, or other traumatic occurrence. It is not helpful to dwell on the abuse incident, thereby increasing the child's self-consciousness or shame. Neither is it helpful to tolerate inappropriate behavior out of fear of harming the child.

Possible responses that can help restore the child's self-esteem and sense of safety include the following:

- If school policy allows, maintain contact with the caseworker or therapist and the (non-offending) parent(s). You can be helpful in the treatment process, and they can be helpful to you in dealing with the child in the period following disclosure.
- Be cautious about touching a child who has been sexually abused. For these children, all touch may mean sexual touch. Even a nonintrusive touch, such as an arm around the shoulder, should be given only with the child's permission.
- Intervene immediately if a child acts out sexually with other children. Respond to the behavior as you would to any inappropriate behavior. Assure the child that you like him or her, but that what he or she is doing is not okay.
- Teach and model appropriate behavior. Do not allow the child to climb all over you. If necessary, you can sit the child on a chair next to yours (or near you on the floor). Sometimes you may need to refuse touches in a gentle, assertive way.
- If the child brings up the abuse, find a time and place to talk about it privately. Offer reassurance that you're sorry it happened, you know the situation is difficult, you're glad she or he told, and you promise to continue to support and care for her or him.
- Be respectful of the family. The family may feel shame, fear, and isolation. Respect their feelings and privacy. Do not discuss the abuse with anyone who's not involved.
- Be prepared for depression or letdown weeks or months after the disclosure. Withdrawal or acting out may recur.
- If the abuse is brought up in a group, deal with it then, matter-of-factly and briefly. Talk to the child later in private.

- All children need to know that they are likable. Abused children are particularly susceptible to feelings of low self-esteem. Positive messages about just "being" will help them build a sense of identity. The following messages have been helpful for many children: "I'm glad you're here." "It's good that you told. I can help you."
- Be aware of your own reactions and get support for any feelings of powerlessness, pain, fear, or anger. If you made the original report, tell yourself—and get someone else you trust to remind you—that it is good that you reported. Whatever pain exists now would be greater if you had not reported.

Clarifying Boundaries

Guidelines for Appropriate Touching of Students

Because there are some educators who have sexually exploited their students, we have all become more sensitive about how we touch students. Below are guidelines for assessing your interactions with students.

Evaluate. Think about how you touch students. Use common sense in deciding which practices you want to continue and those you may want to change. Talk with your colleagues to help clarify your comfort level with boundary issues. Consider how your behavior appears to others. Remember, everyone may not realize your good intentions.

Appropriate touch. Problems develop because of inappropriate touching. This does not mean we should not touch children. Children who do not receive appropriate touches are even more vulnerable to exploitation. Children need hugs, but hugs should come from their needs—not yours. Model appropriate touch with colleagues and students. Be more conscious of how and why you touch students. Give options. ("Would you like a handshake or a hug?") Some children may not want to be touched at all. Respect that. All touching of students should be respectful and consistent.

Talk. Establishing appropriate boundaries is the key to prevention. Talk to your students about touch. Have clear ground rules for touching. Cultural influences, beliefs, and personal history all affect a student's comfort level. Encourage students to let you know if they are concerned about the way you or someone else touches them. Listen carefully and take any needed action immediately.

Extracurricular Activities

When you are planning to take students on a field trip or other activity outside the school, keep the following guidelines in mind.

- Let your administrator know where you're going.
- Get parent permission.
- Take more than one student.
- Take more than one adult.

Student Interactions

- When alone with a student, leave the door open.
- Let another adult know when you will be meeting alone with a student.
- Do not spend the majority of your time with one student or a single group of students.
- Keep your personal life separate from your interactions with students.

Unique circumstances may arise when more intrusive touch is necessary. Special education, nursing, and coaching may require additional physical contact to maintain the health and safety of students. Always be clear (to yourself, students, and parents) about when, where, why, and how you are touching students.

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Involving Families

Take-Home Letters

Involving families is critical to the effectiveness of the *Talking About Touching* program. Children are much more likely to retain and use personal safety skills if they have multiple opportunities to discuss and practice them. The Take-Home Letters are tools to support this outcome. They detail the concepts that the children are learning in the lessons and provide ways for families to support and encourage this learning. Listed below are suggestions for using the letters.

- Send home Take-Home Letter 1: The *Talking About Touching* Program before starting the curriculum. You will need to retype it to reflect your decision about holding a Family Education Night. All other letters are designed to be photocopied onto school letterhead and sent "as is." (Note: Be sure to include all necessary contact information.)
- Consider personalizing the letters. For example, you could assign an "illustrator" to each letter and, for each one, have the designated student decorate his or her copy before you photocopy it for the class to take home. Or you could make copies first and then let each student illustrate the one he or she will take home.
- Attach the letters to your weekly newsletter.
- If you teach children whose families do not speak English, find someone to translate the letters before you send them home. Many school districts have translation services available.
- There are two versions of Take-Home Letter 5: Touching Safety. Take-Home Letter 5 is for those teachers who follow the recommended practice of teaching the anatomically correct names for private body parts in the classroom lesson (see page 14 for more information). Take-Home Letter 5A is for those teachers who prefer to use only the nonspecific "those parts covered by a swimsuit" terminology.
- Many teachers have found it helpful to photocopy all the letters at the beginning of the curriculum so the letters are ready to go.
- The Scope and Sequence (see page 6) is an optional parent handout. It can be photocopied and distributed at the Family Education Night or sent out with Take-Home Letter 1 as a means of giving parents a complete outline of lesson concepts.

SAMPLE Take-Home Letter 1: The *Talking About Touching* Program

Dear Family,

Our class will soon begin using *Talking About Touching: A Personal Safety Curriculum*. This program teaches children skills that will help them keep safe from dangerous or abusive situations. Children will also learn how to ask for help when they need it.

Over the next few weeks, you will receive a series of letters that provide information about how you can help your child learn and practice safety rules taught in the classroom lessons. Children learn more about safety and are more likely to follow safety rules when they have multiple opportunities to practice and talk about safety with their family. I'd like to encourage you to help your child learn and practice safety rules.

Optional sentences:

1. We will have a Family Education Night on _____ (day, date, and time). At that time, you can learn more about the program and how you can help teach your child about safety rules.
2. The video *What Do I Say Now? How to Help Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse* was produced for parents and caregivers of young children. If you are unable to attend the Family Education Night, you can check out the video from school to watch at home. It will show you how to teach and reinforce safety skills taught in the lessons.
3. If you ***do not*** wish your child to participate in this program, please complete, sign, and return this letter by _____ (date).

If you have any questions, please give me a call.

Sincerely,

I ***do not*** wish for my child, _____ , to participate in the *Talking About Touching* program.

Parent/Caregiver signature _____

Dear Family,

The first lessons in the *Talking About Touching* curriculum emphasize the importance of following safety rules. You can help your child learn to be safe by talking about and practicing safety rules at home. I hope these suggestions will be useful to you.

Car safety. Our first lesson focuses on car safety. Children learn about sitting in a booster seat and wearing a seatbelt. Ask your child to sing or teach you the "Booster Seat" song. Booster seats are essential to your child's safety. Children outgrow forward-facing child safety seats when they reach approximately 40 lbs. From this point until children weigh 80 lbs and are about 4'9" tall, they must be properly buckled in booster seats, which lift them so that adult seatbelts fit them securely and safely. Without booster seats, an adult lap belt rides up over a small child's stomach, and the shoulder belt cuts across a child's neck. In a crash, this can cause serious or fatal injuries. Child safety seats with boosters are effective in protecting children in crashes. All children under age 12 should sit properly restrained in the back seat.

Traffic safety. In our traffic safety lesson, children learn to look in *all* directions before crossing the street. Whenever you go for a walk with your child, you can talk about and practice walking safely in your neighborhood.

Fire safety. Ask your child what she or he learned about fire safety. Ask what she or he would do if another child wanted to play with matches. The response children learn in class is to say "No" and then tell you about it.

Gun safety. Ask your child what he or she learned about gun safety. If you own guns, please remember to always keep them locked up.

Be sure to congratulate your child on learning and following these safety rules. Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dear Family,

In this week's *Talking About Touching* lesson, the children will learn what to do when they are lost. Each child will practice telling someone his or her first and last name and telephone number.

You can help your child know what to do if she or he gets lost by making a plan. Help your child come up with ideas for how to handle different situations. Then go over your plan right before you go out with your child. For example, whenever you go to such places as a fair, amusement park, or shopping mall, talk to your child before you get there about what to do if you are separated.

Here are some sample situations you can go over with your child. Have your child generate some ideas, then select the idea(s) that best work for you.

- Pretend that we're in a store. You get separated from me and can't find me. What would you do? (For example, your child could find a salesperson and ask for help.)
- Pretend that we're at the park. You're playing hide-and-seek and realize you don't know where you are or where I am. What would you do? (For example, your child could stand by the swings until you get there.)
- Pretend that we're in a crowded store and you lose sight of me. What would you do? (For example, your child could find the person in charge and ask for help.)

Remember: Before you go out, make sure that your child knows his or her first and last name and telephone number. And be sure that your child knows what to do if he or she gets lost.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dear Family,

In our next two *Talking About Touching* lessons, the children will learn what to do if someone wants them to go somewhere or someone wants to give them something. It will be helpful if you review the Always Ask First Rule with your child: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants you to go somewhere or someone wants to give you something. Ask your child to demonstrate what he or she would do in the following situations:

- What would you do if a neighbor offered you a ride home?
- What would you do if you were in the park and someone you don't know asked you to help look for a lost ball?
- What would you do if someone who lives down the block wanted to give you a present?

If your child follows the Always Ask First Rule, you will always know where your child is and with whom. You will also know who is trying to make friends with your child by offering gifts. Unfortunately, most children are abused by people they already know—friends, family, or acquaintances. If your child understands to always ask first, you will be able to better monitor his or her safety.

Thank you for helping teach this safety rule. Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dear Family,

In the next few *Talking About Touching* lessons, we will talk about touching safety. The children will learn that safety rules include rules about touching. The *Talking About Touching* curriculum teaches children that there are three kinds of touches:

- **Safe touches.** These are touches that keep you safe and are good for your body. They make you feel cared for, loved, and important. Safe touches include hugging, holding hands, pats on the back, an arm around the shoulder, and a shot from the doctor.
- **Unsafe touches.** These are touches that are not good for your body and either hurt your body or your feelings (for example, hitting, pushing, pinching, kicking, and touching the private parts of your body).
- **Unwanted touches.** These may be safe touches, yet the child doesn't want to be touched in that way, by that person, or at that moment in time. It is okay for a child to say "No" to unwanted touches. Children can say "No" to any unwanted touch, even if the person touching them is someone they know. Help your child practice saying "No" in an assertive yet polite voice. This will help children learn how to set personal boundaries for keeping themselves safe.

During classroom lessons, the children will learn the Touching Rule: A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy. They will learn that *private body parts* are "those parts covered by a swimsuit." They will also learn the anatomically correct names for private body parts so that, if necessary, they are able to communicate accurately about any touching questions or problems they may have. It is recommended that you also use anatomically correct terms when communicating with your child about this subject.

Thank you for being a partner in teaching safety to your child. I realize that touching safety is a sensitive topic, so please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dear Family,

In the next few *Talking About Touching* lessons, we will talk about touching safety. The children will learn that safety rules include rules about touching. The *Talking About Touching* curriculum teaches children that there are three kinds of touches:

- **Safe touches.** These are touches that keep you safe and are good for your body. They make you feel cared for, loved, and important. Safe touches include hugging, holding hands, pats on the back, an arm around the shoulder, and a shot from the doctor.
- **Unsafe touches.** These are touches that are not good for your body and either hurt your body or your feelings (for example, hitting, pushing, pinching, kicking, and touching the private parts of your body).
- **Unwanted touches.** These may be safe touches, yet the child doesn't want to be touched in that way, by that person, or at that moment in time. It is okay for a child to say "No" to unwanted touches. Children can say "No" to any unwanted touch, even if the person touching them is someone they know. Help your child practice saying "No" in an assertive yet polite voice. This practice helps children learn to how to set personal boundaries for keeping themselves safe.

During classroom lessons, the children will learn the Touching Rule: A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy. They will learn that *private body parts* are "those parts covered by a swimsuit." It is recommended that you teach your child at home the correct anatomical names for private body parts so that, if necessary, he or she is able to communicate accurately about any touching questions or problems that arise.

Thank you for being a partner in teaching safety to your child. I realize that touching safety is a sensitive topic, so please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dear Family,

In this week's *Talking About Touching* lesson, the children are learning Safety Steps that will guide them to know what to do if someone breaks the Touching Rule.

Safety Steps

1. Say words that mean "No."
2. Get away.
3. Tell a grown-up.

We encourage you to help your child think of different ways of saying "No." (For example: "No, thank you." "Leave me alone." "Stop that." "I'm not allowed to play touching games." "I don't like that.") Help your child understand that getting away can be as simple as moving away from someone or going to another room. Or it might mean running home immediately. Help your child identify whom to tell and have him or her practice telling. Sometimes a child may not be able to get away; then the telling becomes even more important.

Help your child practice responding to the following:

- What would you do if a grown-up you know wants to touch your private body parts—and it's not to keep you clean and healthy?
- What words would you say that mean "No"?
- How would you get away?
- Name a grown-up you could tell.
- Whom else could you tell?

Children need to be able to identify adults to talk to, both inside and outside the family, since you may not always be available. Children also learn in this lesson that it is never a child's fault if someone breaks the Touching Rule.

Encourage your child to come to you if she or he has any questions about using the Touching Rule or the Safety Steps.

Sincerely,

Dear Family,

During the next two weeks, we will review all the safety rules that the children have learned in the *Talking About Touching* program. Now would be a good time for you to review with your child the following rules:

- The Always Ask First Rule: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants you to go somewhere or someone wants to give you something.
- The Touching Rule: A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.
- The Safety Steps: (1) Say words that mean "No"; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up.
- It is never a child's fault if someone breaks the Touching Rule.
- Never keep secrets about touching.
- It is never too late to tell about a touching problem.

Young children are able to use the skills and knowledge they have gained only if they keep practicing what they have learned. As we near the completion of the lessons, please take the time to talk to your child about all these rules and to make sure they understand them. You can help your child practice at home by asking:

- What would you do if a babysitter wanted to play a touching game with you?
- What would you do if a bigger child who lives in our neighborhood grabbed your private parts while playing a game with you?
- What would you do if someone you don't know wanted you to get into his or her car?

If you have any questions, be sure to let me know.

Sincerely,

Dear Family,

We have reached the end of our personal safety curriculum, *Talking About Touching*. But the effort has just begun as far as what we can all do to help keep children safe.

Research shows that young children retain the knowledge and skills they have learned only if they keep practicing them. For this reason, it is recommended that you review all the safety rules with your child on a regular basis, especially these:

- The Always Ask First Rule: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants you to go somewhere or someone wants to give you something.
- The Touching Rule: A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.
- The Safety Steps: (1) Say words that mean "No"; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up.

You can help your child practice the Safety Steps using pretend situations. Make sure that the situations include people they know (babysitter, relative, neighbor), as well as people they don't know.

In addition, remind your child that:

- It is never a child's fault if someone breaks the Touching Rule.
- He or she should never keep secrets about touching.
- It is never too late to tell about a touching problem.

If you would like to check out the video *What Do I Say Now? How to Help Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse,* please let me know.

We will review the safety rules in class later in the year. I will let you know when this is happening.

Sincerely,

Dear Family,

During the next two weeks, we will conduct a final review of the safety rules that the children learned in the *Talking about Touching* program. Now would be a good time to review the following with your child at home:

- The Always Ask First Rule: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants you to go somewhere or someone wants to give you something.
- The Touching Rule: A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.
- The Safety Steps: (1) Say words that mean "No"; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up.
- It is never a child's fault if someone breaks the Touching Rule.
- Never keep secrets about touching.
- It is never too late to tell about a touching problem.

By making sure that your child fully understands these rules, you will be helping him or her keep safe. You might ask your child some of the following questions so he or she can practice answering them:

- What would you do if a neighbor wanted you to go to her house and have a snack?
- What would you do if a bigger boy you know hugged you and started touching your bottom?
- What would you do if someone you don't know tried to help you zip up your pants when you were in a public bathroom?

If you have any questions, be sure to let me know.

Thank you for your partnership this year in helping your child learn about personal safety.

Sincerely,

Family Education Night

Preparation Tips

1. Read through the *What Do I Say Now?* Guidelines for Use (see page 44).
2. Preview the *What Do I Say Now?* video.
3. Read the discussion questions inside the video jacket and select five or six that you might use to spark discussion. If you expect a large group, you could write selected questions on a flip chart or on handouts to be distributed to smaller groups for discussion.
4. Fill in the phone numbers for your local Child Protective Services agency, police department, and crisis hotline to the parent handout outlining the material presented on the video (see page 45). Photocopy this handout for each participant.
5. Photocopy the Scope and Sequence (see page 6) to hand out.
6. Photocopy the Guidelines for Choosing Babysitters to hand out (see page 46).
7. Select sample lessons from the curriculum to "teach" to the adults. Be sure to include at least one on touching safety.

Presentation Outline

Time: 2 hours

A. Introductions

B. Objectives

- To learn about the *Talking About Touching* program in the classroom
- To learn new ways to help protect children from unsafe situations
- To introduce and practice ways for families to reinforce safety skills at home
- To create a partnership between home and school

C. Video and Discussion

Introduce the video and distribute copies of the parent handout. Show the video to the group. Then ask selected discussion questions. If you have a large group, assign everyone to smaller discussion groups.

Be sure to emphasize that most families have their own safety rules. The *Talking About Touching* program encourages children to learn and apply these family rules together with what they learn in class.

D. Curriculum Concepts

Distribute and discuss the Scope and Sequence handout.

E. Demonstration Lessons

Teach sample lessons as you would to the children. You may want to spend extra time on the skill practices, explaining both why they are included (children learn best when they practice what they

have just learned) and how they are done in the classroom (children role-play them). You might even invite parents to try one of the skill practices themselves. Or you could have them think of "what if" situations to use when reinforcing the lessons with their children at home.

F. Supporting Materials

Show and describe the various materials used in the classroom:

- Safety Steps poster
- *Sam's Story* Big Book, small book, and CD
- *Joey Learns the Touching Rule* video (screen if time allows)
- Other books on safety available through the school

G. Guidelines for Choosing Babysitters

Distribute the Guidelines for Choosing Babysitters handout.

H. Conclusion

Thank everyone for coming. Tell them that the videos and the small book version of *Sam's Story* can be checked out for home use.

What Do I Say Now? Guidelines for Use

Video Overview

Committee for Children recognizes the critical role of family involvement in teaching children personal safety skills, especially those that will help prevent child sexual abuse. The video *What Do I Say Now? How to Help Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse* was developed to provide parents and caregivers (1) information about sexual abuse; (2) guidelines for providing a safe and caring environment for young children; (3) practical examples of how and when to talk to children about safety and touching; and (4) guidelines for responding to a child who has disclosed abuse.

Using the Video

What Do I Say Now? can be watched by individuals or families at home, or it can be shown in a group setting with or without a facilitator.

Discussion questions are suggested inside the video jacket. Encourage individuals viewing the video at home to answer the discussion questions for themselves. If you are leading a discussion group, select several questions from those offered.

Touching Rules

What Do I Say Now? offers a variety of ways to teach touching rules. Parents or caregivers must decide how they will present the information themselves, based on their child's age and developmental level and their own family values.

The video offers ideas for helping children learn how to set boundaries—with both peers and adults—in relation to personal touching. Encourage viewers to choose wording for the rules that will work for them. For example: "If someone touches you and you don't like it, say 'No.' " "A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy." "No one should touch your penis (or vulva or vagina) or bottom except a doctor."

Handout

Page 45 is a reproducible handout about the video for families and caregivers. This handout reviews the basic prevention strategies covered in the video. At the bottom of the handout, there is a space to add local emergency phone numbers. Be sure to add these numbers before making copies.

What Do I Say Now?

How to Help Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse

committee for children®

Establish a Safe Environment

Who is with your child?

Check references for:
- Babysitters.
- Child-care providers.

Notice the behavior of other adults around your child.

Be concerned about:
- Adults focused on child relationships more than adult relationships.
- Adults singling out certain children for attention.

Teach Personal Safety Rules

Introduce touching rules along with other safety rules.

Talk about the rules often and practice them with your child.

Agree upon family touching rules to use with other children and adults. Decide how you will teach these rules based on your child's age, developmental level, and your own family values. For example, you could say to your child:
- *If someone is touching you, and you want him or her to stop, say words that mean "No." Then he or she needs to stop. If you are touching someone and he or she says "No," you need to stop.*
- *A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy. No one should touch your penis, vulva, vagina, or bottom except to keep you clean and healthy. If someone does, say words that mean "No." Then get away and tell a grown-up.*
- *Do not keep secrets about touching.*

Discuss Touching Safety

Answer your child's questions.
- Take advantage of natural teaching moments.
- Give age-appropriate answers.

Be approachable. Tell your child:
- *If you ever have any questions, just ask me.*
- *It's never too late to tell.*

Read a children's book about touching safety together.

Start a conversation with your child:
- *Let's review the Touching Rule today.*
- *Before you go, let's practice what you would do if someone tried to break the Touching Rule.*

Respond to Disclosure

Remain calm.

Reassure your child by saying:
- *I'm glad you told me.*
- *It's not your fault.*
- *I am always here for you.*

Seek help for your child and yourself. Possible resources include the following:
- Law enforcement personnel
- Child Protective Services
- Crisis hotline
- Supportive friends and relatives
- Professional counselors

Remember, healing takes time.

Where to Call for Help

CPS _____

Police _____

Crisis Hotline _____

Guidelines for Choosing Babysitters

You should screen anyone who supervises your child. The following are some things to consider when choosing a babysitter.

- Ask each prospective babysitter for names and phone numbers of other families for whom he or she has worked. Call the parents and find out what they think of the babysitter. Ask whether there were ever any problems.

- Let the babysitter know your family safety rules, including touching safety rules. Tell him or her that you have taught your child to tell you when any of the rules are broken, even if the child has been told to keep it a secret.

- Occasionally return home early or unexpectedly so you can see firsthand how things are going. You could also call your child sometimes while you are out.

- Ask your child whether she or he likes the babysitter. If your child does not like the babysitter, ask for more information. Do not leave your child with someone that she or he doesn't like.

- Never leave a child in the care of someone who is using drugs or alcohol. Drugs and alcohol undermine a person's judgment.

"Booster Seat" Song

For Lessons 1 and 2

Sing to the tune of "Frère Jacques"

Where's my booster?
Where's my booster?
Here it is.
Here it is.
It helps keep me safer
When the car is moving.
It lifts me up.
It lifts me up.

Where's my seatbelt?
Where's my seatbelt?
Here it is.
Here it is.
It helps keep me safer
When I'm in my booster.
Buckle up.
Buckle up.

During the first verse, the children should pantomime getting into their booster seats. During the second verse, they should pretend to reach for their seatbelt and buckle themselves in.

Safety Steps: Step 1

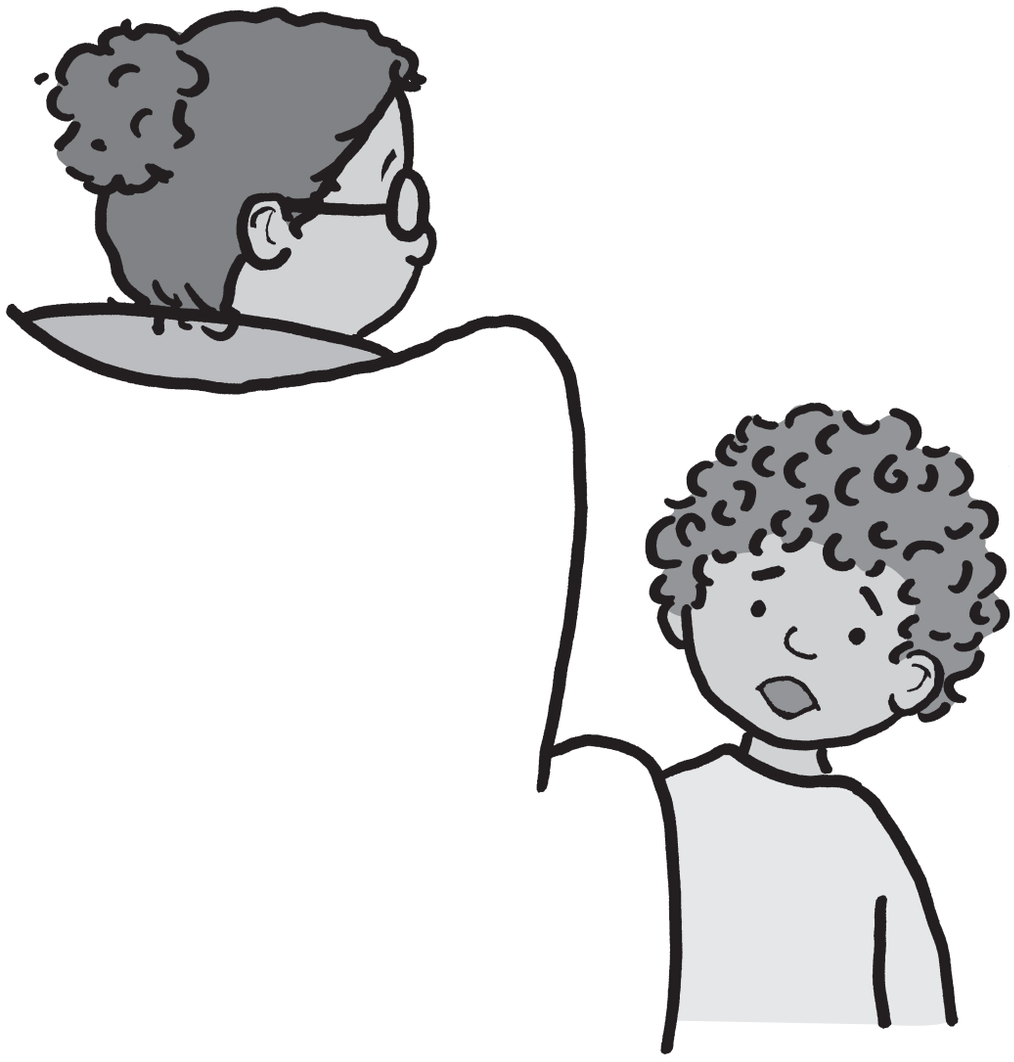
Say words that mean "No."

Safety Steps: Step 2

Get away.

Safety Steps: Step 3

Tell a grown-up.



Recommended Children's Books

Lesson 1

Dinosaurs, Beware by Marc Brown and Stephen Krensky. Safety tips are demonstrated by dinosaurs in situations at home, in the car, in case of fire, with animals, and so on. Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1982.

Lesson 2

I Read Signs by Tana Hoban. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1983.

Lesson 3

Dinosaurs, Beware by Marc Brown and Stephen Krensky. Safety tips are demonstrated by dinosaurs in situations at home, in the car, in case of fire, with animals, and so on. Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1982.

Poinsettia and the Firefighters by Felicia Bond. Poinsettia the Pig feels lonely and scared of the dark until she discovers someone else is awake and keeping watch all night—the firefighters. New York: HarperCollins, 1988.

Lesson 5

I'm Lost by Elizabeth Crary. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1985.

Laney's Lost Momma by Diane Johnston Hamm. Illustrated by Sally G. Ward. When Laney can't find her mother in the department store, she—and her lost momma—remember what to do to find each other. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Company, 1991.

Lost in the Storm by Carol Carrick. Illustrated by Donald Carrick. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987.

Moongame by Frank Asch. During a game of hide-and-seek, Moon hides behind a cloud, making his friend Bear very worried. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1984.

Lesson 6

Peeping Beauty by Mary Jane Auch. Paulette the dancing hen falls into the clutches of a hungry fox, who exploits her desire to become a great ballerina. When Paulette realizes the fox's intentions, she defends herself. New York: Holiday House, 1995.

Lesson 8

It's My Body by Lory Freeman. Illustrated by Carol Deach. A child talks about touches she likes and about resisting touches she doesn't like. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1993.

Loving Touches by Lory Freeman. Illustrated by Carol Deach. Loving and positive touches are described (hugs, kisses, sitting on laps), as well as how to ask for and enjoy them. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1986.

Something Good by Robert Munsch. Illustrated by Michael Martchenko. Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books Ltd., 1990.

Tucking Mommy In by Morag Jeanette Loh. Illustrated by Donna Rawlins. Two sisters tuck their mother in bed one evening when she is especially tired. New York: Orchard Books, 1991.

Lesson 9

The Berenstain Bears Get in a Fight by Stan and Jan Berenstain. New York: Random House, 1982.

I Can't Wait by Elizabeth Crary. Illustrated by Marina Megale Horosko. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1996.

I Want It by Elizabeth Crary. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1996.

I Want to Play by Elizabeth Crary. A young boy considers eight ways to get someone to play with him. Encourages problem solving by looking at alternatives and possible consequences. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1992.

No Fighting, No Biting by Else Holmelund Minarik. New York: HarperCollins Children's Book Group, 1978.

Lesson 10

Best Friends by Miriam Cohen. Illustrated by Lillian Hoban. New York: MacMillan, 1971.

It's My Body by Lory Freeman. Illustrated by Carol Deach. A child talks about touches she likes and about resisting touches she doesn't like. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1993.

Little Bear's Friend by Else Holmelund Minarik. Illustrated by Maurice Sendak. New York: Harper and Row, 1960.

The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig by Eugene Trivizas. Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury. An altered telling of the traditional tale about the conflict between pig and wolf—with a surprise ending. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 1993.

Lesson 11

The Berenstain Bears Go to the Doctor by Stan and Jan Berenstain. New York: Random House, 1981.

I Like Me! by Nancy Carlson. By admiring her finer points and showing that she can have fun and take care of herself even when there's no one else around, a charming pig proves that the best friend you can have is yourself. New York: Puffin Books, Giant edition, 1993.

I'm Terrific by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat. Illustrated by Kay Chorao. New York: Holiday House, 1988.

My Doctor by Harlow Rockwell. Minneapolis: Econo-Clad Books, 1999.

Lesson 13

Grandma, According to Me by Karen Magnuson Beil. Illustrated by Ted Rand. A young girl shows how much she loves her grandmother by telling her what she likes about her. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1992.

My Body Is Private by Linda Walvoord Girard. Illustrated by Rodney Pate. A mother-child conversation introduces the topic of sexual abuse and ways to keep one's body private. Anatomical terms used. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Company, 1984.

My Very Own Book About Me by Jo Stowell and Mary Dietzel. This personal safety workbook focuses on touching safety, including pictures for children to color and places for them to add their own words or drawings. Comes with teacher's guide. Spokane, WA: Act for Kids, 1999.

Something Happened and I'm Scared to Tell by Patricia Kehoe, Ph.D. Illustrated by Carol Deach. A child who has been sexually abused is comforted and supported by a lion friend, and encouraged to tell an adult about it. Anatomical terms used. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1987.

The Trouble with Secrets by Karen Johnsen. Illustrated by Linda Johnson Forssell. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1986.

Adult Resources List

Parent/Caregiver

Children and Trauma: A Parent's Guide to Helping Children Heal by Cynthia Monahon. Thousand Oaks, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

He Told Me Not to Tell by Jennifer Fay and King County Sexual Assault Resource Center. Spokane, WA: ACT for Kids, 1991.

How to Survive the Sexual Abuse of Your Child by Chris Larsen and Anne Zaro. Spokane, WA: ACT for Kids, 2001.

Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse: A Parents' Guide: A Book to Teach Children How to Resist Uncomfortable Touch by Janie Hart-Rossi. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1984.

Safe Child Book by Sherryll Kerns Kraizer. New York: Fireside Books/Simon and Schuster, 1996.

Additional Resources

Child Abuse: Implications for Child Development and Psychopathology by David A. Wolf. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999.

Child Sexual Abuse by David Finkelhor. New York: The Free Press, 1984.

Conspiracy of Silence: The Trauma of Incest by Sandra Butler. Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 1996.

Father-Daughter Incest by Judith Herman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Sharing the Responsibility by Sandy K. Wurtele and Cindy L. Miller-Perrin. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.

Recognizing Child Abuse by Douglas Besharov. New York: The Free Press, 1990.

Sexual Exploitation by Diana Russell. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1984.

Sexually Victimized Children by David Finkelhor. New York: The Free Press, 1981.

What Children Can Tell Us by James Garbarino, Frances M. Stott, and the Faculty of the Erikson Institute. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992.

Acknowledgments

The *Talking About Touching* Development Team would like to thank the following people for their invaluable contributions to the development of the program.

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