



# Things Every 5 Year Old Should Know About Body Safety

## Help your five year old learn the importance of body safety.

It can be challenging to have conversations with your kids about their bodies, healthy boundaries, and abuse. But research shows that children who are informed about their bodies and feel comfortable talking openly with a caring adult are less likely to be abused and more likely to disclose abuse if it happens\*

\*Finkelhor D, Dzuiba-Leatherman J. Victimization prevention programs: a national survey of children's exposure and reactions.

Child Abuse Negl. 1995 Feb;19(2):129-39. doi: 10.1016/0145-2134(94)00111-7. PMID: 7780776..

# 1

### Correct names for body parts

Correct names for body parts. It can be uncomfortable to use words like penis and vagina with a young child, but they need this vocabulary to communicate to you if they see or experience something unsafe.

# 2

### Safe vs unsafe touch

Unsafe and even abuse touch can "feel good" so it is important to be specific with young children. Explain that no one should touch or show private parts (*the ones covered by a swimsuit*). Exceptions would be a doctor or helper with hygiene and this should be with permission from child and parent.

# 3

### Appropriate affection

Create family guidelines about the appropriate people to share affection with (*hugging, kissing, cuddling, etc*). Discuss with your child that it's important to tell an adult if someone touches a private part, or does something you feel uncomfortable with.

# 4

### Boundaries

Now that your child identify appropriate touches they feel comfortable sharing with others, help them enforce the boundaries they have set. Never force a child to give or receive affection in a way that makes them uncomfortable. Practice alternatives like a high five or wave goodbye.

# 5

### No secrets - just surprises

A secret is something that is kept unknown from certain people. If someone tells you to keep a secret from me, it might be because they are trying to hurt you. Surprises are things that we keep quiet until the right time - like a present or a special trip. Secrets should always be told to a trusted adult - especially if it makes you scared, sad, or breaks a privacy rule.