

Dear Family:

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

Over the next few weeks, you will receive a series of letters that provide information about how you can help your child learn and practice the safety rules taught in the classroom lessons. Children learn more about safety and are more likely to follow safety rules when they have multiple opportunities to practice and talk about safety with their family. I encourage you to 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 watch 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 by talking about and practicing safety rules at home. I hope these suggestions will be useful to you.

Car safety. Our first lesson focuses on car safety. Children learn about sitting in a booster seat and wearing a seatbelt. Ask your child to sing or teach you the “Booster Seat” song. 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.

Traffic safety. In our traffic safety lesson, children learn to look in *all* directions before crossing the street. Whenever you go for a walk with your child, you can talk about and practice walking safely in your neighborhood.

Fire safety. Ask your child what she or he learned about fire safety. Ask what she or he would do if another child wanted to play with matches. The response children learn in class is to say “No” and then tell you about it.

Gun safety. Ask your child what he or she learned about gun safety. If you own guns, please remember to always keep them locked up.

Be sure to congratulate your child for learning and following these safety rules. Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dear Family:

In this week's *Talking About Touching* lesson, the children will learn what to do when they are lost. Each child will practice telling someone his or her first and last name and telephone number.

You can help your child know what to do if she or he gets lost by making a plan. Help your child come up with ideas for how to handle different situations. Then go over your plan right before you go out with your child. For example, whenever you go to such places as a fair, amusement park, or shopping mall, talk to your child before you get there about what to do if you are separated.

Here are some sample situations you can go over with your child. Have your child generate some ideas, then select the idea(s) that best work for you.

- Pretend that we're in a store. You get separated from me and can't find me. What would you do? (For example, your child could find a salesperson and ask for help.)
- Pretend that we're at the park. You're playing hide-and-seek and realize you don't know where you are or where I am. What would you do? (For example, your child could stand by the swings until you get there.)
- Pretend that we're in a crowded store and you lose sight of me. What would you do? (For example, your child could find the person in charge and ask for help.)

Remember: Before you go out, make sure that your child knows his or her first and last name and telephone number. And be sure that your child knows what to do if he or she gets lost.

Let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dear Family:

In our next two *Talking About Touching* lessons, the 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 you to go somewhere or someone wants to give you something. 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 your child 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. If your child understands 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 either 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 an assertive yet polite voice. This will help children learn how to set personal boundaries for keeping themselves safe.

During classroom 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." They will also learn 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 anatomically correct terms when communicating with your child about this subject.

Thank you for being a partner in teaching safety to your child. I realize 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 either 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 an assertive yet polite voice. This practice helps children learn to how to set personal boundaries for keeping themselves safe.

During classroom 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 that arise.

Thank you for being a partner in teaching safety to your child. I realize 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 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.

Help your child practice responding to the following:

- What would you do if a grown-up you know wants to touch your private body parts—and it's not to keep you clean and healthy?
- What words would you say that mean "No"?
- How would you get away?
- Name a grown-up you could 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. Children 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:

During the next two weeks, we will review all the safety rules that the children have learned in the *Talking About Touching* program. Now would be a good time for you to review with your child the following rules:

- The Always Ask First Rule: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants you to go somewhere or someone wants to give you something.
- 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.
- 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.

Young children are able to use the skills and knowledge they have gained only if they keep practicing what they have learned. As we near the completion of the lessons, please take the time to talk to your child about all these rules and to make sure they understand them. You can help your child practice at home by asking:

- 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:

We have reached the end of the *Talking About Touching* personal safety curriculum. But the effort has just begun to keep children safe.

Research shows that young children retain the knowledge and 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 these:

- The Always Ask First Rule: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants you to go somewhere or someone wants to give you something.
- 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.

You can help your child practice the Safety Steps using pretend situations. Make sure that the 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 conduct a final review of the safety rules that the children learned in the *Talking about Touching* program. Now would be a good time to review the following with your child at home:

- The Always Ask First Rule: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants you to go somewhere or someone wants to give you something.
- 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.

By making sure that your child fully understands these rules, you will be helping him or her keep safe. You might ask your child some of the following questions so he or she can practice answering them:

- What would you do if a neighbor wanted you to go to her 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, be sure to let me know.

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

Sincerely,