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Lesson:

Helping Your Child Become the

Master of Their Body

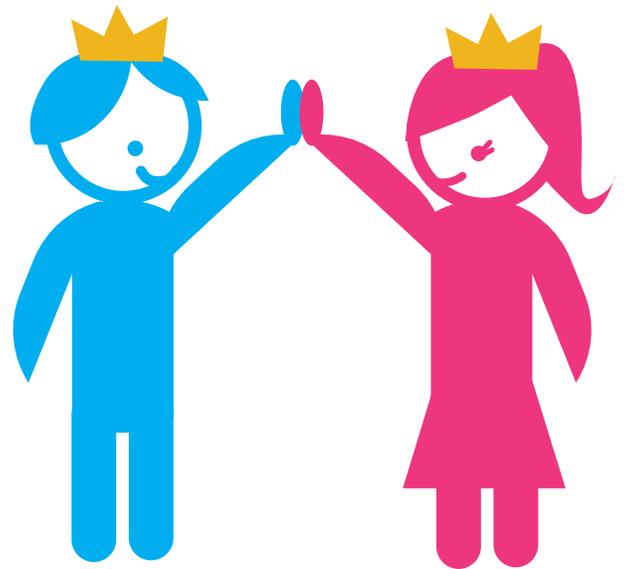
Moving Beyond Good Touch/Bad Touch



BACKGROUND

Before the digital age and body positive movements, teaching our children the difference between “good touch” and “bad touch” seemed like it was all we needed to do to keep our children safe. Using the terms “good touch” and “bad touch” allowed parents to explain in a simple way the difference between wanted, unwanted, or inappropriate touch.

However, as we move further into body positivity movements and the digital age, teaching the difference between “good touch” and “bad touch” is no longer enough.



PREPARATION

This lesson will help you teach your child how to become a master of their own body, be more intune with their own body, and give them the knowledge of what to do if they are ever abused

Take time to read through this lesson and learn more about how to help your child become a master of their own body. Consider reading this article that covers why the terms “good touch” and “bad touch” might be more detrimental to our children than we as parents realized. Familiarize yourself with the signs of abuse, signs of grooming, and how to protect your child from both.

OBJECTIVE

- Help you as a parent understand the importance of your child feeling in control of their own body
- Help your child start feeling like they are the masters of their body and what that means

LESSON

INAPPROPRIATE TOUCH

Being a master of your own body means that you have the confidence and courage to say “no” when something is making you uncomfortable; this includes any form of touch that makes them feel uncomfortable or is forced upon them. It also means feeling confident saying “no” when they are shown something or asked to do something that makes them uncomfortable.



FORCED AFFECTION

Helping your child in becoming a master of their own body also means that they have the right to say “no” to something as simple as a high-five with a friend or family member if they don’t want to. Our children need to know that they have the right to say “no” when something makes them uncomfortable even if what are uncomfortable with might be considered normal physical affection. Teaching them how to be masters of their own bodies also includes teaching them that no one should be able to force or coerce them into doing things against their will. However, if they ever are, they’ll feel less threatened or scared to tell a trusted adult.

We also need to learn how to respect them as they become masters of their bodies. If that means you don’t get a goodnight hug from your little one, even if that can be hard for you as a parent, you need to respect that. Becoming a master of their body starts in the home with the people they trust the most: their parents.

LIKING THEIR OWN BODY

When your child is a master of their own body, they will also know how to love and respect their own bodies. They will have the desire to do the things needed to keep their bodies healthy such as exercising and eating healthy foods.

When they like their own body they should be able to find things that they are grateful for concerning their body instead of focusing on the negatives.

SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Yeast or staph infections
- Cringing during diaper changes for younger children
- Tantrums
 - Pay attention if your child appears to be acting out than they usually do. Pay attention to when, where, or what is said around your child that may trigger an unusual tantrum or outburst
- Low self-worth/an unwillingness to try new things
 - Keep in mind that this does not necessarily mean your child is or has experienced abuse; as a parent, you may be able to notice if they have a sudden change in their self-esteem. Pay attention to how they act just as you would when paying attention to their tantrums (Soldner)



SIGNS OF GROOMING

- Predators pay more attention to the child they are grooming than other children
- Predators invite the child they are grooming to activities where they can be one-on-one
- Predators may casually touch your child (elbow, shoulder, etc.) when you are around to send the message to your child that you are ok with this person touching them
 - It is important to note that not all casual touch should alarm you, but it is important to recognize if it appears excessive
 - How often is your child in physical contact with an individual?
 - Is your child the only child that the individual touches this often? (Grossman-Scott)

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD

- Be open and honest with your child about sex and their body
- Be cautious when a new adult enters your child's life; get to know them
 - "Never assume someone is trustworthy because he or she attends church, has a job, works with children or seems nice," (Grossman-Scott).
- Trust your instincts

DISCUSSION

Discuss with your child what it means to be a master of your own body and how they can achieve that. Discuss how they can become comfortable telling someone "no" when they feel uncomfortable.

Be sure to also talk about what your child should do if someone touches them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Don't forget to discuss the differences between when someone unintentionally makes your child uncomfortable and when someone does it intentionally.

- Unintentional examples
 - A relative you haven't seen in a while hugging before asking
 - A friend resting their arm on your shoulder
 - Mom or dad wanting a high-five or a hug after you did something good
- Intentional examples
 - A person asking you to show them your private parts or look at their private parts
 - A person showing you a pornographic image
 - A boyfriend or girlfriend kissing you without permission

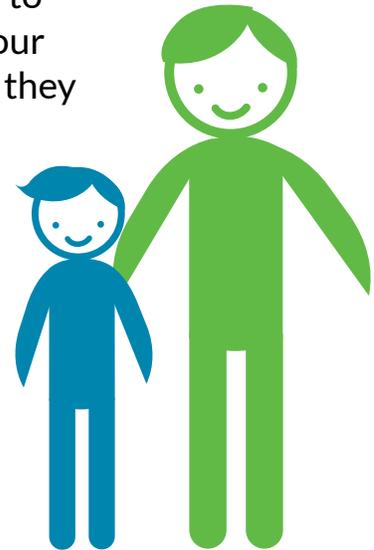
Discuss what your child should do if an abuser tells them not to tell anyone else and/or threatens them or those they love if they do tell.

WHO TO TURN TO

As you complete the discussions, take the time to create a short list of people that you, your partner, and your child all trust. Be sure to discuss why these people are trusted and explain to your child that if they don't feel comfortable coming to you they can talk to someone on this list.

Examples of people that might be on the list:

- Extended family
- Close family friend
- Church leader
- Teacher
- Counselor



Be sure to help your child understand that while their conversations with these trusted people are kept confidential, the trusted person has the right to tell you if actions need to be taken on their part to keep them safe. Make sure they know that this isn't to breach their trust, but to help ensure that you are able to get them the help they need whether that is a police officer, a lawyer, a doctor, or a therapist.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD

- 🗣 How can you politely tell people when you're uncomfortable?
- 🗣 What are ways I can help you become more of a master of your own body?
- 🗣 What kinds of touch are healthy and positive? What would be examples of unhealthy or negative touch?
- 🗣 What should you do if someone forces you into a situation that doesn't make you comfortable?
- 🗣 What are ways you can take precautions on the internet to avoid predators?

ACTIVITIES

Roleplay scenarios together with your child to help your child grow their confidence in saying no. Cycle through different scenarios where they could be unintentionally made uncomfortable, intentionally made uncomfortable, and what to look for so they aren't susceptible to grooming.

Example:

Parent: Hey [child's name], can I have a hug before you go to bed?

Child: Not tonight mom/dad

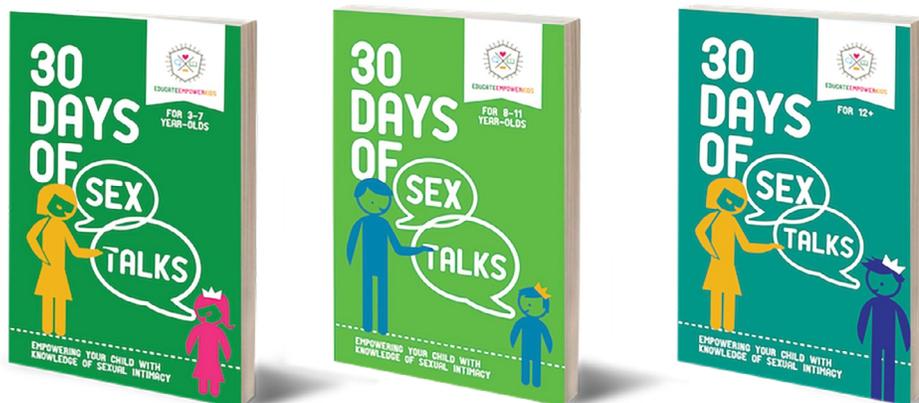
Parent: Ok [child's name]. I respect your decision. Goodnight, I love you!

Roleplay ways your child could tell you if they've been abused to help them become comfortable talking with you about such topics

Consider roleplaying out different scenarios to help your child practice saying "no." Let them know that saying "no" is ok even if it is mom or dad wanting a hug or other physical affection.

While you can teach your child how to be in control of their own bodies, they still may not always come and tell you if they are being abused. Knowing what the signs are can help you better help your child become more confident in becoming the master their own body. This helps our children to feel empowered and comfortable in their own skin. It also helps them be able to act and react in the best way possible if they are ever being groomed or are put in a situation where they could be sexually abused.

If possible, read the section "My Body Belongs to Me" in *30 Days of Sex Talks: For 3 - 7-Year-Olds* and "How to Say No" in *30 Days of Sex Talks: For 8 - 11-Year-Olds*. Both of these resources can help you better answer your child's questions and give them the tools they need to be a master of their own body.



RELATED LESSONS, ARTICLES, AND BOOKS

30 Days of Sex Talks

8 Ways A Predator Might Groom Your Child

Common Mistakes Parents Make When Talking to Kids About Sex

Teach Your Kids to R.U.N. from Pornography

How to Create Healthy Relationships

CITATIONS

Grossman-Scott, A. (n.d.). 8 ways a predator might groom your child. Retrieved from <https://educateempowerkids.org/8-ways-predator-might-groom-child/>

Soldner, J. (n.d.). The problem with "good touch, bad touch". Retrieved from <http://www.jennifersoldner.com/2015/01/the-problem-with-good-touch-bad-touch.html>

Soldner, J. (n.d.). When your child can't speak: Signs of sexual abuse in young children. Retrieve from <http://www.jennifersoldner.com/2014/05/when-your-child-cant-speak.html>