



SAN FRANCISCO CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION CENTER

Tips for Talking to Children about Sexual Abuse

Talking to your child about sexual abuse is as important as any other health or safety rule. You can help keep your child safe without scaring him/her when you:

Teach Your Child That:

- There are **proper names for private body parts** so that your child is able to talk about them when necessary.
- **There are safe and unsafe touches and touches that make people feel uncomfortable.** A high-five or hug is a safe touch, and a punch or a kick is an unsafe touch.
- **Your child's body belongs to him/her.**
- **It's okay to say, "No!" to any type of touch.** If someone touches your child in a way that makes him/her feel yucky, scared, or uncomfortable, it's okay to say, "No!" Help your child practice saying, "No!" using role-plays and the "What If ..." Game. (*See* tip sheet on "[Playing the 'What If ...' Game](#)").
- **No one should touch your child's private body parts unless it's necessary to keep him/her clean or healthy.**
- **It's okay to tell you or a trusted adult about anyone whose behavior makes your child feel uncomfortable or anyone who touches your child's private body parts or who asks your child to touch someone else's private body parts.**
- **There are good secrets and bad secrets.** A good secret is something happy and fun and will be shared later. A bad secret doesn't make a person feel good and isn't to be shared. It's okay to tell you or a trusted adult a bad secret.

If Your Child Tells You About Abuse, You Should:

- Tell your child that you believe him/her and are happy your child told.
- Assure your child that he/she didn't do anything wrong.
- Tell your child that the perpetrator shouldn't have done this and that you will do your best to make sure your child is never again alone with that person.
- Give yourself time to think, and seek help. You can call (415) 441-KIDS (5437), a 24-hour crisis and counseling telephone line for parents and caregivers.



say "no"



get away



tell someone

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