

Let's Talk!

Tips for Talking About Personal Safety & Sexual Abuse with Kids Ages 6–8

6–8

Get Comfy and Start the Conversation

As your child gets older and spends more time away from you, it's important that they know personal safety rules to help keep them from harm. These tips can help you teach them—in a warm, comfortable way—how to recognize if a situation is safe or not, how to say no, and what to do if someone breaks a safety rule.

What You Can Say

“No one should ever touch your private body parts except to keep you healthy.”

“You should not touch or be made to touch or look at another person's private body parts.”

“Bathing suits cover the parts of the body that are meant to be private, which means they are not for others to see or touch.”

“Even if someone seems nice, it's not okay for them to ask you to keep a secret about touching.”

“Pay attention to different feelings in your body, like butterflies in your tummy. That might mean a situation is not okay.”

“I'm glad to see you speaking up for yourself using a strong, respectful voice.”

Review personal safety rules

Just as you caution your child to look both ways before crossing a street, remind them:

“Never keep secrets about touching.”

“The only safe secrets are those that eventually can be shared, like birthday surprises.”

“Always ask first before accepting a gift or a ride from another adult.”



HOT CHOCOLATE TALK™



1 Connect in everyday moments

Whether driving to school, reading together, or playing a game, you can start general conversations about safety that can get more specific. Finding opportunities to talk about personal safety can lead to covering important concepts like recognizing different kinds of touches. You might explain that safe touches make you feel well-cared for and loved, like a hug from a parent, while unsafe touches make you feel uncomfortable.

2 Create a family safety plan

Help your child identify safe adults they can call if they ever need help, and make sure they have all the right contact information. Talk through your daily schedule and agree upon expectations. For example, if your child walks or takes the bus to and from school, you may want to work out a buddy system so they can walk with a friend.

3 Practice safety skills

Try role-playing or asking “What if” questions to give your child a chance to practice skills such as how to refuse unwanted touch. You might ask: “What would you do or say if a bigger kid wanted to see or touch your private body parts?” Your child could practice using assertive phrases like: “Stop. I don't like that.”

4 Let them know it's never their fault

It's very common for kids to be afraid to talk about abuse because, in many cases, they know their offender,¹ and they've been told to keep it a secret. When you teach them that it's never okay to keep secrets about touching and it's never their fault if someone touches them inappropriately, they're more likely to tell.

1. Finkelhor, D. y Dziuba-Leatherman, J. (1995). Victimization prevention programs: A national survey of children's exposure and reactions. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 19(2), 129-139. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134\(94\)00111-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0145-2134(94)00111-7)

IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE OR NEED HELP

Childhelp 800-4-A-Child

National Sexual Violence Resource Center 877-739-3895

National Human Trafficking Hotline 888-373-7888 or text HELP to 233733.

Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network 800-656-HOPE