

# WHAT PARENTS CAN SAY TO PREVENT SEXUAL ABUSE



To keep your child safe from sexual abuse, it's important that you feel comfortable with your son or daughter talking about body safety. By the time your child is a toddler, you can help your child understand that his or her body is not to be touched by anyone without permission. Talking to your child about the need to keep his or her body safe is essential.

## **FOLLOW THESE AGE-APPROPRIATE TIPS FROM THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS:**

### **18 MONTHS**

Teach your child the proper name for body parts.

### **AGES 3 TO 5**

Teach your child about “private parts” of the body and how to say “NO!” to any type of touching that seems wrong or makes the child uncomfortable.

### **AGES 5 TO 8**

Discuss safety away from home and the difference between being touched in private parts of the body, which are areas covered by a bathing suit, and never touching someone else's private parts. Encourage your child to talk about scary experiences.

### **AGES 8 TO 12**

Stress personal safety and give examples of possible dangerous areas, such as locker rooms, malls, social media sites and isolated places. Discuss the rules of sexual conduct expected by the family.

### **AGES 13 TO 18**

Continue to stress personal safety and potentially higher risk locations. Discuss such issues as sexual assault and abuse as well as your family's standards of sexual conduct.

Teach your child that saying “NO” is OK when it involves his or her body. Encourage your child to always share secrets with you about his or her private areas being touched.