

Dear Family:

Soon our class will begin using *Talking About Touching: A Personal Safety Curriculum* for grades 1–3. This program teaches children skills that will help keep them safe from dangerous or abusive situations. Children also learn to ask for help when they need it.

The program is divided into three units:

- **Personal Safety.** This unit teaches children rules that will help keep them safe in potentially dangerous situations.
- **Touching Safety.** This unit focuses on teaching children to identify unsafe touches and to say “No,” get away, and tell a grown-up if someone tries to touch their private body parts. Children are also taught to not keep secrets about touching.
- **Assertiveness and Support.** This unit gives children a chance to practice getting out of unsafe situations and to ask a grown-up for help if they need it.

Over the next few weeks, I will send you information about how you can help your child learn and practice safety rules.

Optional sentences:

1. We will have a Family Education Night on _____ (day, date, and time). At that time, you can learn more about the program and how you can help teach your child about safety rules.
2. The video *What Do I Say Now? How to Help Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse* was produced for parents and caregivers of young children. If you are unable to attend the Family Education Night, you can check out the video from school to view at home. It will show you how to teach and reinforce safety skills taught in the lessons.
3. If you **do not** wish your child to participate in this program, please complete, sign, and return this letter by _____ (date).

If you have any questions, please give me a call.

Sincerely,

I **do not** wish for my child, _____, to participate in the *Talking About Touching* program.

Parent/Caregiver signature _____

Dear Family:

The first lessons in the *Talking About Touching* curriculum emphasize the importance of following safety rules. You can help your child learn to be safe if you talk about safety and practice using safety rules at home. Below are some important rules to talk about with your child.

Car safety. Children learn to always wear a seatbelt and sit in a booster seat until they are big enough for an adult seatbelt to fit properly. Booster seats are essential to your child's safety. Children outgrow forward-facing child safety seats when they reach approximately 40 pounds. From this point until children weigh 80 pounds and are about 4' 9" tall, they must be properly buckled in booster seats, which lift them so that adult seatbelts fit them securely and safely. Without booster seats, an adult lap belt rides up over a small child's stomach, and the shoulder belt cuts across a child's neck. In a crash, this can cause serious or fatal injuries. Child safety seats with boosters are effective in protecting children in crashes. All children under age 12 should sit properly restrained in the back seat.

Bike safety. Children learn to always wear a helmet when they ride a bike. They also learn to make sure that the helmet fits correctly.

Gun safety. Children learn to never play with guns—the lesson explains that guns are not toys and that they are dangerous. Reminder: Adults should always lock up any guns they might have in the house.

Fire safety. Children learn to never play with matches and never play with fire.

Phone safety. Children learn to never give out personal information on the phone.

Walking safety. Children learn to look in every direction before crossing a street, and if there's no sidewalk, to always walk on the side of the road facing traffic.

Congratulate your child for learning and following these safety rules.

Sincerely,

Dear Family:

In the next *Talking About Touching* lesson, children will learn what to do if someone wants them to go somewhere or someone wants to give them something. It will be helpful if you review the Always Ask First Rule with your child: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants to give you something or someone wants you to go somewhere. Ask your child to demonstrate what he or she would do in the following situations:

- What would you do if a neighbor offered you a ride home?
- What would you do if you were in the park and someone you don't know asked you to help look for a lost ball?
- What would you do if someone who lives down the block wanted to give you a present?

If your child follows the Always Ask First Rule, you will always know where he or she is and with whom. You will also know who is trying to make friends with your child by offering gifts. Unfortunately, most children are abused by people they already know—friends, family, or acquaintances. By encouraging your child to always ask first, you will be able to monitor his or her safety better.

Thank you for helping teach this safety rule. Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dear Family:

In the next few *Talking About Touching* lessons, we will talk about touching safety. The children will learn that safety rules include rules about touching. The *Talking About Touching* curriculum teaches children that there are three kinds of touches:

- **Safe touches.** These are touches that keep you safe and are good for your body. They make you feel cared for, loved, and important. Safe touches include hugging, holding hands, pats on the back, an arm around the shoulder, and a shot from the doctor.
- **Unsafe touches.** These are touches that are not good for your body and hurt your body or your feelings (for example, hitting, pushing, pinching, kicking, and touching the private parts of your body).
- **Unwanted touches.** These may be safe touches, yet the child doesn't want to be touched in that way, by that person, or at that moment in time. It is okay for a child to say "No" to unwanted touches. Children can say "No" to any unwanted touch, even if the person touching them is someone they know. Help your child practice saying "No" in a strong yet polite voice. This will help children learn to set personal boundaries for keeping themselves safe.

The children will also learn the Touching Rule: No one should touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy. They will learn that *private body parts* are "those parts covered by a swimsuit." They will also be taught the anatomically correct names for private body parts so that, if necessary, they are able to communicate accurately about any touching questions or problems they may have. It is recommended that you also use correct anatomical language when communicating with your child about this subject at home.

Thank you for being a partner in teaching safety to your child. I recognize that touching safety is a sensitive topic, so please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dear Family:

In the next few *Talking About Touching* lessons, we will talk about touching safety. The children will learn that safety rules include rules about touching. The *Talking About Touching* curriculum teaches children that there are three kinds of touches:

- **Safe touches.** These are touches that keep you safe and are good for your body. They make you feel cared for, loved, and important. Safe touches include hugging, holding hands, pats on the back, an arm around the shoulder, and a shot from the doctor.
- **Unsafe touches.** These are touches that are not good for your body and hurt your body or your feelings (for example, hitting, pushing, pinching, kicking, and touching the private parts of your body).
- **Unwanted touches.** These may be safe touches, yet the child doesn't want to be touched in that way, by that person, or at that moment in time. It is okay for a child to say "No" to unwanted touches. Children can say "No" to any unwanted touch, even if the person touching them is someone they know. Help your child practice saying "No" in a strong yet polite voice. This will help children learn to set personal boundaries for keeping themselves safe.

In these lessons, the children will learn the Touching Rule: A bigger person should not touch your private body parts, except to keep you clean and healthy. They will learn that *private body parts* are "those parts covered by a swimsuit." It is recommended that you teach your child at home the correct anatomical names for private body parts so that, if necessary, he or she is able to communicate accurately about any touching questions or problems they may have.

Thank you for being a partner in teaching safety to your child. I recognize that touching safety is a sensitive topic, so please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dear Family:

In this week's *Talking About Touching* lesson, the children are learning the Safety Steps that will guide them to know what to do if someone breaks the Touching Rule.

Safety Steps

1. Say words that mean "No."
2. Get away.
3. Tell a grown-up.

We encourage you to help your child think of different ways of saying "No" (for example: "No, thank you"; "Leave me alone"; "Stop that"; "I'm not allowed to play touching games"; "I don't like that"). Help your child understand that getting away can be as simple as moving away from someone or going to another room, or it might mean running home immediately. Help your child identify whom to tell and have him or her practice telling. Sometimes a child may not be able to get away; then the telling becomes even more important.

Practice the following situation with your child:

What if an adult you know wanted to touch your private body parts, and it wasn't to keep you clean and healthy? What words would you say that mean "No"? How would you get away? Whom would you tell? Whom else could you tell?

Children need to be able to identify adults to talk to, both inside and outside the family, since you may not always be available. They also learn in this lesson that it is never a child's fault if someone breaks the Touching Rule.

Encourage your child to come to you if she or he has any questions about using the Touching Rule or the Safety Steps.

Sincerely,

Dear Family:

Unit III of the *Talking About Touching* program teaches children to be assertive and to stand up for themselves in a bullying situation. In these lessons, the children practice saying “No” in a strong, clear way.

Learning to be assertive takes time, however. You can help at home by asking your child to show you how he or she would say “No” to someone who is bullying. Check to see that your child stands tall, looks directly at you, and says “No” in a strong voice. Let your child know whether he or she does a good job being assertive.

Remind your child that if it doesn’t feel safe to stand up to bullying, it is important to go to an adult for help. Discuss with your child which adults he or she might go to for help. Children need to be able to identify adults to talk to both inside and outside the family (for example, grandparent, neighbor, teacher, police officer), since you may not always be available.

Continue helping your child practice using these skills by suggesting “what if” situations. Ask your child what he or she would say and do and whom he or she would tell if the situation is confusing or dangerous. Also ask, “Whom else could you tell?” Help your child understand when to stand up to being bullied and when to ask for help.

If your child mentions being picked on or bullied at school, or he or she feels anxious about going out on the playground for any reason, be sure to tell me. The best way to stop bullying is to address it immediately.

Sincerely,

Dear Family:

We have reached the end of the *Talking About Touching* personal safety curriculum. However, the curriculum is just the beginning of what we all need to do to help keep children safe.

Research shows that young children retain the skills they have learned only if they keep practicing them. For this reason, it is recommended that you review all the safety rules with your child on a regular basis, especially the Always Ask First Rule and the Touching Rule. You can also help your child practice the Safety Steps using pretend situations. Make sure that the pretend situations include people they know (babysitter, relative, neighbor), as well as people they don't know.

In addition, remind your child that:

- It is never a child's fault if someone breaks the Touching Rule.
- He or she should never keep secrets about touching.
- It is never too late to tell about a touching problem.

If you would like to check out the video *What Do I Say Now? How to Help Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse*, please let me know.

We will review the safety rules in class later in the year. I will let you know when this is happening.

Sincerely,

Dear Family:

During the next two weeks, we will review the safety rules that the children learned in the *Talking About Touching* Program. In particular, we will go over the following rules:

- The Always Ask First Rule: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants to give you something or someone wants you to go somewhere.
- The Touching Rule: No one should touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.
- The Safety Steps: (1) Say words that mean “No”; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up.
- It is never a child’s fault if someone breaks the Touching Rule.
- Never keep secrets about touching.
- It is never too late to tell about a touching problem.

Now would be a good time for you to review these rules with your child and to make sure she or he understands them. You can practice at home with your child by asking the following questions:

- What would you do if a babysitter wanted to play a touching game with you?
- What would you do if a bigger child who lives in our neighborhood grabbed your private parts while playing a game with you?
- What would you do if someone you don’t know wanted you to get into his or her car?

If you have any questions, be sure to let me know.

Sincerely,

Dear Family:

During the next two weeks, we will review for the last time this year the safety rules that the children learned in the *Talking About Touching* program. We will go over the following rules:

- The Always Ask First Rule: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants to give you something or someone wants you to go somewhere.
- The Touching Rule: A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.
- The Safety Steps: (1) Say words that mean “No”; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up.

We will also remind children that:

- It is never a child’s fault if someone breaks the Touching Rule.
- Never keep secrets about touching.
- It is never too late to tell about a touching problem.

Now would be a good time for you to talk to your child again about all these rules and to make sure he or she understands them. You can practice at home with your child by asking the following questions:

- What would you do if a neighbor wanted you to go to his house and have a snack?
- What would you do if a bigger boy you know hugged you and started touching your bottom?
- What would you do if someone you don’t know tried to help you zip up your pants when you were in a public bathroom?

If you have any questions or concerns, be sure to let me know.

Thank you for your partnership this year in helping your child learn about personal safety.

Sincerely,