



## Let's Talk – Body safety

As caregivers, we make sure to talk to children about road safety, water safety, and how to be sun smart, but we also need to talk to children about body safety. Sometimes caregivers tell us that they feel unsure how to bring up this topic, as it can be distressing and possibly triggering. But children don't know what we know, and hopefully have no understanding of what sexual abuse is. For them, learning simple rules about their bodies and when to confide in trusted adults is no different to learning other safety rules. Here are some body safety rules you can use as a guide.

### 1. **Proper names for private parts.**

Make sure your child knows the proper names for reproductive body parts. This helps them to understand that it's okay to talk about bodies, and can deter sexual predators from targeting a child. Talk about body parts in a positive way, using an everyday tone, so that there's no shame or embarrassment around the language.

### 2. **They are the boss of their body.**

Explain that their body is their own and no one should touch or ask to see their private parts without good reason. Ask your child to think of what a 'good reason' might be (i.e. medical reason). Remind them that if they need to show a doctor, they'll always have a trusted adult with them. No one should ever ask a child to touch or see their private parts or show them pictures or videos of people with no clothes on.

### 3. **Identify a safety network.**

Talk to your child about people that might be in their safety network. Help them to think of five trusted adults they could talk to if they ever felt unsafe or worried about something.

### 4. **Never keep secrets about touching private parts.**

Tell your child that they should never keep or be asked to keep secrets about touching or seeing private parts. Secrets should never make someone feel bad, guilty, worried or uncomfortable. It's important to tell them that it's okay for them to touch their own private parts — but that it's always done in private.

### 5. **Pictures or videos of private parts.**

Reinforce that no one should ever show them pictures or videos of people with no clothes on or doing sexual things. Even if they know and like the person who is showing them, it's never okay. They also need to tell you or someone in their safety network if they see things like this online, or hear something that upsets or confuses them. Remind them you will always believe them and they won't get into trouble if they do tell you.

### 6. **Early warning signals.**

Talk about body warning signals and feelings. Ask: 'How might your body feel when something isn't right or you feel unsafe?' Talk about responses such as a racing heart, sweaty palms, no voice, the need to go to the toilet, butterflies in tummy, feel like crying, etc. Tell them to always trust their body signals and to talk to a trusted adult about the situation that made them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. Help your child learn and use the labels for emotions, as it's important they can recognise, name and talk about their feelings.

### 7. **Help seeking strategies.**

Explain to your child that if someone doesn't follow the body safety rules, they need to say:

(i) 'No' or 'Stop' very loudly and forcefully

(ii) Leave the situation as quickly as possible and

(iii) Tell a trusted adult straight away

Have them practice what to say and how to say it.

Role playing can be very useful in letting a child know how they can respond.