



Sophie's Place Child & Youth Advocacy Centre

Teaching Body Safety

Teaching children about body parts and body safety needs sensitivity, age-appropriate language, and a supportive approach. Here are some best practices to make sure the information is shared effectively and comfortably.

- **Use age-appropriate language:** when talking about body parts and safety, use anatomical terms but make sure that explanations are appropriate for the child's age and understanding. This helps make the body less mysterious and promotes a healthy, non-shameful viewpoint towards it.
- **Create a safe environment:** it's important that children feel safe and respected during these conversations. Make sure the setting is comfortable and keep an open, positive attitude. Let children know they can ask questions anytime and that their thoughts and feelings are valued.
- **Use visual aids:** children are visual learners, so using appropriate visual aids like illustrations or anatomically-correct dolls can help make ideas clearer. Visuals should be friendly and non-threatening, at an appropriate level for the child's development.
- **Engage through stories and role-playing:** using simple stories or role-playing scenarios can make complicated ideas easier to understand for young children. These can be scenarios about what to do if someone breaks their personal boundary or how to say "no" assertively.
- **Focus on empowerment:** teach children about their rights to their own body, emphasize they have the power to say "no" to unwanted touch, and that their body belongs to them. This helps build their confidence and self-respect.
- **Emphasize the importance of speaking up:** encourage children to talk about their feelings and assure them it's okay to tell a trusted adult if they feel uncomfortable, scared, or confused about any touch or interaction.
- **Be respectful of privacy:** teach children about privacy using words they can understand. Explain that private parts are those covered by a swimsuit and that nobody should ask to see or touch their private parts except for a medical reason with their parent/caregiver there.
- **Continual learning:** body safety is an ongoing conversation. Make it part of regular conversations with your children to reinforce learning and as children develop, the conversations can change to reflect their growth.
- **Talk about discomfort openly:** if your child seems uncomfortable with the conversation, reassure them it's normal to feel this way when talking about these things. This teaches them to manage discomfort and helps normalize open conversations about body safety.

Source: <https://www.ecebc.ca/professional-development/lets-talk-about-touching>

Child Abuse Reporting

Emergency: 911
1-800-663-9122 (Ministry of Children & Family Development)
Police: 604-599-0502

Contact Us

Phone: 604-588-0727
www.the-centre.org/sophies-place
Email: spinfo@the-centre.org