

Keeping Our Children Safe

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT
THE LET'S TALK ABOUT TOUCHING
PROGRAM



ABOUT LET'S TALK ABOUT TOUCHING

Giving Children Basic Safety Skills

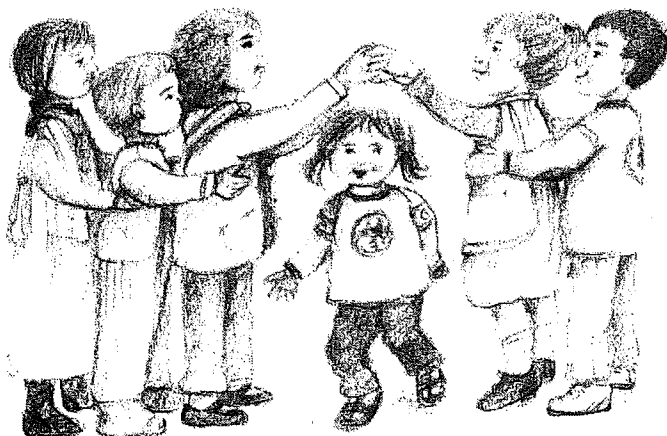
Let's Talk About Touching is an educational program that aims to protect young children from sexual abuse. It teaches children that their bodies are their own and that they have some choice about who touches them and how they are touched. It helps them to differentiate between affectionate touches and sexually abusive touches and gives them some

beginning skills to protect themselves: say "no" or "stop," getting away, and telling someone. *Let's Talk About Touching* has been designed specifically for preschool and kindergarten age children. Prevention programs are most effective when families reinforce the concepts with their children at home.

What You Should Know About Sexual Abuse

In 1998, over one-half of child sexual abuse investigations by child welfare agencies in Canada involved children under the age of eight.

- Sexual abuse is defined as the use of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or by a significantly older or more powerful child.
- Sexual abuse happens to both girls and boys. Children who have disabilities are particularly at risk.
- In the vast majority of child sexual abuse cases the offender is someone the child knows well. In fact, only two percent of reported cases of child sexual abuse involved a stranger as the offender.
- Adults who sexually abuse children use persuasion, bribes, and threats rather than physical force. Offenders develop a relationship with a child and gain the child's affection, trust, and cooperation before they introduce sexual activity. They may tell the child that the activity is part of a game and often tell the child to keep it a secret.
- Most sexual abuse occurs in the child's own home or the home of a relative, neighbour, or friend.
- Children often don't tell because they are afraid no one will believe them or that they will cause trouble.



What Families Can Do

- Respect your children's feelings regarding touching. Support their efforts to say no to unwanted touching like excessive tickling.
- Help your children to learn and practise assertive behaviour.
- Talk to your children and encourage open communication. Be a good listener. Encourage them to tell you about any situation or person that makes them uncomfortable.
- Know where your children are and whom they are with. Good supervision is the best way to protect children from sexual abuse.
- Be wary of any adult who takes a special interest in your children, especially if he/she wants to spend time alone with them. Get to know the person.
- Avoid having secrets with children.
- Teach your children what they can say if they ever need to tell an adult about a touching problem.
- Help them identify adults (in addition to you) whom they could go to for help.

Adapted with permission from *Keeping Kids Safe*, Vancouver School Board, 1990.

When Choosing a Caregiver

- Never leave your child in the care of a person with whom your child is not comfortable — even if the person is a family member or close friend.
- Ask a prospective caregiver for the names and phone numbers of at least two families. Call these families for references.
- Tell the caregiver whether or not he or she is responsible for bathing, dressing, or undressing your child. Also tell your child what to expect of the caregiver.
- Discuss your family rules with the caregiver. Let the caregiver know that your children are not allowed to have secrets with older persons and grown-ups.



If You Need Help



Hearing that your child has been sexual abused can be very upsetting. Here are some suggestions that may be helpful.

- Take your child to a quiet place and ask him or her to tell you what happened. Listen carefully. Respond to your child's questions in a calm and matter-of-fact way.
- ALWAYS believe your child. Research indicates that it is extremely rare for a young child to lie about sexual abuse.
- Praise your child for telling you about the incident. Reassure your child that it is not his or her fault. Explain that the adult has a problem and needs help.
- Reassure your child that you will do your best to protect him or her from further abuse.
- Call your family doctor to arrange a medical examination for your child.
- Report the incident immediately.

Who to Call

In British Columbia, we are all required by law to report suspected or disclosed child abuse to the Ministry of Children and Family Development. A report can be made to the Ministry of Children and Family Development by calling:

- The nearest district office of the Ministry of Children and Family Development (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday)

OR

- The Helpline for Children: 310-1234 (no area code needed.) The helpline is available 24 hours, 7 days a week.

OR

- Refer to the blue pages of the telephone directory under Governments, British Columbia, Ministry of Children and Family Development.



A report can be made to the police by calling 911 or the non-emergency number listed in the telephone directory.

Overview of *Let's Talk About Touching*

Unit 1

Lesson 1 This is My Body

OBJECTIVE To promote children's awareness and enjoyment of their bodies, encourages self-help skills, and helps children begin to develop a sense of body ownership.

Lesson 2 Touches I Like

OBJECTIVE To enhance children's awareness of touches that are fun, caring, and helpful.

Lesson 3 Touches I Don't Like

OBJECTIVE To acknowledge that in everyday situations there are some touches children do not like and reinforce that they can say "no" or "stop" to the person who is touching them.



Unit 2

Lesson 4 Private Parts of My Body

OBJECTIVE To identify and provide the names of the private parts of the boys and girls.

Lesson 5 Keeping My Private Parts Clean and Healthy

OBJECTIVE To identify situations in which certain adults may touch children's private parts to help them stay clean and to make them healthy if they are sick or hurt.

Unit 3

Lesson 6 Keeping My Body Safe

OBJECTIVE To help children distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate touching of their private parts by adults and to introduce the safety rules: saying "no" or "stop," getting away, and telling.

Lesson 7 My Safety Rules

OBJECTIVE To provide opportunities for children to practise assertive behaviour and reinforce the safety rules of saying "no" or "stop," getting away, and telling an adult.

Lesson 8 People Who Can Help Me

OBJECTIVE To help children identify adults whom they can tell about inappropriate touching, and to encourage children to keep telling until someone helps them.

Lesson 9 I Can Talk About Touching

OBJECTIVE To distinguish between secrets that a child can keep and secrets a child should tell, and to reinforce that children should not keep secrets about touching.



Let's Talk About Touching: Talking with Your Child at Home

UNIT 1

Lesson 1: This is My Body

Lesson 1 promotes children's awareness and enjoyment of their bodies, encourages self-help skills, and helps children begin to develop a sense of body ownership.

Talking with Your Child

- Meal time, bath time, and bedtime can be opportunities to discuss the things a child needs to keep his or her body healthy. A walk or a car trip can present opportunities to discuss safety.
- Enjoyable physical activities such as running, riding a bike, playing ball games, or dancing, provide opportunities to direct attention to the body and what the child can do.

Helpful Books

<i>My Body And How It Works</i>	J.W. Watson, R.E. Switzer, and J.C. Hirschberg
<i>Susan Laughs</i>	Jeanne Willis
<i>Going to the Doctor</i>	Anne Civardi
<i>Your Body: From Head to Toe</i>	Nuria Bosch Roca

Lesson 2: Touches I Like

Lesson 2 enhances children's awareness of touches that are fun, caring, and helpful.

Talking with Your Child

- Discuss the many positive touches your child shares with family members. For example, when you are bathing your child, tucking your child into bed, or having a cuddle as you read a story, you could talk about how these are positive touches.

Helpful Books

<i>Ask Mr Bear</i>	Marjorie Flack
<i>Loving Touches</i>	Lory Freeman
<i>A Kiss for Little Bear</i>	E.H. Minarik
<i>On Mother's Lap</i>	Ann Herbert Scott
<i>Sloppy Kisses</i>	Elizabeth Winthrop

Lesson 3: Touches I Don't Like

Lesson 3 acknowledges that in everyday situations there are some touches children do not like and reinforces that they can say "no" or "stop" to the person who is touching them.

Talking with Your Child

- Talk to your child about the touches he or she does not like.
- Children need to know they have some choices with regard to touching, even in their relationships with adults. Children can learn to say "no," politely, to unwanted touches from adults. Adults who respect children's right to say "no" to unwanted touches are also helping them learn to say "no" to abusive touches.

Helpful Books

<i>Difficult Day</i>	Eugenie Fernandes
<i>It's My Body</i>	Lory Freeman
<i>The Hating Book</i>	Charlotte Zolotow
<i>The Quarreling Book</i>	Charlotte Zolotow
<i>Hands are Not For Hitting</i>	Martine Agassi

UNIT 2

Lesson 4: Private Parts of My Body

Lesson 4 identifies and provides the names of the private parts of boys and girls.

Talking with Your child

Help your child to remember the correct names for the private parts of his or her body by reviewing them when you are helping your child to bathe, dress, or undress. Emphasize: "They are part of your body and your body belongs to you." A child who knows the correct names can explain to a grown-up if he or she has hurt a private body part, and is able to tell a grown-up if someone touches the child's personal body parts inappropriately.

Helpful Books

<i>Bodies</i>	Barbara Brenner
<i>Once Upon A Potty</i>	Alona Frankel
<i>Outside-In</i>	Clare Smallman and Edwina Riddell
<i>The Bare Naked Book</i>	Kathy Stinson
<i>My Body and How It Works</i>	J.W Watson, R.E. Switzer, and J.C. Hirschberg
<i>Belly Buttons are Navels</i>	Mark Schoen

Lesson 5: Keeping My Private Parts Clean and Healthy

Lesson 5 identifies situations in which certain adults may touch children's private parts to help them stay clean and to make them healthy if they are sick or hurt.

Talking with Your Child

- Talk to your child about the ways he or she is learning to keep the private parts of his or her body clean and healthy. Examples might include bathing, wiping himself or herself after using the toilet, visiting the doctor when he or she needs a check-up or has hurt a personal body part, brushing teeth, and visiting the dentist.
- Explain that young children sometimes need help from grown-ups to keep their personal body parts clean and healthy. Discuss which grown-ups are allowed to help your child with bathing, toileting, etc.

Helpful Books

<i>All By Myself</i>	Aliki
<i>It's My Body</i>	Lory Freeman
<i>Loving Touches</i>	Lory Freeman
<i>Families</i>	Debbie Bailey
<i>Waves in the Bathitub</i>	Eugenie Fernandes

UNIT 3

Lesson 6: Keeping My Body Safe

Lesson 6 assists children in distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate touching of their private parts by adults and introduces the safety rules: saying “no” or “stop,” getting away, and telling.

Talking with Your Child

- Continue to talk about fun, caring, and helpful touches with your child as they occur and remind your child that he or she can say “no” to unwanted touches.
- When you are helping your child to bathe, dress, undress, or use the toilet, talk about the different situations in which your child needs help to keep his or her private body parts clean and healthy.
- Give your child specific guidelines as to which adults can help him or her with bathing, dressing or undressing, and using the toilet.

Helpful Books

<i>It's My Body</i>	Lory Freeman
<i>Loving Touches</i>	Lory Freeman
<i>Sloppy Kisses</i>	Elizabeth Winthrop
<i>The Sky Was Blue</i>	Charlotte Zolotow

Lesson 7: My Safety Rules

Lesson 7 provides opportunities for children to practise assertive behaviour and reinforces the safety rules of saying “no” or “stop,” getting away, and telling an adult.

Talking with Your Child

- Continue to share affectionate, caring touches with your child. Reassure your child that most grown-ups and big kids will give them fun, caring, and helpful touches. However, it is important for children to know that they can say “no” to touches they don’t like.
- Help your child to practise saying “no” by posing a few situations and having your child show you how he or she would respond. The following are some suggestions: Show me how you would say “no” if. . . a big kid who is your friend wants to touch your vulva (or penis) and says it's a secret. . . a grown-up in our family wants you to touch a personal part of his body and says: “Don’t tell anyone.”
- Praise your child for his or her efforts to say “no.” It is helpful to give specific praise, such as: “I liked the way you stood up straight,” or “You certainly used a big, strong voice.” Remember these are safety rules to protect your child from sexual abuse.

Helpful Books

It's My Body

Lory Freeman

Your Body Belongs to You

Cornelia Spelman

Lesson 8: People Who Can Help Me

Lesson 8 helps children identify adults whom they can tell about inappropriate touching, and encourages them to keep telling until someone helps them.

Talking with Your Child

- Talk with your child about the adults they can tell or go to for help if they are touched in a way that is not okay.
- Make a picture with your child of the grown-ups to whom he or she can go for help. At the top of a large sheet of paper, print: "If an grown-up or a big kid wants me to keep a secret about touching, I will tell ..." Have your child paste on the sheet photographs of grown-ups he or she can tell. Ask your child if you may print the person's name under each picture. Phone numbers can be added when your child has learned to use the telephone.

Helpful Books

Loving Touches

Lory Freeman

Grandfather and I

Helen E. Buckley and Jan Ormerod

Lesson 9: I Can Talk About Touching

Lesson 9 helps children distinguish between secrets children can keep and they should tell, and reinforces that children should not keep secrets about touching.

Talking with Your Child

- Talk to your child about what he or she would do if a grown-up or big kid touched the private parts of your child's body and wanted him or her to keep it a secret. Remind your child that he or she can say "no" or "stop," get away, and come tell you right away.
- Review the body safety concepts with your child from time to time. Many everyday situations you encounter with your child can present opportunities to discuss and/or practise some aspect of body safety.
- Add one or two of the children's books to your child's library. Remember that children who feel good about themselves and have clear information are least likely to be abused.

Helpful Books

Sally's Secret

Shirley Hughes

ANNEXE C - 2

Modèle de lettre à l'intention des familles

Madame, Monsieur,

La sécurité de nos enfants nous concerne tous. Éduquer nos enfants à la sécurité, qu'il s'agisse de prévenir les accidents sur les terrains de jeux ou de la manière de traverser une rue à grande circulation, est un aspect important de notre programme régulier. Comme composante fondamentale de l'information destinée aux enfants en matière de sécurité, j'aimerais leur proposer un programme qui les aidera à se protéger des abus sexuels.

Parlons des attouchements est un programme destiné à inculquer aux jeunes enfants quelques concepts fondamentaux de sécurité que les familles et les enseignants pourront élargir, au fur et à mesure que les enfants grandissent. *Parlons des attouchements* a été utilisé très largement, depuis 1986, dans les institutions d'éducation pour jeunes enfants et dans certains jardins d'enfants de Colombie-Britannique. Le programme vient d'être revu pour y intégrer les réponses des enseignants, des parents et des enfants.

La réponse des parents et des enseignants à ce programme a été particulièrement favorable. Les parents ont constaté que leurs enfants assimilaient bien les concepts et les techniques de sécurité proposés par le programme et ont fait savoir que la participation de leurs enfants n'avait pas le moindre effet négatif sur la réaction des ceux-ci envers les contacts affectueux appropriés.

J'ai participé à une séance de formation de deux jours consacrée au programme *Parlons des attouchements* et j'aimerais pouvoir vous en entretenir. J'ai dès lors le plaisir de vous convier à une réunion d'information destinée aux parents et aux tuteurs au cours de laquelle vous pourrez examiner les ressources et documents et discuter du programme avec moi-même et avec d'autres familles. Cette réunion se tiendra le _____ de _____ à _____ heures.

Veuillez me communiquer avant le _____ votre intention d'assister à cette réunion. Si vous nous indiquez que vous désirez obtenir l'aide d'un interprète, nous nous efforcerons de répondre à ce besoin. Si vous ne pouvez pas assister à la réunion mais désirez néanmoins obtenir de plus amples renseignements sur le programme, n'hésitez pas à me le demander. Vous avez l'entière liberté de faire participer votre enfant à ce programme.

Pour information, j'ai joint un bulletin qui traite de la protection de nos enfants contre les abus sexuels et qui donne un aperçu du programme *Parlons des attouchements*.

Je me réjouis d'avance de pouvoir m'entretenir avec vous de ce programme important pour la sécurité.

Avec mes plus sincères salutations,

☞.....

Réunion d'information *Parlons des attouchements*

Nom de l'enfant _____

Nom d'un des parents/tuteur _____

- Oui, je désire assister à la réunion d'information *Parlons des attouchements*
 Non, je ne peux pas assister à la réunion d'information *Parlons des attouchements*

Oui, j'aimerais avoir l'aide d'un interprète.
Ma langue maternelle est le _____

Veuillez renvoyer ce formulaire avant le _____ à _____

10 Tips for Working with Multicultural Families

1. Parents from other cultures have developed their own methods of parenting. Respect those methods. Don't insist that the parents do it your way if they are to be good parents. Don't assume that as a teacher you know what is best for the child and can tell the parent what to do.
2. Establish a good relationship with the parent before giving advice.
3. Be flexible. Rules may need to be bent or changed to meet parents or children's needs.
4. Be cautious. Don't intrude too quickly into parents' privacy — it may embarrass them. Taboo subjects or what is considered private vary greatly from culture to culture.
5. Communicate frequently with parents, not just when there is a problem or for a formal progress report on the child.
6. When speaking with a person who has little English:
 - Speak softly. If you speak too loudly it may sound like yelling to some people.
 - Watch your tone. Don't be patronizing.
 - Use simple, clear language.
 - Match your animation to the comfort level of the parent or child.
 - Talk briefly and frequently to the parents. But don't be overly talkative if they have real difficulty understanding English.
7. Spend time with new immigrant families.
8. Seek privacy before discussing confidential or emotional issues.
9. Study the cultures of the children in your centre or classroom. If you have an awareness and understanding of the family life, cultural background, and individual values of your families, you will transmit that understanding through your behaviour.
10. Respect, accept, empathize, and have patience with ideas that differ from your own.

Julie Dotsch, diversity consultant, One World. Reprinted with permission.

Curriculum Connections for Kindergarten

The Primary Program is a guide to effective practices for primary educators, provided by the BC Ministry of Education.

The program addresses the development of the whole child. It reflects an understanding that children learn through active engagement and play, and that children represent their knowledge in a variety of ways. It is based on a recognition of the individual and social nature of learning and the essential role of language in mediating thought, communication and learning.¹

The five areas that together address the development of the whole child provide the foundation on which the Primary Program is built.

- Aesthetic and Artistic Development
- Emotional and Social Development
- Intellectual Development
- Physical Development and Well-being
- Development of Social Responsibility

1. BC Ministry of Education. *The Primary Program: A Framework for Teaching*. Victoria, 2000, page 16.