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# **Talking About Touching<sup>®</sup>** **A Personal Safety Curriculum**

**Preschool/Kindergarten (Ages 4–6) and Grades 1–3**

**THIRD EDITION**

## **Trainer's Manual**

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# Overview

## Program Description

### What Is the *Talking About Touching* Program?

The *Talking About Touching* program for Preschool/Kindergarten and Grades 1–3 focuses on teaching children basic skills designed to help them keep safe from dangerous or abusive situations. Despite good intentions to provide a safe environment for children, adults cannot always be there to protect children from every dangerous or abusive situation. Using the materials provided in the *Talking About Touching* kit, parents, caregivers, child-care providers, and teachers can work together to provide the rules, information, encouragement, and practice that children need to help protect themselves.

### What Approach Does the *Talking About Touching* Program Use?

The *Talking About Touching* curriculum introduces the subject of child sexual abuse at each grade level within a general framework of safety.

- **Preschool/Kindergarten:** Unit I introduces common safety issues affecting children. Lesson topics include car safety, traffic safety, and fire safety. This basic context of safety is reinforced in Unit II, in which lessons about touching safety are introduced. Unit II opens with lessons that emphasize the positive aspects of touch in children’s everyday lives. The overall focus on safety, rather than sexuality, helps defuse the potentially difficult nature of talking to children about sexual abuse. This safety focus provides a straightforward way for adults and children to communicate about the subject.
- **Grades 1–3:** Unit I introduces common safety issues affecting children. Lesson topics include walking safety, fire safety, and gun safety. This basic context of safety is reinforced in Unit II when lessons about touching safety are introduced. Unit II opens with lessons that emphasize the positive aspects of touch in children’s everyday lives. The goal of the lessons in Unit III is to increase children’s ability to stand up for themselves in an assertive, but not aggressive, way and to ask for help in difficult, uncomfortable, or dangerous situations.

The *Talking About Touching* program recognizes the key role that parents play in protecting children from abuse. The curriculum includes *What Do I Say Now?*<sup>™</sup>, a parent education video designed to provide parents with knowledge and skills for abuse prevention. Parents and caregivers are reminded of the positive aspects of touch in healthy child development. By using a safety orientation when talking with children about sexual abuse, teachers and parents are able to reinforce the same strategies and vocabulary at school and at home. The program encourages parents to use anatomically correct language and a natural, matter-of-fact tone when talking with their children about their bodies. By doing so before the topic of sexual abuse is introduced, the children will be better able to report any abusive situation to their parents if it ever becomes necessary.

## **Pre/K** Scope and Sequence

### Optional parent handout

#### Unit I

##### **Personal Safety**

The goal of this unit is to increase children’s knowledge of and adherence to rules that will help keep them safe.

##### **Lesson 1: Learning Car Safety**

Following safety rules helps keep people safe. Always wearing a seatbelt helps keep people safe in a car.

##### **Lesson 2: Learning Traffic Safety**

Following safety rules helps keep children safe. Children should cross the street safely by looking in all directions first and holding hands. Children should say “No” to breaking safety rules.

##### **Lesson 3: Learning Fire Safety**

Following safety rules about fire is very important for children. Children should say “No” to breaking safety rules. When someone breaks a safety rule, children should tell a grown-up.

##### **Lesson 4: Learning Gun Safety—Never Playing with Guns**

Handling or playing with guns is dangerous for children.

##### **Lesson 5: Getting Found**

Children need to know how to stay safe when they are lost.

##### **Lesson 6: The Always Ask First Rule—Getting Permission Before Going with Someone**

An important people safety rule is: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants you to go somewhere with him or her.

##### **Lesson 7: The Always Ask First Rule—Getting Permission Before Accepting Gifts**

An important people safety rule is: Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants to give you something.

#### Unit II

## **Touching Safety**

The goal of this unit is to strengthen children's ability to distinguish between safe touch and unsafe touch and to increase children's knowledge of safety rules about touching.

### **Lesson 8: Getting and Giving Safe Touches**

Safe touches help people feel cared for and loved. They are good for your body.

### **Lesson 9: Dealing with Unsafe Touches**

Children can develop skills to help them resist or avoid unsafe touches.

### **Lesson 10: Saying "No" to Unwanted Touches**

Children (and adults) have a right to say how and by whom they are touched. Children can develop skills and vocabulary to help them avoid unwanted touches.

### **Lesson 11: Learning the Touching Rule**

Learning the Touching Rule will help children stay safe. The Touching Rule is: A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.

### **Lesson 12: Learning the Safety Steps** (Booster Lesson)

Learning the Safety Steps will help children stay safe. The Safety Steps are (1) Say words that mean "No"; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up.

### **Lesson 13: Using the Touching Rule**

Children should use the Safety Steps if someone breaks the Touching Rule.

### **Lesson 14: Joey Learns the Touching Rule** (Booster Lesson; video used)

Children should use the Safety Steps if someone breaks the Touching Rule. Children should not keep secrets about touching. It's never the child's fault.

### **Lesson 15: Sam's Story** (Big Book used)

Children should use the Safety Steps if someone breaks the Touching Rule. Children should not keep secrets about touching.

## **GRADE 1** Scope and Sequence

### Optional parent handout

#### Unit I

##### **Personal Safety**

The goal of this unit is to increase children’s knowledge of and adherence to rules that will help keep them safe.

##### **Lesson 1: Learning Bicycle Safety—Wearing Your Helmet**

Following safety rules helps keep people safe. Children can bicycle safely by wearing a helmet and following specific rules.

##### **Lesson 2: Learning Gun Safety—Never Playing with Guns**

Handling and playing with guns is dangerous for children.

##### **Lesson 3: The Always Ask First Rule**

Children need to ask parents or the person in charge first before going somewhere with someone or accepting a gift from someone.

#### Unit II

##### **Touching Safety**

The goal of this unit is to strengthen children’s ability to distinguish between safe touch and unsafe touch and to increase their knowledge of safety rules about touching.

##### **Lesson 4: Identifying Touches—Safe Touch/Unsafe Touch**

Safe touch is good for your body, and it makes you feel cared for, loved, and important. Unsafe touch is not good for your body and hurts your body or feelings.

##### **Lesson 5: Dealing with Unsafe Touch**

Children can develop skills to help them avoid or resist unsafe touches.

##### **Lesson 6: Physical Abuse—Telling a Grown-Up**

Children should tell a grown-up they trust if they are being abused.

##### **Lesson 7: Saying “No” to Unwanted Touch**

It is okay for children to say “No” to unwanted touch.

##### **Lesson 8: The Touching Rule**

Learning the Touching Rule helps children stay safe. The Touching Rule is: No one should touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.

##### **Lesson 9: Learning the Safety Steps (Booster Lesson)**

The Safety Steps help children know what to do if someone breaks the Touching Rule. The Safety Steps are (1) Say words that mean “No”; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up.

**Lesson 10: Using the Touching Rule** (Booster Lesson)

Children should not keep secrets about touching. It is never too late to tell about touching that breaks the Touching Rule.

**Unit III****Assertiveness and Support**

The goal of this unit is to increase children’s ability to stand up for themselves in an assertive, but not aggressive, way and to ask for help in difficult, uncomfortable, or dangerous situations.

**Lesson 11: Standing Up for Yourself by Saying “No”**

Being assertive and standing up for themselves can help keep children safe.

**Lesson 12: Getting Help If You Are Bullied**

When assertive behavior doesn’t work, it’s all right to ask for help.

**Lesson 13: Sam’s Story**

Children need to follow the Safety Steps—say words that mean “No,” get away, and tell a grown-up—if someone breaks the Touching Rule. Children should not keep secrets about touching.

## **GRADE 2** Scope and Sequence

### Optional parent handout

#### Unit I

##### **Personal Safety**

The goal of this unit is to increase children’s knowledge of and adherence to rules that will help keep them safe.

##### **Lesson 1: Fire Safety—Creating a Family Safety Plan**

Knowing and following specific fire safety rules are important factors in keeping children safe.

##### **Lesson 2: Gun Safety—Never Playing with Guns**

Handling and playing with guns is dangerous for children.

##### **Lesson 3: Home Safety—Answering the Phone**

Responding appropriately to unsafe phone calls is an important skill for children to know.

##### **Lesson 4: The Always Ask First Rule**

Children need to ask the person in charge first before going somewhere with someone or accepting a gift from someone.

#### Unit II

##### **Touching Safety**

The goal of this unit is to strengthen children’s ability to identify differences among safe touch, unsafe touch, and unwanted touch and to follow safety rules about touching.

##### **Lesson 5: Identifying Touches—Safe Touch/Unsafe Touch**

Safe touch is good for your body, and it makes you feel cared for, loved, and important. Unsafe touch is not good for your body and hurts your body or your feelings.

##### **Lesson 6: Unsafe Touch—Preventing Physical Abuse**

Children should tell a grown-up they trust if they are being physically abused.

##### **Lesson 7: Unwanted Touch**

It is okay for children to say “No” to unwanted touch.

##### **Lesson 8: The Touching Rule** (Booster Lesson)

Learning the Touching Rule helps children stay safe. The Touching Rule is: No one should touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.

##### **Lesson 9: Learning the Safety Steps** (Booster Lesson)

The Safety Steps help children know what to do if someone breaks the Touching Rule. The Safety Steps are (1) Say words that mean “No”; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up.

**Lesson 10: Secrets About Touching—Telling a Grown-Up**

Children should not keep secrets about touching. It is never too late to tell about touching that breaks the Touching Rule.

**Lesson 11: Using the Touching Rule with Peers—Asking for Help**

When older or bigger children try to break the Touching Rule, it is important to ask for help.

**Unit III****Assertiveness and Support**

The goal of this unit is to increase children’s ability to stand up for themselves in an assertive, but not aggressive, way and to ask for help in difficult, uncomfortable, or dangerous situations.

**Lesson 12: Finding Support—Talking to a Grown-Up**

Adults are part of a support system for children who need to talk about upsetting past experiences.

**Lesson 13: Standing Up for Yourself If You Are Bullied**

Bullying is unkind and unfair. Being assertive lessens the likelihood of being a target of bullying.

**Lesson 14: Speaking Out Against Bullying**

Speaking out against bullying is an important step toward stopping bullying behavior.

## **GRADE 3** Scope and Sequence

### Optional parent handout

#### Unit I

##### **Personal Safety**

The goal of this unit is to increase children’s knowledge of and adherence to rules that will help keep them safe.

##### **Lesson 1: Walking Safety**

Following specific walking safety rules helps keep children safe.

##### **Lesson 2: Fire Safety—Never Playing with Fire**

Knowing and following specific fire safety rules are important factors in keeping children safe.

##### **Lesson 3: Gun Safety—Never Playing with Guns**

Handling and playing with guns is dangerous for children.

##### **Lesson 4: The Always Ask First Rule**

Children should always ask first if someone wants them to do something or go somewhere with him or her.

#### Unit II

##### **Touching Safety**

The goal of this unit is to strengthen children’s ability to identify differences among safe touch, unsafe touch, and unwanted touch and to adhere to safety rules about touching.

##### **Lesson 5: Identifying Touches—Safe Touch/Unsafe Touch/Unwanted Touch**

The ability to differentiate among safe touch, unsafe touch, and unwanted touch is an important factor in keeping children safe.

##### **Lesson 6: Physical Abuse—Telling Secrets**

Children should tell a grown-up they trust if they are being abused.

##### **Lesson 7: The Touching Rule and the Safety Steps** (Booster Lesson)

Learning the Touching Rule helps children stay safe. The Touching Rule is: No one should touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy. The Safety Steps help children know what to do if someone breaks the Touching Rule. The Safety Steps are (1) Say words that mean “No”; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up.

##### **Lesson 8: Using the Touching Rule** (Booster Lesson)

Using the Touching Rule and the Safety Steps help children stay safe.

**Lesson 9: Telling Touching Secrets**

Children should not keep secrets about touching. It is never too late to tell about touching that breaks the Touching Rule.

**Unit III****Assertiveness and Support**

The goal of this unit is to increase children's ability to stand up for themselves in an assertive, but not aggressive, way and to ask for help in difficult, uncomfortable, or dangerous situations.

**Lesson 10: Learning to Be Assertive—Standing Up for Yourself**

Children need to respond assertively and safely when they find themselves in uncomfortable or dangerous situations in public places.

**Lesson 11: Solving a Problem—Talking It Out**

Adults are part of a support system for children who need to talk about upsetting past experiences.

**Lesson 12: Dealing with Bullying—Asking for Help**

Bullying is unkind and unfair. When standing up to being bullied doesn't work, asking for help is another way for children to be assertive.

**Lesson 13: Harassment—Knowing What to Do**

*Harassment* includes unwanted touch and rude comments or actions. Children should respond assertively to harassment and tell a trusted grown-up.

## What Classroom Materials Are Included in the *Talking About Touching* Curriculum?

Except where noted, all classroom materials listed are included in both the Preschool/Kindergarten and Grades 1–3 curriculum kits.

### Lesson Cards

Each lesson builds on and reinforces the skills learned in previous lessons. The basic strategy of the curriculum is to provide information and self-protective skills designed to reduce children’s vulnerability in dangerous or abusive situations. Children are taught rules about general safety. For example:

- Wearing a seatbelt
- Looking all ways before crossing a street
- Wearing a helmet when riding a bicycle
- Walking facing traffic
- Never playing with fire or guns

Rules about touching safety that focus on preventing sexual abuse are then introduced. The messages are simple and straightforward. Using lesson cards with stories and photographs, the teacher introduces each concept. Children are then given the opportunity to practice each skill.

### *Sam’s Story* (Big Book, Small Book, Audiocassette)

The curriculum includes a Big Book entitled *Sam’s Story*, which tells about Sam and how she learns to use the Touching Rule. The Big Book is intended to be read aloud. A small book version of *Sam’s Story* is also included with the materials, both for children to “read” to themselves and for parents or caregivers to check out and read to their children at home. *Sam’s Story* is available on audiocassette as well so that children can listen to the story and songs in a learning center or listen while the teacher turns the pages of the Big Book. The songs are taught to the children as part of the curriculum lesson.

### Safety Steps Poster

A poster is included with the curriculum kit to provide a visual cue for children as they learn the Safety Steps.

### *Joey Learns the Touching Rule* (Video)

*Joey Learns the Touching Rule* tells the story of Joey and how he uses the Touching Rule to prevent a potentially abusive situation. It is presented in the last lesson of the Preschool/Kindergarten *Talking About Touching* curriculum. The video can also be used as a review of the touching safety lessons. Note: This video is not used in the Grades 1–3 curriculum.

## How Are Families Involved?

### Family Education Night

Family involvement is essential to the success of any personal safety program. Committee for Children recommends that you schedule a meeting with parents and caregivers before the implementation of the curriculum. Parents are encouraged to support and reinforce the program’s safety messages and

rules at home and to initiate discussions about family safety rules with their children. An easy-to-follow outline for a family education night is included in the Involving Families section of the Trainer's Manual (see page 41).

### **What Do I Say Now? (Video)**

*What Do I Say Now?*, a video for parents and caregivers, covers the basic points of how to protect children from child sexual abuse. The video provides information about child sexual abuse, guidelines for talking to children about personal safety, and ideas for responding to disclosure. The video can be shown at the family education night or be made available to parents and caregivers to check out for viewing at home. Guidelines for using the video, discussion questions, and a handout master are included with the video.

### **Take-Home Letters**

*Talking About Touching* Take-Home Letters are provided in the Trainer's Manual for your reference (see page 41). Reproducible masters are included in the Preschool/Kindergarten and Grades 1–3 Teacher's Guides. These letters are an integral part of the program—they describe essential themes of the lessons and offer suggested activities for parents or caregivers to do at home with their children. The letters play a key role in the effectiveness of the curriculum, so be sure to send them home when suggested on the lesson cards.

## **Background Information**

### **What Is Child Sexual Abuse?**

*Child sexual abuse* is the exploitation or coercion of a child by an older person (adult or adolescent) for the sexual gratification of the older person. Child sexual abuse involves a continuum of behavior ranging from verbal, nonphysical abuse to forcible touching offenses. It can take the form of a single encounter with an exhibitionist, occasional fondling by a casual acquaintance, years of ongoing abuse by a family member, rape, or exploitation through pornography and/or prostitution.

### **How Big Is the Problem?**

Studies indicate that about 20% of America women and 5%–10% of American men experienced some form of sexual abuse as children. The peak ages of vulnerability are from 7 to 13, although reports also indicate that one-third to one-half of child sexual abuse victims are under the age of 7 (Finckelhor, 1994; American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, 1996). The incidence of child sexual abuse for children with disabilities is 1.75 times greater than for children without disabilities (National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, 1993). The sexual abuse of children occurs in every class, race, religion, neighborhood, cultural group, and ethnic group.

### **What Are the Dynamics of Child Sexual Abuse?**

Child sexual abuse is rarely committed by the “dangerous stranger” about whom children have traditionally been warned. Based on general population surveys, in 70%–90% of the reported cases, the perpetrator is actually someone the child knows. Of all offenders, 90% are male, and teenagers represent up to 40%. Abuse by parent figures constitutes between 6% and 16% of all cases, and abuse by any relative is reported in approximately 25% of all cases (Finkelhor et al., 1990; Saunders, Kilpatrick, Resnick, Hanson, and Lipovsky, 1992). In clinical studies, parent figures make up a third of the offenders, and all relatives constitute half of the offenders (Elliott and Briere, 1994; Gomes-Schwartz, Horowitz, and Cardarelli, 1990).

Most often, the abuse begins at a very young age with the handling of the child’s genitals, and it is kept secret through bribes, threats, or special attention. The “average” sexual abuse “incident” is not a one-time event. Rather, it is an ongoing cycle of exploitation that lasts for one or more years. Often, the abuse escalates to penetration and/or oral-genital contact (Conte and Schuerman, 1987; Elliott and Briere, 1994; Finkelhor et al., 1990; Russell, 1984; Gomes-Schwartz et al., 1990).

### **Why Don’t Children Tell About Abuse?**

Children don’t tell about sexual abuse for a number of reasons. In the early stages, they may simply be unaware that the touching is inappropriate. Later, they may be bribed or coerced into keeping it secret by threats of frightening consequences to themselves or their families. Children are often made to feel responsible not only for the abuse itself, but also, if they should tell, for any consequences to their families. Finally, children may conceal the abuse because they simply do not know how or whom to tell.

### **What Is the Impact of Child Sexual Abuse on the Child?**

Early sexual victimization can result in life-long problems. The degree of trauma depends on the age and personality of the child, the offender’s relationship to the child, the nature and duration of the abuse, and the way disclosure is handled (especially the degree of support that the family offers the victim). Increased vulnerability to re-victimization, prostitution, delinquency, suicide or suicide attempts, and depression are often associated with early and long-term abuse.

## **Prevention Research**

### **Can Young Children Learn Personal Safety Skills?**

A wide variety of child sexual abuse prevention programs have been evaluated in the last 15 years. A meta-analysis of 27 studies indicates that children who participated in prevention programs had statistically significant improvement of their knowledge of personal safety skills over control group children (Davis and Gidycz, 2000). In studies of elementary students, researchers found that program participants exhibited more knowledge and skills, plus more ability to discriminate between appropriate and inappropriate touch, compared with controls. These results were also true for preschool

programs that involved more active modes of training. Although very young children did not achieve 100% accuracy in recognizing and responding to potentially abusive situations, they did score much higher than control children in most studies (Wurtele and Saslawsky, 1986; Woods and Dean, 1986; Wurtele, Marrs, and Miller-Perrin, 1987). The meta-analysis of studies shows that children in early elementary school and preschool learned most from prevention programs (Davis and Gidycz, 2000).

Although knowledge measures show improvement in student learning (Conte, Rosen, Saperstein, and Shermack, 1985; Wurtele and Miller-Perrin, 1992), not all concepts are equally well understood due to developmental variation in comprehension. Resistance skill scores are higher when children participate in active-learning programs that provide multiple opportunities for children to practice the skills during the program (Blumberg, Chadwick, Fogarty, Speth, and Chadwick, 1991; Wurtele, Marrs, and Miller-Perrin, 1987).

### **What Kinds of Prevention Programs Help Children Learn Skills Best?**

Children are more likely to learn self-protection strategies if they have received comprehensive prevention instruction, including opportunities to practice the skills in class, multi-day presentations, and materials to take home and discuss with their parents (Davis and Gidycz, 2000; Finkelhor, Asdigian, and Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995). Programs incorporating more active modes of teaching (modeling, rehearsal, and reinforcement) have resulted in greater gains in knowledge and skills than those employing a didactic approach (Davis and Gidycz, 2000; Wurtele and Saslawsky, 1986; Woods and Dean, 1986; Wurtele, Marrs, and Miller-Perrin, 1987). Resistance skill scores are higher when children participate in active-learning programs that provide multiple opportunities for children to practice the skills during the program (Blumberg, Chadwick, Fogarty, Speth, and Chadwick, 1991; Wurtele, Marrs, and Miller-Perrin, 1987).

### **What Kinds of Prevention Programs Are Found to Be Ineffective?**

In general, one-time presentations focused on personal safety, such as single puppet shows or video presentations, have been found to be ineffective in teaching children personal safety skills (Davis and Gidycz, 2000). The approach that teaches children to use their feelings as a guide to determine whether a situation is unsafe has also been found to be ineffective with young children. When children are taught to use a safety rule as the primary decision-making tool, they demonstrate a greater ability to recognize unsafe situations (Wurtele, Kast, Miller-Perrin, and Kondrick, 1989).

### **Do Children Use Prevention Skills?**

When researchers at the University of New Hampshire asked 2,000 young people between the ages of 10 and 16 this question, they found that a surprisingly high percentage (40%) reported specific instances in which they used information or skills that they had learned in an anti-victimization program to protect themselves (Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995).

One goal of personal safety programs is to encourage children to report past or ongoing abuse. One method of assessing this skill is to ask children whether they should tell someone if they were in-

volved in an abusive situation. Prior to participating in a personal safety program, few participants thought they should report secret touching (Wurtele and Sarno, 1996). Post-program findings indicate that both preschool- and school-aged children were more willing to tell; however, preschoolers had difficulty describing the abusive situation to a resource person (Wurtele and Sarno, 1996).

These studies suggest that well-conceived and well-implemented programs may influence children's ability to use abuse prevention skills. More research would be helpful on this subject, although there is difficulty in implementing a study that would accurately test children's use of prevention skills without exposing them to realistic role-play of unsafe situations. This, of course, is neither ethical nor appropriate.

### **Are There Unintended Negative Effects of Personal Safety Instruction?**

The majority of studies to date (Wurtele, 1989; Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995) do not support the contention that personal safety instruction produces fear and anxiety about safety issues in children exposed to such programs. Children's appropriate-touch recognition scores did not decrease significantly, indicating that program participants are not likely to misinterpret nurturing touches or make false accusations (Wurtele, Kast, Miller-Perrin, and Kondrick, 1989). In their nationally representative study of youth, Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman found that some respondents reported that exposure to personal safety training resulted in more worry about abuse and more fear of adults. However, the children with increased worry and fear were also the children who, along with their parents, reported having the most positive feelings about the programs and the greatest utilization of skills. This data suggest that the level of worry and fear induced by the programs was appropriate to the subject (Finkelhor and Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995). Exploring this topic in greater depth, one initial study (Casper, 1999) looked at characteristics of children with positive or negative reactions to a prevention program. One finding of this study was that children who are generally more anxious and who feel that they have no control over what happens to them, especially girls, are more likely to become afraid of being touched inappropriately. This study recommended careful preparation and debriefing for these children to alleviate anxiety aroused by the program.

### **Has the *Talking About Touching* Program Been Evaluated?**

The 1996 editions of the *Talking About Touching* program for Preschool/Kindergarten and Grades 1–3 were evaluated during piloting of the curriculum. Findings include the following:

- At all levels, scores from pre- and post-interviews of students who participated in the program show a statistically significant improvement in knowledge and application of the safety skills taught in the curriculum.
- At the Preschool/Kindergarten level, students' perceived competence in using the skills increased significantly from pre- to posttest. Students' reported anxiety at pretest was low and did not increase significantly at posttest.
- In Grades 1–3, students' perceived competence in performing the skills did not significantly improve from pre- to posttest; however, a significant finding was not likely given the high level of perceived competence reported at pretest. Students' reported anxiety at pretest was low and did not increase

significantly at posttest.

For a summary report of the pilot study, see page 76 in the Trainer's Manual.

## Curriculum Foundation

The content and method of instruction in the *Talking About Touching* curriculum were developed using information from current research on child abuse prevention and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1973). According to these resources, the most effective prevention programs are comprehensive and include multi-day presentations, active-learning strategies, and supporting materials for parents. The *Talking About Touching* program is based on this model.

### Information About Offenders

Because the majority of child molesters are people known to the child, prevention efforts should not be focused on "stranger danger." The *Talking About Touching* curriculum teaches children to recognize, resist, and report specific unsafe behaviors, regardless of the person's relationship to the child. Lesson stories are based on what we know about how offenders commonly groom children to be victims; for example, by buying children gifts, telling them to keep the touching a secret, and giving them special attention.

### Integration with Safety Instruction

The *Talking About Touching* curriculum teaches basic rules and skills for protective action in a variety of dangerous situations. Car, traffic, and fire safety lessons are taught first at the Preschool/Kindergarten level; in the Grades 1–3 curriculum, walking, traffic, fire, and gun safety lessons are taught first. This establishes a parallel logic to the later touching safety lessons. It allows teachers and students to establish a comfort level with the instruction format before introducing touching rules. It also enables adults and children to view abuse prevention within the context of safety education rather than sex education.

### Rules-Based Approach

Research indicates that young children are more successful in applying a rules-based, rather than a feelings-based, approach to safety (Wurtele, Kast, Miller-Perrin, and Kondrick, 1989). Instead of relying on feelings as a measure of safety, the *Talking About Touching* curriculum emphasizes learning and applying simple safety rules.

### Social Learning Theory

*Talking About Touching* teaching strategies are based on Social Learning Theory, which was first outlined by Bandura (1973). According to this theory, children learn best by first observing a skill dem-

onstration and then practicing the skill while receiving feedback and reinforcement. In *Talking About Touching* lessons, the teacher models the skill or skills being taught, then provides an opportunity for the students to practice. The teacher gives feedback on performance and reinforces effective use of skills through “transfer of learning” suggestions.

## Booster Lessons

Periodic review of safety rules and skills contributes greatly to retention. Two lessons at each grade level of the *Talking About Touching* curriculum are identified as Booster Lessons (see each grade level’s Scope and Sequence for specific lesson numbers). These lessons deal with the Touching Rule and Safety Steps that children learn in the program—it is crucial that children understand these concepts and skills, so review is important. Present the designated Booster Lessons in sequence with the rest of the lessons. Then, following the completion of the program, present each Booster Lesson twice more during the year.

## Family Inclusion

The most effective prevention programs are those in which parents are actively involved. While children can be taught skills that will help protect them from molesters, they cannot be expected to always protect themselves on their own. Parents and caregivers need to be actively involved in creating a safe environment for their children. The *What Do I Say Now?* video, discussion questions, and handout, were all developed to support adults in becoming active participants in prevention. The *Talking About Touching* curriculum also includes Take-Home Letters for parents, an outline for a family education night presentation, and a small book version of *Sam’s Story*, which can be checked out by parents for reading to their children at home.

## Private Body Parts

When teaching touching safety rules, you will have to decide what terminology to use for private body parts. It is recommended that you use anatomically correct names. For boys, the private body parts are the penis in the front and the buttocks, or bottom, in the back. For girls, the private body parts are the vulva, vagina, and breasts in the front and the buttocks, or bottom, in the back. By using these terms in a natural, matter-of-fact way, you will help children communicate accurately about any touching problems or questions they may have. The video *What Do I Say Now?* also encourages parents to use anatomically correct terms with children.

In some communities and schools, using these terms may be difficult. The *Talking About Touching* program, therefore, offers the option of simply referring to private body parts simply as “those parts of the body covered by a bathing suit.” You will need to decide which approach is most appropriate for your classroom and community.

## Bullying/Harassment

Many teachers who have used earlier versions of the Grades 1–3 *Talking About Touching* program have requested the inclusion of lessons on bullying and harassment. These teachers recognized that skills

taught in the curriculum could be directly applied to the prevention of these problems. Research supports the need for early intervention and prevention of bullying and harassment. Findings indicate that 81% of eighth- to eleventh-grade students in America's public schools have experienced some form of sexual harassment during their school lives. Most students' first experience with sexual harassment occurs between sixth and ninth grades, while 6% experience it even before third grade (AAUW, 1993).

Nan Stein of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women has studied bullying as an antecedent to sexual harassment (1995). She advocates using the subject of bullying as a way to universalize the discussion of sexual harassment and aid in the development of empathy for victims. For all these reasons, lessons specifically addressing bullying and harassment have been added to the Grades 1–3 *Talking About Touching* curriculum.

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# Implementing the Program

## Implementation Planning

### Schoolwide Implementation

The *who*, *where*, and *when* of implementing the *Talking About Touching* program are critical issues for ensuring its effectiveness. Committee for Children recommends that students receive the program at each primary grade level (K–3) and that all school staff receive training. There are many advantages to instituting this approach. It takes time to change behavior and learn new skills. The program is most effective when students receive consistent instruction for several years. Not only will the safety skills be reinforced each year, but the children will also process the information differently as they mature. If schoolwide implementation is not possible, it is helpful to have at least two teachers within a school teaching the *Talking About Touching* curriculum so they can support each other and share concerns and successes. In addition, certain skill practices are best modeled with the help of another adult in the classroom.

### Creating a *Talking About Touching* Support Team

If your school has decided to implement the curriculum schoolwide, Committee for Children recommends creating a support team to provide leadership and coordination in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum. When choosing support team members, look for staff and parents who are committed to the successful implementation of the *Talking About Touching* program and who have enough flexibility in their work schedules to be able to offer support. Support team members might include the following:

- Principal or vice principal
- Counselor, social worker, or school psychologist
- Nurse
- Parent representative(s)
- Classroom teacher(s) representing those who teach the curriculum

### Who Should Teach the Curriculum?

Committee for Children has found that classroom teachers are usually the most effective curriculum presenters. There are several reasons for this:

- Teachers have established themselves as support people to whom the students can turn at any time.
- Teachers can ensure that all students receive the same information and can follow up when a student has missed a lesson.
- Teachers' knowledge of individual students enables them to respond to behavioral indicators of changes.
- Teachers notice when a child hasn't grasped the concepts of a lesson, and, if necessary, they can

reteach or review concepts.

If a particular classroom teacher feels uncomfortable with the materials, it is better for someone else, such as the school counselor, social worker, or nurse, to teach the curriculum. Ideally, the teacher would still familiarize him- or herself with the materials and be present when lessons are taught so students know that the teacher is supportive. The teacher would also be able to identify classroom opportunities for skill practice and activities, and to facilitate the transfer of learning. School counselors, social workers, and nurses will often help facilitate implementation. They can provide assistance in planning for training, organizing discussion groups for teachers, assisting teachers in modeling skill practices, observing lesson presentations, and giving feedback. They can also inform classes about the services that school counselors, social workers, and nurses provide to the students.

### **Family Involvement**

Research suggests that children will learn more and feel less anxious about the subject of sexual abuse if their parents talk to them and help them practice prevention skills (Casper, 1999). Therefore, parental support is crucial to the success of the *Talking About Touching* curriculum.

Involving parents in both planning and implementation will strengthen parent cooperation and support. Ways to involve parents include:

- Offering an overview of the curriculum at a Family Education Night (or during individual parent conferences).
- Presenting the video *What Do I Say Now?* at the Family Education Night (or making it available for parents to check out).
- Sending home the Take-Home Letters that accompany certain lessons.

An outline for a Family Education Night presentation and all *Talking About Touching* Take-Home Letters are included in the Involving Families section of this Trainer's Manual for your reference (see page 41).

### **Staff Training**

All school staff should understand their role in identifying and reporting child abuse. A written reporting procedure should be distributed to all staff. Each year, the school's reporting procedures should be reviewed, and a complete training on issues of abuse should be offered to new staff. Committee for Children offers training for teaching the *Talking About Touching* curriculum more effectively. This should be offered to teachers and other staff who will teach the curriculum. Committee for Children also offers training for trainers.

All staff should learn to recognize the signs of child abuse and be trained in how to respond to disclosure. Students are more likely to use self-protection strategies if they are supported by the entire school staff through teaching, monitoring, and reinforcement of the skills presented in the curriculum.

Many states have produced their own training videotapes that outline individual state guidelines for reporting. Contact your state or local office of the Department of Health and Human Services, the appropriate Child Protective Services agency, or your state Attorney General's office for more information. Other resources are listed in Appendix B (see page 75).

Following are elements to consider when planning staff training.

**Include the Following People:**

Teachers	Bus drivers
Parents	Food service personnel
Volunteers	Special education assistants
Teaching assistants	Substitute teachers
Custodians	Specialists
Secretaries	Other

**Be Sure to Cover the Following Topics:**

- Basic knowledge of child abuse and neglect
- Physical and behavioral indicators of child abuse and neglect
- Local and state laws regarding reporting
- Child abuse and neglect reporting policies
- Overview of the concepts and skills taught in *Talking About Touching* lessons
- Modeling and practice of key teaching strategies, such as facilitating student skill practice

**Additional Topics You May Wish to Cover:**

- Overview of age-appropriate touching of students by staff
- Childhood growth and development, including what constitutes normal sexuality in children
- Positive discipline techniques
- Setting limits
- Presentation by local Child Protective Services representative to familiarize staff with CPS procedures and personnel

## How to Teach the Curriculum

### The Lesson Cards

The lessons are designed to provide ease of presentation and to ensure that the concepts and strategies are presented in a straightforward and consistent manner. The lessons should be taught in sequence, as each builds upon skills presented in previous lessons. The preparation section (in the left column of each card) contains the following:

- Concepts
- Objectives
- Materials
- Notes to the Teacher

- Warm-Up/Review
- Story and Discussion
- Skill Practice
- Activities
- Summary

The final section of each card (at the end of the right column) guides the teacher in providing follow-up and reinforcement of the concepts and skills presented in the lesson. This section includes the following:

- Transfer of Learning
- Additional Activity Ideas
- Take-Home Reminder

## Preparation

Prepare for each lesson by first reading the preparation section (in the left column of each card), which includes the following:

**Concepts.** The concepts identify the main ideas and skills taught in the lesson.

**Objectives.** The objectives are framed in terms of skills that the students should be able to perform after learning the lesson. Teachers should keep these objectives clearly in mind when teaching each lesson.

**Materials.** Here you'll find a list of all the materials you will need to teach the lesson and do the activities.

**Notes to the Teacher.** This section provides background information related to the safety skills taught in each lesson. After you have reviewed these topics, consider the Story and Discussion questions, noting especially how they present and reinforce each of the safety skills. Prepare for the Skill Practice, being sure that you have all necessary materials. Familiarize yourself with the Activity. And prepare for the Transfer of Learning by choosing which classroom activities you could target for practicing the new skills. You may also wish to try one of the Additional Activity Ideas. These usually include reading selected books to the class or having students read them on their own (see Appendix A, page 67) as a means of reinforcing key concepts presented in the lesson.

## Using Puppets

Educators have long observed young children's captivated response to puppets. When it comes to children's engagement in a topic, puppets can have a compelling effect. Preliminary research indicates that use of puppets can increase the effectiveness of programs (Davis and Gidycz, 2000).

In the *Talking About Touching* Preschool/Kindergarten and Grade 1 lessons, the Warm-Up/Review and Skill Practice sections can all be adapted for using a puppet simply by having a puppet speak the words the teacher normally would.\* A puppet can also be a character in the role-plays. Keep in mind



that the children do not need a polished performance. The mere presence of a puppet, accompanied by the use of simple movements and a normal voice, will delight them.

Opportunities for using puppets are included in many of the lessons at each grade level. A puppet icon appears on the lesson cards wherever a puppet might be used. A hand puppet with a kindly demeanor, arms, and recognizable face is recommended. The arms are necessary so that the children can identify different kinds of safe touch (for example, holding or shaking hands, patting on the back).

\* Puppet use may also work in the Grades 2 and 3 lessons. If you are a Grade 2 or 3 teacher, simply use your own judgment to determine how well your students would respond to the puppet.

## Teaching a Lesson

Following are some tips for handling the various lesson sections in the classroom.

**Warm-Up/Review.** This section provides a brief review of the previous lesson or a warm-up activity to help set the tone for the current lesson. By observing the children, you will be able to determine whether you need to reteach the previous lesson or provide additional time for skill practice.

**Story and Discussion.** When presenting a lesson, direct the students to look at the photograph on the front of the lesson card while you read the text of the story and discussion questions on the back. Make sure that each student can see the photograph clearly. On the text side of the card, all the lines that you will say to the students during the lesson appear in **bold type**.

The success of the program hinges on your ability to successfully facilitate classroom discussion. The format of the suggested discussion questions discourages simple yes/no responses—they begin with phrases like “What might happen if . . . ?” or “How do you think . . . ?” or “How can you tell . . . ?” Do not become sidetracked in discussions that are not directly related to the lesson objectives.

When responding to students, refrain from placing value judgments on their answers. Saying, for example, “That’s one idea. What is another?” encourages more participation than “That’s a good idea. Does anyone have another one?” The latter response may inhibit students who fear that their own suggestions may not be as “good.”

Possible responses appear in parentheses after each question. These are meant as suggestions, not absolutes—the children will naturally generate additional ideas.

**Skill Practice (Teacher Modeling).** After presenting the story and discussing the targeted skill, you will often need to first demonstrate, or model, the skill to be practiced. Research has shown that modeling is an effective means of promoting the learning of prosocial skills (Bandura, 1986; Gresham and Elliot, 1993). Modeling is also valuable because it allows teachers to share their human side, and it shows that modeling can be fun and that mistakes are okay.

You and a student can model most skills, although you may want to enlist another adult to help with

some of the skill practices. Ideally, you'll want to rehearse the skill with the student or adult assistant. If this isn't possible, at least spend some time before each lesson thinking about how you plan to model the particular skill. Whenever you (or the other adult) play the role of someone who is trying to get the child to do something unsafe, you may want to have that person wear a hat or scarf to clarify that this is just a role-play. Another option is to use a puppet to play the role.

When modeling a particular skill, keep in mind the following guidelines (some will not apply to every situation):

- Model the skill by playing the role of the child in the story.
- As you model the skill, use language a child would use. You can also adapt the situation to allow for regional or cultural differences.
- Model the behavioral steps. You may want to replay the scene, pointing to the steps on the poster as you do them.
- Keep the skill demonstration simple by performing the steps without a lot of extraneous dialogue or action.

After modeling the skill, doing the following can be beneficial:

- Have the class identify the steps you followed.
- Discuss the outcome of using the skill.
- Invite a critique by asking what you did well and how you might improve.
- Model self-reinforcement. Say, for example, "I think I did a good job."

At first, you may feel uncomfortable modeling skills. With practice, however, modeling can quickly become an enjoyable activity.

**Skill Practice (Student Practice).** Without student practice of a skill, the positive effects of modeling are usually short-lived. Student skill practices provide an effective means for practicing behavioral skills (Gresham and Elliott, 1993). Suggested skill practice scenarios are listed on the lesson card.

Students who perform with you or another student in front of the class should receive immediate feedback from you and the rest of the class. Phrase your questions to elicit constructive comments. For example: "Did Diane follow the safety rules?" "What did Diane do well?" "What could she do differently?"

Provide reinforcement in the form of encouragement when skill practices are done well. Make comments specific, such as, "You did a good job of looking right at me when you said that."

Be prepared—many students may want to be on stage. If your class size is greater than ten, some children may not be able to sit still through all the student skill practices. Additional skill practices can be performed during the week, and thus serve as reinforcements of the lessons.

Be sure that every student has a chance to participate in a skill practice with you or another child to ensure that they all learn the targeted skill. It is not necessary to force every student to perform in front of the class. Instead, the emphasis should be on providing an opportunity for each student to participate in practicing the new skill, either individually or in groups.

**Activities.** Activities appear on the lesson cards after the Skill Practice section. They include physi-

cal exercises, games, project suggestions, and other ideas for providing closure to the lesson. Items needed for activities are noted in the Materials list.

**Summary.** To provide a review and closure, a summary script is included in each lesson.

**Transfer of Learning.** The long-term effectiveness of the skills presented in this curriculum requires applying the skills to real-life situations. While this section is short and appears at the end of the lesson, it is nonetheless one of the most critical. It offers the teacher ideas for how to facilitate the students' use of the newly taught skill in the classroom, on the playground, and at home.

**Additional Activity Ideas.** For some lessons, additional activities are suggested. Ideas often include the option of sharing recommended books with the class. Annotated Lists of children's books that reinforce lesson themes and concepts are located in Appendix A (see page 67). You may choose to read any of the books aloud in class and/or to send books home with children for independent reading or as read-alouds with parents. If you decide to incorporate classroom read-alouds, it's best not to do so immediately following a lesson so children aren't sitting too long at one time.

**Take-Home Reminder.** Parents and caregivers must be informed about the *Talking About Touching* program so they can support their children's learning and use of safety and touching rules. The Take-Home icon appears at the end of those lessons that include Take-Home Letters. Copies of the letters are located in this manual for your reference (see page 41).

## Classroom Guidelines

Below are suggestions to help maximize your efforts at making the *Talking About Touching* program an integral—and meaningful—part of your curriculum.

**Setting up the classroom.** The physical setup of the classroom can affect students' involvement and interaction during the lesson and have a direct bearing on the quality of their learning experience. If possible, arrange the classroom so that the lessons can be presented in a circle or horseshoe arrangement. This allows students to see each other and the teacher clearly, encouraging involvement and inviting discussion. This arrangement also provides a stage for the skill practice in the center of the circle or at the open end of the horseshoe.

Some teachers have found it helpful to teach *Talking About Touching* lessons at a "station" with a small group of students, while a teaching assistant or parent monitors the rest of the class in other activities. This provides the opportunity for more students to be actively involved in the lessons, and it can help keep behavior-management problems in check.

**Establishing ground rules.** Establish clear behavioral guidelines for conduct at the beginning of the program. Encourage students to participate in making the rules. Practice phrasing each rule in a positive way that clearly defines the expected behaviors. For example, instead of saying, "Don't talk out of turn," say, "Raise your hand and wait until you're called on." Setting a positive tone from the start will be a great aid in the effective implementation of the *Talking About Touching* program.

**Setting the pace.** The *Talking About Touching* program is designed to appeal to children's physical and

intellectual pacing needs. It's up to you to establish a smooth pace while getting the concepts and skills across. Teachers with large classes will find this especially challenging. Sometimes certain students will be so interested in a given lesson that your challenge will become allowing those interested students to be heard while keeping everyone interested and involved.

**Encouraging participation.** You may have children in your classroom who are generally more anxious than the others or who feel overwhelmed by aspects of their lives that are beyond their control. These children may feel heightened anxiety following *Talking About Touching* lessons. If possible, spend extra time with these children, preparing them beforehand and talking with them afterward. Involving their parents will also help lessen these children's anxiety.

With most lessons, some students will eagerly participate in group discussions and activities; others will hang back and participate very little. As a result, you will want to develop facilitation techniques that encourage all students' participation. When asking questions, for example, pay attention to the wait time. By waiting 5–10 seconds, you can usually double participation—by then, most of the students will have had adequate time to think about their answers.

You may notice that some children thrive on the physical activities and skill practices but “drop out” during discussions. You can encourage their participation by having them physically point to the photograph for certain answers—after you've asked, for example, “How can you tell that Maria is thinking about what to do?” Another method is to include short role-plays in the story section, such as “Can you show me what a sad face looks like?”

To ensure that all students have an opportunity to be heard, you can first have everyone share their answers with the child sitting next to them. Follow this up with an invitation to everyone to share their ideas with the entire group. This is especially helpful when working with large groups. You may also ask a question and, once students' hands are up, say, “I will call on Enrique, Joan, and Samuel this time.” If you use this method, assure the students that you will call on everyone at some point during the lesson.

Sometimes students will stay focused on answering a particular question even after you've moved on to another. One way to deal with this is to simply say, “Now I have another question” and proceed to the next one. This will help the students stay with you.

Rephrasing a question is another way to encourage involvement. This can be accomplished by saying, “Think of one thing Jamie can do about his problem and then raise your hand.” Wait until all hands are raised before calling on any one student. When you practice these and similar techniques, classroom discussions can be kept lively and flowing, and participation can become the norm.

**Handling disruptive behavior.** If students give silly answers, redirect them to the task at hand by referring to the question being discussed. You can say, for example, “That's one way of looking at it” or “That's one idea. What is another?” Then quickly move on to another student's suggestion.

When one student's behavior threatens to disrupt a lesson, gently remind him or her of classroom

ground rules. Restless fidgeting can sometimes be curbed by letting the child hold a stuffed animal or squeeze a soft ball. An extremely disruptive student can be directed to sit nearby but slightly apart from the group. She or he can still benefit from the lesson but be less of a distraction to the other students. If the disruptive behavior seems to be directly related to lesson content, this may be an indicator that the child has been abused. Follow up later by talking with that child one-on-one.

If a child discloses during a lesson, explain that you will talk to him or her privately after the lesson.

If the group as a whole becomes restless, set the lesson aside. You can always come back to it later. Most lessons can be divided into sections if necessary. If restlessness is a recurring problem, however, you may want to schedule the lessons at a different time of day.

**Finding the time to teach the program.** The *Talking About Touching* program fits well into curriculum guidelines. It not only teaches safety skills, but also academic readiness skills and concepts common to health education curricula. The curriculum should not be viewed as an add-on, but as a tool for meeting key grade-level objectives.

Individual lessons provide an appropriate focus for circle time. You may want to schedule lessons for specific days and times. In order to help every child in your class be safe, be sure to provide reviews for any students who miss lessons.

Depending on the class size, each Preschool/Kindergarten lesson will take approximately 20–35 minutes and each Grades 1–3 lesson will take approximately 25–40 minutes. Following is a detailed look at estimated times for each lesson section:

- **Warm-Up/Review**—5 minutes (Pre/K and Grades 1–3)
- **Story and Discussion**—5–10 minutes (Pre/K); 10–15 minutes (Grades 1–3)
- **Skill Practice**—5–10 minutes\* (Pre/K); 10–20 minutes\* (Grades 1–3)
- **Activities**—5–10 minutes (Pre/K and Grades 1–3; time noted is in addition to regular lesson time)

\* Time estimate includes teacher modeling of the skill and student practice.

## Child Abuse Disclosure

### Recognizing and Responding to Disclosure

Teachers are in a unique position to recognize and help abused children. A teacher's daily contact with students affords opportunities to observe changes in behavior and to be a resource for students if they need to talk with someone they can trust. Children disclose abuse in a variety of ways. They may come in to talk privately about what is going on, but this is one of the less common ways for children to disclose. More common ways include those that follow.

**Indirect hints:** "My brother wouldn't let me sleep last night." "Mr. Jones wears funny underwear." "My babysitter keeps bothering me."

In the case of physical abuse or neglect, a child may say: "I don't see my mom much anymore." "I was alone all weekend." "I don't like my new daddy." "My mom gets mean when she drinks."

A child may talk in these terms because she or he hasn't yet learned more specific vocabulary, feels too ashamed or embarrassed to talk more directly, or has promised not to tell. Gently encourage the child to be more specific, within the limits of his or her vocabulary, but bear in mind that in order to make a report you do not need to know exactly what form the abuse has taken.

**Disguised disclosure:** "I know someone with a touching problem." "What would happen if a girl told her mother she was being molested, but her mother didn't believe her?"

In the case of physical abuse or neglect, a child may say: "I know someone who gets beaten up by his dad." "What would happen if a girl told you her parents never take care of her?" Here the child might be talking about a friend or sibling, but is just as likely to be talking about her- or himself. Encourage the child to tell you what he or she knows about the "other child." In many cases, the child will eventually tell you whom she or he is talking about.

**Disclosure with strings attached:** "I have a problem but if I tell you about it, you have to promise not to tell anyone else."

Most children are all too aware that negative consequences will result if they break the secret of abuse. Often the offender uses the threat of these consequences to force the child to remain silent. Let the child know that you want to help and that the law requires you to make a report if any child discloses abuse. Just as the abuse itself is against the law, it is also against the law for you not to report. Respect confidentiality by discussing the abuse only with those directly involved in the legal and support processes. These people might include the school nurse or counselor, school principal, and/or the CPS investigator.

Suggestions for responding to disclosure include:

- Find a private place to talk with the child.
- Do not panic or express shock.
- Express your belief that the child is telling the truth.
- Use the child's vocabulary.
- Reassure the child that it is good to tell.
- Reassure the child that it is not his or her fault, that he or she is not bad.
- Determine the child's immediate need for safety.
- Let the child know that you will do your best to protect and support her or him.
- Tell the child what you will do.
- Report to the proper authorities.

If a child discloses during a lesson, acknowledge the child's disclosure and continue the lesson. Later, find a place where you can talk with the child alone. You may want to schedule the lessons before a playtime or recess so that, if need be, you have a natural opportunity to talk with a child privately.

Remember, your role is not to investigate the situation. It is your responsibility to report the abuse, set in motion the process of getting help for the child, and be supportive of the child.

## **Reporting Child Abuse**

### **The Law**

Child abuse laws vary depending on the state or province, as do those persons or agencies responsible for reporting and/or investigating suspected cases of abuse. For your state or province's reporting laws, contact your local Child Protective Services office or law enforcement agency. Educators who suspect child abuse are ethically and legally obligated to report it. Those who are mandated to report usually include teachers, school administrators, physicians, nurses, medical examiners, mental health professionals, social workers, day care providers, foster care workers, residential or institutional workers, and law enforcement officers.

Reporting laws specify that mandated reporters who "have reasonable cause to believe" that a child is being neglected or abused must report that suspicion to the state protective service or the police. Because each state has its own legal requirements and timelines for reporting, be sure to find out exactly what your state requires. Failure to report can result in a jail sentence and/or a significant fine.

### **School Policy**

Individual schools often have their own reporting procedures. Some schools require that the head teacher or principal be informed so he or she can then make the official report. Other policies require that the principal be informed before the teacher makes the report. Failure by administrators to report does not release teachers who suspect abuse from their legal obligations. By fully understanding your school's policy and local laws about reporting child abuse, you will be able to act appropriately in any given situation.

### **Reporting Specifics**

Reporting is a request for an investigation. Mandated reporters do not need to prove the abuse. It is the role of the state protective services or the police to investigate the report. They will determine the nature and extent of the problem, evaluate the child's condition and safety, and take appropriate action to protect the child. If additional incidents occur after the initial report has been made, make another report. Thorough documentation of injuries or disclosures will help ensure a successful investigation.

Mandated reporters are protected in most states and provinces in terms of liability and confidentiality. Reporters who have acted "in good faith" are immune from any civil or criminal charges that might result. A reporter can ask for confidentiality, in which case the reporter's name will not be released without written consent (except to those directly involved in the investigation) or unless the reporter is called upon to testify in court. Anonymous reports are accepted, but they are discouraged.

If a mandated professional is unsure whether she or he has reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused, she or he should call the state protective services for advice. Recognizing an abused child

is often difficult and laden with uncertainty. Some guidelines suggested by many teachers include:

- Resolve doubt in favor of the child.
- Ask other staff who know the child whether they have concerns.
- Let the children in your care know they can talk to you.
- If you sense that a child is trying to tell you something, let the child know that you will believe him or her and help with any problem.
- Be direct. Go to a private place and ask gently whether the child is having a problem and needs help.
- Respect the child's privacy by not discussing the situation with others unnecessarily.
- Call a Child Protective Services worker and describe the situation to get clarification on whether to report.

### **Ongoing Response to the Sexually Abused Child**

Many school personnel are uncertain about how to respond in an ongoing way to the child who has disclosed sexual abuse. The best approach is to acknowledge and try to normalize the situation as you would with a divorce, death, or other traumatic occurrence. It is not helpful to dwell on the abuse incident, thereby increasing the child's self-consciousness or shame. Neither is it helpful to tolerate inappropriate behavior out of fear of harming the child.

Possible responses that can help restore the child's self-esteem and sense of safety include the following:

- If school policy allows, maintain contact with the caseworker or therapist and the (non-offending) parent(s). You can be helpful in the treatment process, and they can be helpful to you in dealing with the child in the period following disclosure.
- Be cautious about touching a child who has been sexually abused. For these children, all touch may mean sexual touch. Even a nonintrusive touch, such as an arm around the shoulder, should be given only with the child's permission.
- Intervene immediately if a child acts out sexually with other children. Respond to the behavior as you would to any inappropriate behavior. Assure the child that you like him or her, but that what he or she is doing is not okay.
- Teach and model appropriate behavior. Do not allow the child to climb all over you. If necessary, you can sit the child on a chair next to yours (or near you on the floor). Sometimes you may need to refuse touches in a gentle, assertive way.
- If the child brings up the abuse, find a time and place to talk about it privately. Offer reassurance that you're sorry it happened, you know the situation is difficult, you're glad she or he told, and you promise to continue to support and care for her or him.
- Be respectful of the family. The family may feel shame, fear, and isolation. Respect their feelings and privacy. Do not discuss the abuse with anyone who's not involved.
- Be prepared for depression or letdown weeks or months after the disclosure. Withdrawal or acting out may recur.
- If the abuse is brought up in a group, deal with it then, matter-of-factly and briefly. Talk to the child later in private.
- All children need to know that they are likable. Abused children are particularly susceptible to

feelings of low self-esteem. Positive messages about just “being” will help them build a sense of identity. The following messages have been helpful for many children: “I’m glad you’re here.” “It’s good that you told. I can help you.”

- Be aware of your own reactions and get support for any feelings of powerlessness, pain, fear, or anger. If you made the original report, tell yourself—and get someone else you trust to remind you—that it is good that you reported. Whatever pain exists now would be greater if you had not reported.

## Clarifying Boundaries

### Guidelines for Appropriate Touching of Students

Because there are some educators who have sexually exploited their students, we have all become more sensitive about how we touch students. Below are guidelines for assessing your interactions with students.

**Evaluate.** Think about how you touch students. Use common sense in deciding which practices you want to continue and those you may want to change. Talk with your colleagues to help clarify your comfort level with boundary issues. Consider how your behavior appears to others. Remember, everyone may not realize your good intentions.

**Appropriate touch.** Problems develop because of inappropriate touching. This does not mean we should not touch children. Children who do not receive appropriate touches are even more vulnerable to exploitation. Children need hugs, but hugs should come from their needs—not yours. Model appropriate touch with colleagues and students. Be more conscious of how and why you touch students. Give options. (“Would you like a handshake or a hug?”) Some children may not want to be touched at all. Respect that. All touching of students should be respectful and consistent.

**Talk.** Establishing appropriate boundaries is the key to prevention. Talk to your students about touch. Have clear ground rules for touching. Cultural influences, beliefs, and personal history all affect a student’s comfort level. Encourage students to let you know if they are concerned about the way you or someone else touches them. Listen carefully and take any needed action immediately.

### Extracurricular Activities

When you are planning to take students on a field trip or other activity outside the school, keep the following guidelines in mind.

- Let your administrator know where you’re going.
- Get parent permission.
- Take more than one student.
- Take more than one adult.

### Student Interactions

- When alone with a student, leave the door open.
- Let another adult know when you will be meeting alone with a student.

- Do not spend the majority of your time with one student or a single group of students.
- Keep your personal life separate from your interactions with students.

Unique circumstances may arise when more intrusive touch is necessary. Special education, nursing, and coaching may require additional physical contact to maintain the health and safety of students. Always be clear (to yourself, students, and parents) about when, where, why, and how you are touching students.

## References

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# Involving Families

## Take-Home Letters

Involving families is critical to the effectiveness of the *Talking About Touching* program. Children are much more likely to retain and use personal safety skills if they have multiple opportunities to discuss and practice them. The Take-Home Letters are tools to support this outcome. They detail the concepts that the children are learning in the lessons and provide ways for families to support and encourage this learning. All *Talking About Touching* Take-Home Letters are provided in this Trainer's Manual for your reference. Listed below are suggestions for using the letters as they appear in the Teacher's Guide.

- Send home Take-Home Letter 1: The *Talking About Touching* Program before starting the curriculum. You will need to retype it to reflect your decision about holding a Family Education Night. All other letters are designed to be photocopied onto school letterhead and sent "as is." (Note: Be sure to include all necessary contact information.)
- Consider personalizing the letters. For example, you could assign an "illustrator" to each letter and, for each one, have the designated student decorate his or her copy before you photocopy it for the class to take home. Or you could make copies first and then let each student illustrate the one he or she will take home.
- Attach the letters to your weekly newsletter.
- If you teach children whose families do not speak English, find someone to translate the letters before you send them home. Many school districts have translation services available.
- For both Preschool/Kindergarten and Grades 1–3, there are two versions of the Take-Home Letter that deals with touching safety. Preschool/Kindergarten Take-Home Letter 5 and Grades 1–3 Take-Home Letter 4 are for those teachers who follow the recommended practice of teaching the anatomically correct names for private body parts in the classroom lesson (see page 22 for more information). Preschool/Kindergarten Take-Home Letter 5A and Grades 1–3 Take-Home Letter 4A are for those teachers who prefer to use only the nonspecific "those parts covered by a swimsuit" terminology.
- Many teachers have found it helpful to photocopy all the letters at the beginning of the curriculum so the letters are ready to go.
- Each grade level's Scope and Sequence (see pages 8–15) is an optional parent handout. It can be photocopied and distributed at the Family Education Night or sent out with Take-Home Letter 1 as a means of giving parents a complete outline of lesson concepts.
- Note that each time you teach a lesson identified as a Booster Lesson, you will send home a letter that corresponds to the lesson's sequence in the curriculum. So, when you teach a Booster Lesson for the first time, as part of the regular sequence, you will send home a letter that reflects the lessons "first use"; when you teach the same lesson as a review (or Booster Lesson) after completing the curriculum, you will send home a different letter explaining that you are reviewing the lesson's concepts in class. All letters are provided in the curriculum, and the information you will need is clearly indicated on the lesson cards.

## Pre/K SAMPLE Take-Home Letter 1: The *Talking About Touching* Program

Dear Family,

Our class will soon begin using *Talking About Touching: A Personal Safety Curriculum*. This program teaches children skills that will help them keep 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 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'd like to 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 \_\_\_\_\_

## Preschool/Kindergarten

## Take-Home Letter 2: Following Safety Rules

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 lbs. From this point until children weigh 80 lbs 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 on learning and following these safety rules. Please call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

## Preschool/Kindergarten

## Take-Home Letter 3: Getting Found

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,

## Preschool/Kindergarten

## Take-Home Letter 4: The Always Ask First Rule

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 better monitor his or her safety.

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

Sincerely,

### Preschool/Kindergarten

## Take-Home Letter 5: Touching Safety

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,

## Preschool/Kindergarten

## Take-Home Letter 5A: Touching Safety

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,

## Preschool/Kindergarten

## Take-Home Letter 6: The Safety Steps

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,

## Preschool/Kindergarten

## Take-Home Letter 7: *Talking About Touching* Review

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,

### Preschool/Kindergarten

## Take-Home Letter 8: Keep Practicing

Dear Family,

We have reached the end of *Talking About Touching: A Personal Safety Curriculum*. But the effort has just begun as far as what we can all do to help 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,

## Preschool/Kindergarten

## Take-Home Letter 9: *Talking About Touching* Review

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.
- 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,

## Grades 1–3 SAMPLE Take-Home Letter 1: The *Talking About Touching* Program

Dear Family,

Our class will soon 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 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. *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 \_\_\_\_\_

## Take-Home Letter 2: Following Safety Rules

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 lbs. From this point until children weigh 80 lbs 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 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 on learning and following these safety rules.

Sincerely,

## Grades 1–3

### Take-Home Letter 3: The Always Ask First Rule

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 better able to monitor his or her safety.

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

Sincerely,

## Grades 1–3

### Take-Home Letter 4: Touching Safety

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,

## Grades 1–3

### Take-Home Letter 4A: Touching Safety

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,

## Grades 1–3

### Take-Home Letter 5: The Safety Steps

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,

## Grades 1–3

### Take-Home Letter 6: Assertiveness

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. Review 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,

## Grades 1–3

### Take-Home Letter 7: Keep Practicing

Dear Family,

We have reached the end of *Talking About Touching: A 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 *What Do I Say Now?™ How to Help Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse* video, 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,

## Grades 1–3

### Take-Home Letter 8: *Talking About Touching* Review

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,

## Grades 1–3

## Take-Home Letter 9: *Talking About Touching* Review

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.
- 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,

# Family Education Night

## Preparation Tips

1. Read through the *What Do I Say Now?* Guidelines for Use (see page 64 for a reference copy).
2. Preview the *What Do I Say Now?* video included in your curriculum kit.
3. Read the discussion questions inside the video jacket and select five or six that you might use to spark discussion. If you expect a large group, you could write selected questions on a flip chart or on handouts to be distributed to smaller groups for discussion.
4. Fill in the phone numbers for your local Child Protective Services agency, police department, and crisis hotline to the parent handout outlining the material presented on the video (see page 65 for a reference copy). Photocopy this handout for each participant.
5. Photocopy the Scope and Sequence for the appropriate grade level(s) to hand out (see pages 8–15).
6. Photocopy the Guidelines for Choosing Babysitters to hand out (see page 66 for a reference copy).
7. Select sample lessons from the curriculum to “teach” to the adults. Be sure to include at least one on touching safety.

## Presentation Outline

Time: 2 hours

### A. Introductions

### B. Objectives

- To learn about the *Talking About Touching* program in the classroom
- To learn new ways to help protect children from unsafe situations
- To introduce and practice ways for families to reinforce safety skills at home
- To create a partnership between home and school

### C. Video and Discussion

Introduce the video and distribute copies of the parent handout. Show the video to the group. Then ask selected discussion questions. If you have a large group, assign everyone to smaller discussion groups.

Be sure to emphasize that most families have their own safety rules. The *Talking About Touching* program encourages children to learn and apply these family rules together with what they learn in class.

### D. Curriculum Concepts

Distribute and discuss the Scope and Sequence handout(s).

### E. Demonstration Lessons

Teach sample lessons as you would to the children. You may want to spend extra time on the skill practices, explaining both why they are included (children learn best when they practice what they have just learned) and how they are done in the classroom (children role-play them). You might even invite parents to try one of the skill practices themselves. Or you could have them think of “what if” situations to use when reinforcing the lessons with their children at home.

**F. Supporting Materials**

Show and describe the various materials used in the classroom:

- Safety Steps poster
- *Sam’s Story* Big Book, small book, and audiocassette
- Other books on safety available through the school
- For Preschool/Kindergarten only: *Joey Learns the Touching Rule* video (screen if time allows)

**G. Guidelines for Choosing Babysitters**

Distribute the Guidelines for Choosing Babysitters handout.

**H. Conclusion**

Thank everyone for coming. Tell them that the videos and the small book version of *Sam’s Story* can be checked out for home use.

## ***What Do I Say Now?*™ Guidelines for Use**

### **Video Overview**

Committee for Children recognizes the critical role of family involvement in teaching children personal safety skills, especially those that will help prevent child sexual abuse. The video *What Do I Say Now? How to Help Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse* was developed to provide parents and caregivers (1) information about sexual abuse; (2) guidelines for providing a safe and caring environment for young children; (3) practical examples of how and when to talk to children about safety and touching; and (4) guidelines for responding to a child who has disclosed abuse.

### **Using the Video**

*What Do I Say Now?* can be watched by individuals or families at home, or it can be shown in a group setting with or without a facilitator.

Discussion questions are suggested inside the video jacket. Encourage individuals viewing the video at home to answer the discussion questions for themselves. If you are leading a discussion group, select several questions from those offered.

### **Touching Rules**

*What Do I Say Now?* offers a variety of ways to teach touching rules. Parents or caregivers must decide how they will present the information themselves, based on their child's age and developmental level and their own family values.

The video offers ideas for helping children learn how to set boundaries—with both peers and adults—in relation to personal touching. Encourage viewers to choose wording for the rules that will work for them. For example: "If someone touches you and you don't like it, say 'No.' " "A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy." "No one should touch your penis (or vulva or vagina) or bottom except a doctor."

### **Handout**

Page 65 is a sample of the reproducible handout contained in the curriculum about the video for families and caregivers. This handout reviews the basic prevention strategies covered in the video. At the bottom of the handout, there is a space to add local emergency phone numbers. Be sure to add these numbers before making copies.

# Family Education Handout



## What Do I Say Now?™



### Establish a Safe Environment

Establish a safe environment by teaching children the difference between good and bad touches. Good touches are those that make you feel safe and loved, like a hug or a pat on the back. Bad touches are those that make you feel uncomfortable, scared, or hurt. Teach children to say "no" if they are touched in a way that makes them feel bad. Encourage them to tell a trusted adult if they are ever touched in a bad way.

Teach children to recognize their own feelings. If they feel uncomfortable or scared, they should stop the touch and tell an adult. Encourage them to be assertive and to stand up for themselves. Remind them that it is always their right to say "no" to any touch that they do not like or that makes them feel bad.

Teach children to recognize their own feelings. If they feel uncomfortable or scared, they should stop the touch and tell an adult. Encourage them to be assertive and to stand up for themselves. Remind them that it is always their right to say "no" to any touch that they do not like or that makes them feel bad.

### Respond to Disclosure

If a child discloses a bad touch, listen to them without judgment. Believe what they are saying and reassure them that they did the right thing by telling you. Encourage them to tell other trusted adults, such as a teacher or a police officer. Report the incident to the appropriate authorities and seek legal advice if necessary.

Where to Call for Help

_____
_____
_____

## Family Education Handout

### Guidelines for Choosing Babysitters

You should screen anyone who supervises your child. The following are some things to consider when choosing a babysitter.

- Ask each prospective babysitter for names and phone numbers of other families for whom he or she has worked. Call the parents and find out what they think of the babysitter. Ask whether there were ever any problems.
- Let the babysitter know your family safety rules, including touching safety rules. Tell him or her that you have taught your child to tell you when any of the rules are broken, even if the child has been told to keep it a secret.
- Occasionally return home early or unexpectedly so you can see firsthand how things are going. You could also call your child sometimes while you are out.
- Ask your child whether she or he likes the babysitter. If your child does not like the babysitter, ask for more information. Do not leave your child with someone that she or he doesn't like.
- Never leave a child in the care of someone who is using drugs or alcohol. Drugs and alcohol undermine a person's judgment.

## Appendix A

### Recommended Children's Books

Many teachers find it helpful to read additional books to their students that reinforce the concepts of the lessons. Because of the specific nature of many of these books, you may have a difficult time locating some of them. You may need to have a bookstore order them for you. You could also try ordering them online or directly from the publisher.

The books range in maturity and explicitness. Find ones that you are comfortable reading to your class. Please keep in mind that some of the books listed may not link directly to a lesson but will reinforce assertiveness and social skills, which are at the heart of the curriculum.

These books can either be read to the class or made available for student reading. Do not read them aloud right after a lesson, however, as this would require the children to sit still for too long.

You may want to make the books (or the list of titles) available to parents so they can read them with their children at home. You may also want to give the list to the school librarian so that she or he can pull the books and shelve them in a special place. The librarian might even suggest additional related books to add to the list.

Keep in mind that many children's books go out of print just a few years after publication. Often, out-of-print books can still be found in school and local libraries. Committee for Children hopes that these books will be available for your use.

Note that a few titles occur in both lists.

## Preschool/Kindergarten Book List

Books most appropriate for use with the Preschool/Kindergarten curriculum are grouped below by lesson number.

### Lesson 1

*Dinosaurs, Beware* by Marc Brown and Stephen Krensky. Safety tips are demonstrated by dinosaurs in situations at home, in the car, in case of fire, with animals, and so on. Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1982.

### Lesson 2

*I Read Signs* by Tana Hoban. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1983.

### Lesson 3

*Dinosaurs, Beware* by Marc Brown and Stephen Krensky. Safety tips are demonstrated by dinosaurs in situations at home, in the car, in case of fire, with animals, and so on. Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1982.

*Poinsettia and the Firefighters* by Felicia Bond. Poinsettia the Pig feels lonely and scared of the dark until she discovers someone else is awake and keeping watch all night—the firefighters. New York: HarperCollins, 1988.

### Lesson 5

*I'm Lost* by Elizabeth Crary. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1985.

*Laney's Lost Momma* by Diane Johnston Hamm. Illustrated by Sally G. Ward. When Laney can't find her mother in the department store, she—and her lost momma—remember what to do to find each other. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Company, 1991.

*Lost in the Storm* by Carol Carrick. Illustrated by Donald Carrick. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987.

*Moongame* by Frank Asch. During a game of hide-and-seek, Moon hides behind a cloud, making his friend Bear very worried. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1984.

### Lesson 6

*Peeping Beauty* by Mary Jane Auch. Paulette the dancing hen falls into the clutches of a hungry fox, who exploits her desire to become a great ballerina. When Paulette realizes the fox's intentions, she defends herself. New York: Holiday House, 1995.

## **Lesson 8**

*It's My Body* by Lory Freeman. Illustrated by Carol Deach. A child talks about touches she likes and about resisting touches she doesn't like. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1993.

*Loving Touches* by Lory Freeman. Illustrated by Carol Deach. Loving and positive touches are described (hugs, kisses, sitting on laps), as well as how to ask for and enjoy them. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1986.

*Something Good* by Robert Munsch. Illustrated by Michael Martchenko. Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books Ltd., 1990.

*Tucking Mommy In* by Morag Jeanette Loh. Illustrated by Donna Rawlins. Two sisters tuck their mother in bed one evening when she is especially tired. New York: Orchard Books, 1991.

## **Lesson 9**

*The Berenstain Bears Get in a Fight* by Stan and Jan Berenstain. New York: Random House, 1982.

*I Can't Wait* by Elizabeth Crary. Illustrated by Marina Megale Horosko. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1996.

*I Want It* by Elizabeth Crary. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1996.

*I Want to Play* by Elizabeth Crary. A young boy considers eight ways to get someone to play with him. Encourages problem solving by looking at alternatives and possible consequences. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1992.

*No Fighting, No Biting* by Else Holmelund Minarik. New York: HarperCollins Children's Book Group, 1978.

## **Lesson 10**

*Best Friends* by Miriam Cohen. Illustrated by Lillian Hoban. New York: MacMillan, 1971.

*It's My Body* by Lory Freeman. Illustrated by Carol Deach. A child talks about touches she likes and about resisting touches she doesn't like. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1993.

*Little Bear's Friend* by Else Holmelund Minarik. Illustrated by Maurice Sendak. New York: Harper and Row, 1960.

*The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* by Eugene Trivizas. Illustrated by Helen Oxenbury. An altered telling of the traditional tale about the conflict between pig and wolf—with a surprise ending. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books, 1993.

## Lesson 11

*The Berenstain Bears Go to the Doctor* by Stan and Jan Berenstain. New York: Random House, 1981.

*I Like Me!* by Nancy Carlson. By admiring her finer points and showing that she can have fun and take care of herself even when there's no one else around, a charming pig proves that the best friend you can have is yourself. New York: Puffin Books, Giant edition, 1993.

*I'm Terrific* by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat. Illustrated by Kay Choroa. New York: Holiday House, 1988.

*My Doctor* by Harlow Rockwell. Minneapolis: Econo-Clad Books, 1999.

## Lesson 13

*Grandma, According to Me* by Karen Magnuson Beil. Illustrated by Ted Rand. A young girl shows how much she loves her grandmother by telling her what she likes about her. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1992.

*My Body Is Private* by Linda Walvoord Girard. Illustrated by Rodney Pate. A mother-child conversation introduces the topic of sexual abuse and ways to keep one's body private. Anatomical terms used. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Company, 1984.

*My Very Own Book About Me* by Jo Stowell and Mary Dietzel. This personal safety workbook focuses on touching safety, including pictures for children to color and places for them to add their own words or drawings. Comes with teacher's guide. Spokane, WA: Act for Kids, 1999.

*Something Happened and I'm Scared to Tell* by Patricia Kehoe, Ph.D. Illustrated by Carol Deach. A child who has been sexually abused is comforted and supported by a lion friend, and encouraged to tell an adult about it. Anatomical terms used. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1987.

*The Trouble with Secrets* by Karen Johnsen. Illustrated by Linda Johnson Forssell. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1986.

## Grades 1–3 Book List

Books most appropriate for use with the Grades 1–3 curriculum are grouped below by topic. As noted, a few books listed work particularly well with a more specific age range.

### Sexual Abuse

*Alice Doesn't Babysit Anymore* by Kevin B. McGovern. Illustrated by Cathy McGovern. Portland, OR: McGovern and Mulbacker, 1985. Tina and Tony have a babysitter who plays “secret” games with them. When a new babysitter notices the children touching each other inappropriately, she encourages them to talk about these games and get help.

*A Better Safe Than Sorry Book* by Sol and Judy Gordon. Illustrated by Vivien Cohen. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1992. Continually reinforces the message of saying “No” and telling a trusted adult. Also includes a discussion of private body parts.

*It's My Body* by Lory Freeman. Illustrated by Carol Deach. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1983. Geared toward an early elementary audience, with examples of positive touches and inappropriate touches. Models assertive behavior in responding to inappropriate touches. Also available in Spanish: *Mio Cuerpo Es Mio*.

*It's Not Your Fault* by Judith Jance. Charlotte, NC: Kidsrights Press, 1985. Terry is being touched by Joe, her grandmother's new husband. Unable to talk to her family, Terry decides to tell her teacher. The best way to obtain this book is directly through the publisher.

*Laurie Tells* by Linda Lowery. Illustrated by John Eric Karpinski. Minneapolis: Lerner Publishing Group, 1995. Laurie tries to talk to her mom about her touching problem, but her mom doesn't believe her. Children follow Laurie as she decides whom else she can tell. This beautifully illustrated book is appropriate for third-graders.

*My Body Is Private* by Linda Girard. Illustrated by Kathleen Tucker. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Co., 1984. Emphasizes the importance of saying “No” when experiencing uncomfortable touches. Also explores general safety scenarios.

*No More Secrets for Me* by Oralee Watcher. Illustrated by Jane Aaron. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1984. Four short scenarios explore different abusive situations. In each situation, the children demonstrate assertiveness skills and find trusted adults to help them with their touching problems.

*Pitterpat* by Lee Carolyn Jacobson. Charlottesville, VA: Hampton Roads Publishing, 1994. Pitterpat, a rabbit, is sexually abused by a relative. After telling her mother, who assures her it was not her fault, Pitterpat begins to put the experience behind her.

*Please Tell!* by Jessie Ottenweller. Center City, MN: Hazelton Foundation, 1991. Written and illustrated

by a nine-year-old who shares her experience of being sexually abused by her uncle. Available in Spanish: *¡Por Favor, Di!*

*Something Happened and I'm Scared to Tell* by Patricia Kehoe. Illustrated by Carol Deach. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1987. A girl who has been sexually abused meets a talking lion, who explains that what happened to her was not her fault and encourages her to tell someone. There is a short discussion of physical abuse and private body parts.

*Something Happened to Me* by Phyllis E Sweet. Illustrated by Barbara Lindquist. Racine, WI: Mother Courage Press, 1985. Explores the feelings children may experience after abuse. Assures the reader that the abuse is not the child's fault.

*The Trouble with Secrets* by Karen Johnsen. Illustrated by Linda J. Forssell. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1986. Sometimes it's hard to know when to keep a secret and when to tell someone. This book includes examples of different types of secrets and makes a smooth transition into touching secrets, emphasizing the importance of sharing confusing secrets.

*A Very Touching Book* by Jan Hindman. Illustrated by Tom Novak. Ontario, OR: AlexAndria Associates, 1983. Written and illustrated by the creators of *Where Did I Come From?*, this humorous book helps children practice talking about their bodies without being embarrassed. With a strong emphasis on personal pride, it provides clear guidelines on unsafe touching and lists resources that children can use if they are experiencing any touching problems.

*Who Is a Stranger and What Should I Do?* by Linda Walvoord Girard. Illustrated by Helen Cogancherry. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Co., 1985. Offers guidelines on specific unsafe situations and emphasizes the importance of assertive behavior.

## **Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, and Domestic Violence**

*Daisy: A Book About Child Abuse* by E. Sandy Powell. Illustrated by Peter J. Thornton. Minneapolis: Learner Publishing Group, 1991. Daisy's father is physically and verbally abusive, and she's often afraid to go home. Her tutor, Mrs. Cally, knows something is wrong—she helps Daisy understand that her father needs help and that Daisy needs to get help for herself.

*Don't Hurt Me, Mama* by Muriel Stanek. Illustrated by Helen Cogancherry. Morton Grove, IL: Albert, Whitman and Co., 1983. A recently divorced mother begins to abuse her daughter. Assertiveness skills are modeled as the little girl tells her school nurse, who encourages the mother to get counseling.

*A Family That Fights* by Sharon Chester Bernstein. Illustrated by Karen Ritz. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Co., 1991. Henry's father is hurting his mother. The kids in the family are scared, angry, and ashamed. They're also confused because sometimes Dad is fun. This book emphasizes that fights are not the children's fault.

*Hear My Roar* by Ty Hochban. Illustrated by Vladyana Kryorka. New York: Annick Press, 1994. Father Bear has a drinking problem; he becomes angry and violent when he's drinking. Mother Bear seeks

help when she realizes his violence is affecting the whole family.

*Mommy and Daddy Are Fighting* by Susan Paris. Illustrated by Gail Labinski. Seattle: Seal Press, 1986. Begins with a general discussion of fights, including examples of fights between siblings. Then moves into the confusion and fear that two sisters experience when they witness their father abusing their mother.

*Something Is Wrong at My House* by Diane Davis. Illustrated by Marina Megale. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1985. The violence between a boy's parents is provoking feelings of fear and anger in him. It's affecting his life, not just his parents'. He realizes he can take steps to alleviate his anger and participate in activities to feel better. This is an empowering book, appropriate for both younger and older children.

*Squeakers* by Stephen Cosgrove. Illustrated by Robin Jones. Los Angeles: Price Stern Sloan, Inc., 1985. Squeakers, a squirrel, reluctantly lets a mole pull hairs from his tail in exchange for chestnuts. Squeakers becomes withdrawn; his parents notice his changed behavior and encourage him to talk about what is bothering him.

### **Getting Lost**

*I'm Lost* by Elizabeth Crary. Illustrated by Marina Megale. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1985. Amy and her dad are separated during a trip to the zoo. Other children help her "decide" what steps to take to find her dad. Best for younger students.

*I Promise I'll Find You* by Heather Patricia Ward. Illustrated by Sheila McGraw. Buffalo, NY: Firefly Books, Limited, 1994. This imaginative book geared toward younger children explores a number of hypothetical situations in which children become lost. It always provides the assurance that the child will be found. Great illustrations.

### **Assertiveness**

*The Bully on the Bus* by Carl Bosen. Illustrated by Rebekah Stecker. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1988. When a boy experiences bullying on his school bus, he must make some decisions about how to respond. Children help him "choose" actions and behaviors to deal with the situation. There are no "wrong" choices; the reader is always brought back on track.

*Elizabeth Imagined an Iceberg* by Chris Raschka. New York: Orchard Books, 1994. While riding her bicycle, Elizabeth encounters Madame Uff Da. Madame Uff Da intimidates Elizabeth, especially when she picks her up against her will. Elizabeth is able to draw on her inner resources and model assertiveness skills that bring her to safety. Wonderful illustrations.

### **Miscellaneous**

*Double-Dip Feelings: A Book to Help Children Understand Emotions* by Barbara S. Cain. Illustrated by

Anne Patterson. Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens, Inc., 1993. This simple book helps explain the confusion that accompanies having contradictory feelings at the same time.

*Fire Diary* by Lily Rosenblatt. Illustrated by Judith Friedman. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Co., 1994. Written in journal form, *Fire Diary* tracks the memories of a girl whose house burned down. It describes her experience of moving in with her extended family, her fear of going back to school, and the experience of going to a therapist. Also provides fire safety guidelines.

*I Like Me!* by Nancy Carlson. New York: Viking Kerstrel, 1988. Pig likes to spend time by herself doing fun things. She enjoys taking care of herself. When she makes mistakes, she tries again. Pig proves that the best friend you can have is yourself.

*Loving Touches* by Lory Freeman. Illustrated by Carol Deach. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1985. Positive touches are just as important as food, water, and sleep. This book provides younger children examples of how to ask for and give healthy touches.

*The Words Hurt* by Chris Loftis. Illustrated by Catharine Gallagher. New Horizon, NJ: New Horizon Press, 1994. Greg's dad is verbally abusive; his words hurt even after he has apologized. With the support of his friends, Greg finds the strength to talk to his dad about the problem.

## Appendix B

### Adult Resources List

#### Parent/Caregiver

*Children and Trauma: A Parent's Guide to Helping Children Heal* by Cynthia Monahon. Thousand Oaks, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

*He Told Me Not to Tell* by Jennifer Fay and King County Sexual Assault Resource Center. Spokane, WA: ACT for Kids, 1991.

*How to Survive the Sexual Abuse of Your Child* by Chris Larsen and Anne Zaro. Spokane, WA: ACT for Kids, 2001.

*Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse: A Parents' Guide: A Book to Teach Children How to Resist Uncomfortable Touch* by Janie Hart-Rossi. Seattle: Parenting Press, 1984.

*Safe Child Book* by Sherryll Kerns Kraizer. New York: Fireside Books/Simon and Schuster, 1996.

#### Additional Resources

*Child Abuse: Implications for Child Development and Psychopathology* by David A. Wolf. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999.

*Child Sexual Abuse* by David Finkelhor. New York: The Free Press, 1984.

*Conspiracy of Silence: The Trauma of Incest* by Sandra Butler. Volcano, CA: Volcano Press, 1996.

*Father-Daughter Incest* by Judith Herman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

*Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Sharing the Responsibility* by Sandy K. Wurtele and Cindy L. Miller-Perrin. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.

*Recognizing Child Abuse* by Douglas Besharov. New York: The Free Press, 1990.

*Sexual Exploitation* by Diana Russell. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1984.

*Sexually Victimized Children* by David Finkelhor. New York: The Free Press, 1981.

*What Children Can Tell Us* by James Garbarino, Frances M. Stott, and the Faculty of the Erikson Institute. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992.

## Appendix C

### *Talking About Touching*® Preschool/Kindergarten and Grades 1–3 (1996 editions) Curriculum Evaluation Summary

**Leihua Sylvester, M.Ed.**  
**Committee for Children**

Children face a host of potentially dangerous and abusive situations, including bullying, harassment, and access to firearms. Moreover, the sexual abuse of children occurs at the rate of more than one in five children (Elliott and Briere, 1994). Many of these dangerous situations can be prevented by using self-protection and assertiveness skills.

Recent research has shown that preschool and elementary-aged children can learn personal safety concepts and skills (Wurtele, Marrs, and Miller-Perrin, 1987; Finkelhor and Strapko, 1992). The most effective approach for teaching these skills includes instruction in specific skills over time, frequent opportunities for skill practice, and parent involvement (Finkelhor, Asdigian, and Dziuba-Leatherman, 1995; Wurtele et al., 1987).

#### **Program Description**

*Talking About Touching* is a personal safety curriculum that teaches children self-protection and assertiveness skills to reduce their vulnerability to harm and abuse. This comprehensive program is developmentally sequenced and designed to be taught in the classroom over a period of six to eight weeks. Topics include safety rules for riding in the car and responding in a fire, as well as handling inappropriate touching and responding to strangers. The program presents the concepts through a variety of media (i.e., video, story and audio cassette, poster) and involves discussion, skill practice, and transfer of training (e.g., classroom activities, take-home information sheets). Parent involvement is highly encouraged. Lessons last 10–20 minutes depending on the grade level and lesson.

#### **Purpose of Evaluation**

An evaluation study of the *Talking About Touching* personal safety curricula (1996 editions) for Preschool/Kindergarten and Grades 1–3 was conducted for two purposes: (1) to determine the extent to which students retained the information and effectively demonstrated the skills taught in the program; and (2) to gather feedback from practitioners using the program to guide the final revision process of the 1996 editions.

Students participating in the study were from eight elementary schools in western Washington. The schools included urban, suburban, and rural schools, and reflected a range of ethnic diversity (range = 20%–80% Caucasian) and socioeconomic status (i.e., percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch; range = 10%–90%). Forty-eight students were in preschool/kindergarten (Pre/K; sampled from 1 preschool and 5 kindergarten classes), 22 in first grade (2 first grades, 1 first/second grade split class), 30 in second grade (4 second grades, 1 first/second grade split), and 33 in third grade (2 classes). About half the students were girls (see Table 1 for gender breakdown by grade).

**Table 1. Sample n's by grade and sex.**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
Preschool/Kindergarten	25	23
First	10	12
Second	16	14
Third	16	17
Total	67	66

The program implementors were ten teachers and two school counselors; all but one of them were women. The implementors<sup>1</sup> received training in the curriculum prior to teaching it; in most cases, training was done less than a month before the implementation. Two of the teachers had taught the program before. Nearly all of the teachers had previously used role plays as an instructional strategy.

The program was implemented over approximately eight weeks. Lessons were presented to the entire class; however, only students whose parents gave written consent took part in the student interview. Students in the study were interviewed within approximately two weeks prior to and two weeks following the curriculum implementation.<sup>2</sup> The two female interviewers were trained Committee for Children staff. Interviews took place in a semi-private place in the schools.

The interview included questions regarding the specific safety skills presented in the program, assessing both comprehension and behavioral skills. For example, comprehension items included “What are all the things you should do to cross a street safely?” and “What should you do if someone tries to touch your private body parts when it’s not okay?” Items that assessed behavioral skill involved the presentation of several large photographs depicting two different hypothetical scenarios (e.g., a stranger drives up to a boy and offers him a ride home); students were then asked to demonstrate

<sup>1</sup>Program implementors will be referred to as “teachers” from here on.

<sup>2</sup>Due to implementation and scheduling difficulties, posttests were not conducted in two classes (the single preschool class and a second grade class).

what the child in each story should do. Assessment of skill involved students' verbal responses as well as their body language and tone of voice.

In addition, perceived competence and anxiety regarding personal safety skills was assessed, each with a single item. The two questions were: "How good [are] you at keeping yourself safe?" and "How do you feel inside about learning safety rules?" Responses were indicated on a four-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = not good at all, to 4 = very good; and 1 = not at all scared, to 4 = very scared, respectively). Finally, students were asked if they had previously learned about personal safety in school.

Credit was given for plausible answers, in addition to those explicitly presented in the program. The comprehension score was the total number of correct knowledge items. The behavioral skill score involved four-part answers for each scenario (i.e., summary response [accept vs. refuse], body language, voice tone, and verbal message) for a maximum of four points possible per scenario. The summary knowledge and skill score was a sum of the comprehension and behavioral skill scores. Perceived competence and anxiety indices were simply the rating given for that item.

Teachers were asked to complete brief evaluations for each lesson. Using a six-point Likert scale, teachers were asked to rate each lesson's ease of use, importance for students, and effectiveness in teaching the concepts and skills, and the utility of the supplementary activities. In addition, teachers were asked to rate their comfort level with teaching the lesson, and students' comfort level, interest, and comprehension. Open-ended questions were also included to solicit recommendations for improving each lesson. An overall curriculum evaluation questionnaire was given, with a similar format and questions. The curriculum survey was followed by an interview with the curriculum developer to obtain in-depth information, with a particular focus on recommendations for improving the program.

## Results

*Student knowledge and behavioral skill.* A 4 (Grade) by 2 (Sex) by 2 (Test Time) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed, with Test Time as the repeated measure, and knowledge and skill summary score as the dependent variable. A significant main effect was found for Test Time,  $F(1, 97) = 129.58$ ,  $p < .001$ . Students achieved significantly higher scores at time 2. In addition, the Grade by Test Time interaction was significant,  $F(3, 97) = 42.88$ ;  $p < .001$ . Subsequent paired comparisons within grade showed students in all grades improved significantly from time 1 to time 2 (all  $p$ 's  $< .001$ ; see Table 2 for change scores by grade).<sup>3</sup> Thus, students at each grade level achieved a significantly higher summary score after receiving the curriculum compared to their score before being taught the program.

The most challenging item for students was recalling how to handle appropriate touching. Students were required to state three actions (i.e., say "no," run away, tell someone) to obtain credit for the item. Most students (93.4%) were able to recall one action for the interviewer, 69.8% recalled two actions, and 23.6% recalled all three actions.

Another item that was difficult was recalling what to do if an initial request for a touching problem was ignored. Other challenging items at specific grade levels were: recalling what to do if lost (Pre/K),

<sup>3</sup>Recall that within the Pre/K group, posttests were collected only for kindergartners.

crossing the street safely (Pre/K and Grade 1), handling phone calls at home if alone (Grade 2), walking around traffic safely (Grade 3), and fire safety skills (Pre/K, Grades 1 and 2).

*Student perceived competence.* Students' perceived competence was moderately high ( $M$ 's = 3.60-3.65) for all grade levels at pretest. A 4 (Grade) by 2 (Test Time) repeated measures ANOVA indicated no significant main effects for grade or sex. However, a significant Grade by Test Time interaction was found,  $F(3, 95) = 3.16; p < .05$ . In subsequent paired comparisons, perceived competence significantly improved over time for the Pre/K group only ( $p < .01$ ; see Table 2 for change scores by grade). The Sex by Test Time interaction approached significance.

*Student anxiety.* Anxiety levels at pretest were moderately low ( $M$ 's = 1.53-2.13). A 4 (Grade) by 2 (Sex) by 2 (Test Time) repeated measures ANOVA indicated no significant effects.

*Student prior experience.* At time 1, 80% of the students overall (i.e., 70%, 70%, 84%, and 94% of students in Pre/K, Grade 1, 2, and 3, respectively) indicated they had previously learned about safety skills in school.

**Table 2. Change scores by grade.**

Grade and measure	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>
Preschool/Kindergarten				
Knowledge and behavioral skill	39	5.42	3.90	8.69***
Perceived competence	37	.38	.83	2.78**
Grade 1				
Knowledge and behavioral skill	18	4.94	3.76	5.57***
Perceived competence	18	.11	1.02	.46
Grade 2				
Knowledge and behavioral skill	18	2.94	2.06	6.07***
Perceived competence	18	-.17	.62	-1.14
Grade 3				
Knowledge and behavioral skill	30	1.82	2.11	4.71***
Perceived competence	30	-.23	1.04	-1.23

Note. Negative change scores reflect a reduction in perceived competence or anxiety.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

*Evaluation of the program.*<sup>4</sup> Teachers indicated the training was highly worthwhile ( $M = 2.17$ ) and they felt well-prepared to implement the program ( $M = 1.57$ ). Lessons were reportedly easy to pre-

pare ( $M = 1.17$ ); in particular, the lesson cards made the presentation and discussion of the material straightforward ( $M = 1.17$ ). They found the manual useful ( $M = 2.60$ ), particularly the resource material and activity sheets to give families. Although teachers reported integration was not difficult ( $M = 1.75$ ), only half reported actually doing it. These teachers either included related material with the program or integrated the program into other areas of the academic curriculum.

Teachers found the concepts developmentally appropriate for their students ( $M = 1.57$ ) and the lessons effective in teaching the concepts ( $M = 1.71$ ) and stimulating discussion ( $M = 1.71$ ). Students easily comprehended the lessons and concepts presented ( $M = 1.33$ ). Guiding students in role-playing was reportedly easy for teachers ( $M = 1.43$ ). In general, students were able to demonstrate the relevant skills during skill practices ( $M = 2.08$ ).

Teachers indicated a high degree of comfort teaching the program ( $M = 1.14$ ). Likewise, students showed a high level of comfort with and interest in the lessons ( $M = 1.50, 1.57$  respectively) as reported by teachers. Rapport and trust were reportedly easy to establish ( $M = 1.50$ ). One teacher mentioned that when the program was started half-way through the year, rapport and trust had already been established, making it easier to approach the material. Teachers reported a fair degree of support from their administration and from parents ( $M$ 's = 4.71, 4.17, respectively). The two teachers who used the parent video in their implementation reported it was quite helpful to parents ( $M = 1.00$ ) and that parents consequently endorsed the video ( $M = 5.50$ ). All of the teachers indicated they plan to use the program again with future classes.

## Discussion

The evaluation study showed significant improvement in kindergarten through third-grade students' safety knowledge and skill after receiving the *Talking About Touching* curriculum. Although most of the students had received prior classroom-based instruction in safety, they were significantly more skilled after being taught *Talking About Touching*. Students were better able to indicate strategies to prevent and handle dangerous situations (e.g., bicycle and fire safety) as well as abusive situations (e.g., bullying, inappropriate touching).

Students' perceived competence at using safety skills was initially quite high. Only the kindergarten group significantly increased in perceived competence after receiving the program, which was not surprising given the high initial levels. In addition, students did not evidence significant reductions in anxiety. Again, this was not unexpected in light of the low initial levels.

Teachers found the program easy to implement, yet relevant and effective in teaching students safety skills. Moreover, they were quite enthusiastic about the content and structure of the program and planned to use it again. Both administrators and parents were fairly supportive, particularly those parents who viewed the parent video.

A high level of support was given to the overall curriculum and lessons as they were written. Teachers' comments regarding specific lessons, activities, and discussion questions were instrumental in the final revision of the program. The revisions involved the substitution of several photographs, changing

These results are based on the seven completed questionnaires. The remainder were either missing or incomplete.

the sequence of some lessons, and revising the wording in some of the lesson scripts. However, the fundamental concepts and teaching strategies of the program remained unchanged.

In summary, the current evaluation study of the *Talking About Touching* curricula for preschool through third grade suggests that the program is helpful in improving young children's safety knowledge and skill. The study also provided evidence of educators' support for the program and its merit in teaching children safety skills.

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# In-Service Training

## Before You Begin

### Setting the Stage for the *Talking About Touching* Staff Training

There is a lot of material to be covered in the one-day *Talking About Touching* staff training. We have outlined several time-saving methods to assist you. The goal of the following material is to make it as easy as possible for you to prepare for and present your own *Talking About Touching* staff training.

### Scheduling the *Talking About Touching* Staff Training

There are two suggested training formats.

#### 1. One-day, 7 1/2-hour training

To ensure a successful outcome, this is the format we recommend:

8:30 A.M.–4:00 P.M. with a 30-minute on-site lunch (limited time precludes going out)

Scheduling options:

- In-service day during school year
- Summer institute day
- Weekend (pay teachers, offer credit)
- Regular workday (requires substitutes)

#### 2. Three separate sessions\*

Scheduling options:

- All three sessions in one week
- One session each week for three weeks
- Sessions on early release days
- Sessions after work and/or on a weekend day

\* Caution: It is more common for participants to miss a session with this format. Also, some participants may show up late and attend only the second and/or third session (due to word-of-mouth enthusiasm after the first session). Note that spreading the three sessions too far apart will lower comprehension and dilute the staff training.

### Training Room/Equipment

Select a training room large enough to accommodate the following equipment:

- Large-screen TV monitor(s) (at least 27") and VCR(s) on a 60" stand with wheels (it is helpful to have a counter and remote control with the VCR)
- Overhead projector on a short table
- Screen

- Chalkboard or easel with chart paper

In addition to the training area with tables and chairs, retain extra open space (without furniture) in the room for large group activities and break-out groups. This space should be half again as large as the training room.

Allow enough wall surface for posting signs and posters, and have sufficient electrical outlets. Do volume and vision tests to ensure appropriate volume and clear views from all parts of the room.

### Trainer Preparation

The following will be helpful in your preparation for the *Talking About Touching* staff training.

- Read a copy of your state's, agency's, or organization's reporting law and policy. Your state's mandatory reporting laws on child abuse are typically available through your state's Department of Health and Social Services.
- Review developmental information and curriculum unit information at the front of this Trainer's Manual.
- Review staff training video and prepare appropriate training materials.

You may want to request Committee for Children catalogs or brochures to hand out at your training. Please notify Committee for Children three to four weeks in advance; with advance notice, the catalogs will be shipped free of charge. Note that there will be a fee for rush requests.

### Preparing the Handouts and Overheads

Preparing handout packets prior to the training will save precious minutes spent handing out papers during the training itself. Prepare the handout packets for participants by using the masters provided behind the Handouts tab.

- Make overhead transparencies of Handouts, except for Handouts 4, 6A, 12, 15, and 16.
- Copy and prepare certificates of completion (Handout 16).

### Curriculum Kits

It's important to have enough curriculum kits for the participants to use during the training, particularly during Curriculum Exploration. Check on availability of kits in the school or agency and have them brought to the training site in advance of the training day. You will need one kit for every three people at a particular kit level. For example, if there are nine teachers at the Grades 1–3 level, you will need three Grades 1–3 kits in order for them to do the Curriculum Exploration activity. If you are not able to secure the recommended number of kits, form groups of six participants for the Curriculum Exploration and have two people work together on each unit. If the school or agency will be purchasing kits, it's best to train the staff after the kits have arrived so participants can begin teaching immediately after the training.

### Planning for Participant Seating

84 ideal setup uses 6'–8' rectangular tables or 72" round tables. Seat participants in groups of three

or six people. Place a sign on each table designating the curriculum grade level. As participants enter the training room, they should see an overhead transparency or sign that directs them to sit at a table with people teaching the same curriculum grade levels. Suggest that those who work with more than one grade level choose the curriculum level they'll work with the most.

### **Implementation Help for Trainers**

Prior to scheduling the staff training, meet with the school or agency *Talking About Touching* support team or principal to clarify the following:

- How was the staff involved in the decision to implement the program?
- Who will teach the lessons?
- If non-teaching staff are not at this training, how will they be trained?
- Who will provide ongoing support for use of the program?
- What are the plans for evaluation?
- Have kits been purchased? How many?
- What are the plans for parent/family involvement?

An idea that might be helpful for schools or agencies that are still planning their implementation is to ask one person at the training to record questions about implementation that come up during the training. This list can be used by the *Talking About Touching* support team or principal for future planning sessions.

### **Reminders**

- Make meal arrangements or notify participants to bring a brown-bag meal.
- Send participants a reminder of training date(s), times, location, and meal arrangements.
- Emphasize that it is critical that all participants attend the entire training.
- When possible, use in-service days, pay, or continuing education credit as an incentive.
- Give training participants a certificate of completion. A certificate master is provided in the Hand-outs section of the Trainer's Manual.

### **Using the *Talking About Touching* Staff Training Outline**

The goal of the Staff Training Outline is to make it as easy as possible for you to present your own *Talking About Touching* staff training. The directions to the facilitator are in **bold type**. Notes to the facilitator are in *italic type* enclosed within brackets. Scripted lines are in regular roman type. Possible responses from participants are in *italic type* enclosed within parentheses.

# Talking About Touching®: A Personal Safety Curriculum Staff Training Outline

## I. Welcome and Goals (30 minutes)

**Welcome participants and thank them for attending.**

*[Note to facilitator: If you are making this presentation to a group other than your own staff, be sure to include introductions of yourself and group participants. One idea is to have participants write their names on individual table tent cards, add one thing they wish for children, and share this with the group. You could also have individuals share their names, organizations, the ages of children they work with, and what they hope to get out of the training.]*

**Share your excitement about Talking About Touching: A Personal Safety Curriculum.**

*[Note to facilitator: Share what you have experienced or learned at the Talking About Touching Training for Trainers; for example, how the materials address the needs of the organization or the specific selling points of the curriculum.]*

**Introduce Committee for Children and the Talking About Touching program.**

Committee for Children is a nonprofit organization that has researched and developed award-winning social-emotional skills curricula since the late 1970s. Committee for Children is deeply committed to its mission to promote the safety, well-being, and social development of children by creating quality educational programs for educators, families, and communities.

The *Talking About Touching* program was developed in 1982 and was the first school-based curriculum in the country to deal with child sexual abuse prevention. The third edition of the curriculum was published in 2001.

Other curricula by Committee for Children include *Second Step®: A Violence Prevention Curriculum* and *Steps to Respect®: A Bullying Prevention Program*.

**Identify people who have experience teaching the Talking About Touching program, and have them briefly share their experience.**

**Discuss trainer's expectations and ground rules.**

*[Note to facilitator: Record the ground rules on chart paper and post this in the training room.]*

There are some things that we can all do to help the training move along so that we have time to

**Talking About Touching®: A Personal Safety Curriculum**

cover all of the material. Let's agree to be prompt after breaks, maintain confidentiality about what is discussed in this room, keep side-talking to a minimum, and speak loudly and clearly when sharing with the group.

**Go over the day's logistics:**

- Breaks
- Restrooms
- Food

**Explain what this day is and is not about.**

This day is NOT about changing the reporting system, laws, or policies. It is important to remember that we cannot make abuse go away, and we cannot keep children away from every danger. However, we can teach children skills to help them take care of themselves. This day is about learning how to give children these skills.

**Go over agenda.**

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 1: Talking About Touching Staff Training Agenda.]*

Please turn to Handout 1. We are now at the "Welcome and Goals" stage of the agenda. This will be followed by "Defining Child Abuse: An Overview." After that you will participate in a *Talking About Touching* orientation, which will lead into curriculum exploration and practice. Finally, we will look at "Identifying, Reporting, and Handling Disclosure of the Sexually Abused Child."

**Review Goals for the Talking About Touching Staff Training.**

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 2: Goals for the Talking About Touching Staff Training.]*

Please turn to Handout 2. In today's staff training, our goal is to learn how to prepare to use the *Talking About Touching* curriculum by examining the sequence, content, and flow of the lessons and participating in a teaching experience. We will also gain an understanding of the issue of child abuse and learn how to identify indicators of abuse and how to handle disclosures. Finally, we will talk about your responsibilities as a mandated reporter.

**II. Defining Child Abuse: An Overview (1 hour, 15 minutes)**

**Acknowledge the difficulty of addressing this problem.**

The topic of child sexual abuse can be difficult to talk about. Personal experiences and feelings may surface. It is important to take care of yourself throughout the training. If you need to talk or need support of any kind, please connect with me on break.

The topic of child abuse is not new. It has been around throughout time. What is new is how we deal with it. Public awareness of child abuse and child advocacy is a recent trend. The first reporting law was established in 1962, and laws were established in every state by 1970. Child abuse prevention programs have proliferated in the last 20 years. It is just in our lifetime that we have begun to identify and deal with child abuse.

**Discuss the scope of the problem in more detail.**

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 3: Scope of the Problem.]*

Please turn to Handout 3. Let's take a look at the scope of the problem.

- At least 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys will be sexually abused before reaching the age of 18. You may have read some statistics that are different from these. There are many ways of reporting. These numbers are conservative. It may very well be higher.
- 80%–90% of abusers are known, loved, and trusted by the child. In the past, child abuse curricula have focused on “stranger danger.” The truth is, child abuse is rarely committed by the “dangerous stranger” whom children have been traditionally warned about.
- Child abuse happens in all racial, religious, ethnic, and economic groups.
- 2 million incidents of child abuse and neglect were reported in 1994 (up from 60,000 in 1974). The current flood of reports in the U.S. has prompted many people to wonder whether sexual abuse is on the rise. This is certainly possible, but it is also possible that the recent flood can be entirely accounted for by a new willingness to report what was previously an unmentionable experience.
- Only 2% of child sexual abuse occurs in daycare settings. Our perceptions are often molded by the media. The sensationalized coverage of child abuse in daycare settings can create the impression that it is happening all the time.
- 3% of child sexual abuse is violent (as opposed to manipulative). Again, this speaks to how our perceptions are molded by the media. The “average” sexual abuse “incident” is not a violent event. Rather, it is an ongoing cycle of exploitation that lasts for one or more years.
- A third of all cases of child abuse involve children under the age of 5. There are many reasons why these children are particularly vulnerable. They don't have the language skills to talk about it. They can't leave. The abuser may be someone they know and love. They may simply be unaware that the

**Talking About Touching®: A Personal Safety Curriculum**

touching is inappropriate. They could be bribed or coerced into keeping the secret. They may not know how to tell or whom to tell.

- 80%–90% of prison inmates were abused as children. This really speaks to the cycle of abuse and its long-term effects. Early sexual victimization can result in life-long problems. The degree of trauma depends on the age and personality of the child, the offender’s relationship to the child, the nature and duration of the abuse, and the way disclosure is handled, especially the degree of support the family offers to the victim. Increased vulnerability to revictimization, prostitution, delinquency, suicide or suicide attempts, and depression is often associated with early and long-term abuse.

These are some pretty staggering statistics. I know we all agree that child abuse is harmful. But if I ask what constitutes abuse, we might not all agree.

**Define abuse through the PENS activity.**

Next, I want us to participate in a group activity that will help us look at two things:

- How the law defines *child abuse*.
- How we define *child abuse*.

Before we begin this activity, I would like to give you some actual definitions of *child abuse* and *neglect*, as defined by Washington state.

Child abuse or neglect shall mean the injury, sexual abuse, or negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by any person under circumstances which indicate that the child’s health, welfare and safety is harmed thereby. . . . Negligent treatment or maltreatment shall mean an act or omission which evinces serious disregard of consequences of such magnitude as to constitute a clear and present danger to the child’s health, welfare and safety.  
(Division of Children and Family Services, 1995)

Let’s keep both of these definitions in mind as we go through this next exercise.

**Introduce the PENS worksheet.**

*[Note to facilitator: Record the answers on chart paper with a replication of Handout 4: Defining Abuse (four vertical lines labeled P, E, N, and S).]*

Please turn to Handout 4. As you see, there are four lines labeled P, E, N, and S. The P stands for physical; the E stands for emotional; the N stands for neglect; and the S stands for sexual abuse. Each vertical line represents a continuum. Placing a specific example of each type of abuse at the top of the line indicates that it is the most extreme example and can result in death. Placing an example at the bottom of the line indicates that it is less serious.

Let’s look at one example of physical abuse and put it on the continuum. Let’s use the example of a woman in a mall with two children. One of the children sits on the floor, and the woman yanks the child up by the arm. Where on the P continuum should this fall?

*[Note to facilitator: With the group's help, place it on the line somewhere in the low range.]*

Let's chart more examples of physical abuse. What are different examples and where would you place your example on the continuum?

*[Note to facilitator: When participants have a number of examples on the continuum, summarize physical abuse with the following information.]*

A physically abused child is one who has sustained nonaccidental physical injury or injuries, such as hitting, kicking, throwing, choking, shaking, unexplained bruises, burns, fractures, bites, internal injuries, and auditory, dental, ocular, or brain damage. This type of abuse is the result of direct action by an adult.

Let's chart examples of emotional abuse. What are different examples and where would you place your example on the continuum?

*[Note to facilitator: When participants have a number of examples on the continuum, summarize emotional abuse with the following information.]*

Emotionally abusive behaviors include a pattern of rejecting, isolating, ignoring, corrupting, or terrorizing a child. This type of abuse is often the result of indirect action by an adult. This is the most difficult category to identify and report, but it can have the most long-lasting implications, including lags in physical development, extreme behavior disorder, fearfulness of adults or authority figures, and low self-esteem, depression, and suicide.

Let's chart examples of neglect. What are different examples and where would you place your example on the continuum?

*[Note to facilitator: When participants have a number of examples on the continuum, summarize neglect with the following information.]*

Negligent treatment or maltreatment (a dangerous act) is that which constitutes a clear and present danger to the child's health, welfare, and safety, such as failure to provide adequate food or supervision. This type of abuse is often the result of nonaction by an adult.

*[Note to facilitator: Draw two horizontal lines to divide the lists into three categories: criminal, gray area, and poor judgment. Explain to participants what the horizontal lines indicate.]*

Examples located in the top third of the page should represent examples on each continuum that are identifiable abuse and therefore required to report by law. These are identified as "criminal."

Examples in the bottom third of the page should represent examples on each continuum where the adult has used "poor judgment." This area is an acknowledgement that we all can and do make mistakes. These examples are identified as ones that do not need to be reported.

Examples in the middle area should represent examples on each continuum that are areas where we definitely need to follow through and ask questions. Making a report is optional. These are identified as the “gray area.”

Notice that we have not put any information on the sexual abuse continuum. There is no continuum for sexual abuse. There is no such thing as a mistake. It doesn’t matter if it only happened once. It doesn’t matter if the child consented or initiated. It is all criminal.

### **Define sexual abuse.**

*Sexual abuse* is the exploitation or coercion of a child by another person (adult or adolescent) for the sexual gratification of the older person. Child sexual abuse involves a continuum of behavior that ranges from verbal, nonphysical abuse to forcible touching offenses. It can range from a single encounter with an exhibitionist, to occasional fondling by a casual acquaintance, to years of ongoing abuse by a relative or family member, to rape or exploitation through prostitution or pornography. Any time an adult interacts with a child for his or her own sexual gratification, he or she has broken the law.

### **Define continuum between “touch” and “nontouch.”**

Sexual abuse includes both “touching” and “nontouching” offenses. Sexual abuse can begin in “nontouch” and escalate to “touching.” Let’s look at some examples.

*[Note to facilitator: Generate examples of “touch” and “nontouch” sexual abuse. List these on a horizontal continuum on a separate chart. Examples of “touch” include molestation and sexual intercourse. Examples of “nontouch” include harassment, voyeurism, obscene phone calls, showing pornography to children, sexual comments, exposure, and children witnessing sexual activity.]*

Sexual abuse can occur in either of these areas. These examples of “nontouch” are considered sexual abuse because, as with touch, there is a sense of violation. Abuse can begin in “nontouch” and graduate to “touch,” often through the process of grooming.

### **Define grooming.**

*Grooming* is the intentional process to gain trust in a child and to set the stage for abuse to occur. It often begins by isolating a child—especially a nonassertive child with few friends—and beginning a relationship with that child through paying compliments, buying presents, or doing activities together. Then the “groomer” will desensitize the child to touch by such things as wrestling and tickling, and will gradually move into more overt forms of sexual abuse.

**BREAK: 15 minutes**

## **III. Talking About Touching Orientation: Key Concepts, Format, Content**

**Introduce the River Story.**

*[Note to facilitator: Use this story to shift from looking at the issues of abuse and mandated reporting to the participants' roles as child advocates—an important step toward prevention.]*

**Tell the River Story.**

This is a story about a group of picnickers by the side of a river. It was the Fourth of July and there were several tables full of food and lots of games going on, and everybody was having a great time. At some point, one of the picnickers looked over toward the river and noticed something floating on the river—in fact, it was a woman, and she was drowning. Acting quickly, this person jumped into the river, swam out, brought the woman back to the shore, and resuscitated her. Just as the rescuer got the woman to her feet, a man appeared in the very same predicament. So someone else jumped in, rescued the man, resuscitated him, and got him on his feet, when sure enough someone looked out and saw another person struggling down the river.

This kept happening. The picnickers kept jumping into the river to rescue people, and as soon as they got one person stabilized, another came along until finally someone in the group said, “Look, I’m going to send someone up river to find out why people are coming down the river and drowning and see what we can do about that.”

**Debrief participants about the River Story.**

Your role as a mandated reporter is to be there when a child is “drowning” and to take care of that child. Your role as a child advocate is to go up river to address the issue and teach skills so that the child can take care of him- or herself. The goal is to make an impact on the number of crises we are dealing with every day. In other words, to work toward prevention.

**Present a lesson.**

*[Note to facilitator: Choose a lesson and present it to the group, asking them to play the role of students. Following the lesson, talk briefly about the layout of the lesson card. For a Preschool/Kindergarten group, use Lesson 6; for a Preschool/Kindergarten–Grade 3 group, use Grade 1, Lesson 3.]*

I want to present a lesson to illustrate what it looks like when we begin to teach children skills to help keep themselves safe from dangerous and abusive situations. When the lesson is finished, we will look at the *Talking About Touching* curriculum in more detail.

**Present elements of a successful social-competence curriculum.**

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 5: Successful Social-Competence Curriculum.]*

Please turn to Handout 5. The skills taught at each grade level are telling/asking for help, assertiveness, and decision making. The emphasis on each skill changes depending on development and grade level. For example, telling/asking for help is emphasized in Preschool/Kindergarten and assertiveness is

emphasized in Grades 1–3. Decision making is presented as a safety rule at all grade levels.

### **Detail the key concepts of the curriculum.**

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 6, “Key Concepts,” while discussing the expanded version on Handout 6A.]*

Please turn to Handout 6A. Let’s take a look at the key concepts included in the curriculum.

#### **1. Safety Rules**

Children learn personal safety in the context of other safety training. They learn that there are specific safety rules regarding touch. Research has indicated that young children are more successful in applying a simple rules-based approach to safety rather than a feelings-based approach (Wurtele, Kast, Miller-Perrin, and Kondrick, 1989). Simple safety rules presented in the *Talking About Touching* curriculum guide children toward safe decision making in a variety of situations, including those involving touch.

#### **2. Touch**

Children learn that there are safe, unsafe, and unwanted touches.

*[Note to facilitator: Record examples of safe and unsafe touches on chart paper.]*

Safe touches are presented as positive, caring touches that enrich all of our lives.

Unsafe touches include touches that hurt bodies or feelings. Pushing is an example of an unsafe touch. It is important not to encourage children to judge the safety of touches by how they make them feel because unsafe touches may feel good.

It is also important that children feel safe in refusing unwanted touches. Often, children receive the message not to talk about or control the touches they give and receive. However, if children aren’t able to talk about their dislike of kissing Uncle Bill because he smells like a cigar, for example, how will they speak of more exploitive experiences with touch? Children have a right to say how and by whom they are touched.

### **Present the touching safety rules.**

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 7: The Touching Rule, Preschool/Kindergarten.]*

Please refer to Handouts 7 and 8. The Touching Rule for Preschool/Kindergarten is “A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.”

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 8: The Touching Rule, Grades 1–3.]*

The Touching Rule for Grades 1–3 is “No one should touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.”

Let's continue with the remaining key concepts and skills.

### **3. The Safety Steps**

Children learn the Safety Steps: (1) Say words that mean "No"; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up. They also generate a variety of ways to respond to inappropriate requests through skill practice.

### **4. Support Systems**

Children learn to identify specific people to whom they can go for help. They learn to persist in asking for help until they get it. They learn that all sexual contact with adults, even that which they have successfully resisted, must be reported. The trauma of physical or sexual abuse often needs to be talked about more than once. It is important that children be able to identify grown-ups whom they know and trust and to whom they can talk with about upsetting past experiences.

### **5. Body Parts**

Children learn that certain parts of their body are private and not to be touched by others except for health or hygiene reasons.

When teaching touching safety rules, teachers will need to decide what terminology they want to use for private body parts. It is recommended that anatomically correct names be used, if possible. Using correct terminology will assist children in communicating accurately about any touching problems or questions they may have.

In some communities and school settings, using these terms may be difficult. Lessons that present the touching rules, therefore, offer the option of referring to private body parts as "those parts of the body covered by a bathing suit." Teachers will want to decide which approach will be most appropriate for their class or community.

### **6. Blame**

Children learn that sexual contact with an adult is never the child's fault, no matter how it started or how long it lasted. It is always the adult's fault.

### **7. Secrets**

Children learn not to keep secrets about touching.

**LUNCH BREAK: 30 minutes**

## **IV. *Talking About Touching* Curriculum Exploration and Practice**

(1 hour, 30 minutes)

**Provide an overview of the kits.**

**Talking About Touching®: A Personal Safety Curriculum**

*[Note to facilitator: Hold up the components as you highlight them.]*

Each kit contains the following components:

- Teacher's Guide, which includes:
  - Program description.
  - Scope and Sequence of the lessons.
  - Information on how to teach the program.
  - Background information on child sexual abuse.
  - Information on handling disclosures and reporting.
  - Supplemental teaching materials.
  - Take-Home Letters.
  - Family Education Night outline.
  - Guidelines for using the *What Do I Say Now?*™ family video.
- *What Do I Say Now?*™ parent video.
- 11" x 17" photo-lesson cards (15 lessons in Preschool/Kindergarten; 40 lessons total in Grades 1–3).
- *Sam's Story*, which includes a big book and an audiocassette with the story and songs (Preschool/Kindergarten and Grade 1 only).
- Safety Steps poster.
- *Joey Learns the Touching Rule*™ video (Preschool/Kindergarten only).

**Introduce "Curriculum Exploration" activity.**

*[Note to facilitator: Use chart paper to display the following lesson breakdown.]*

*Preschool/Kindergarten*  
*Lessons 1–7 (Unit I)*  
*Lessons 8–12 (Unit II)*  
*Lessons 13–15 (Unit II)*

*Grades 1–3*  
 We are going to spend some time exploring the curricula in more detail. Choose a grade level that you would like to explore and then break into groups of three per grade level.

*Personal Safety (Unit I)*  
*Touching Safety (Unit II)*  
*Assertiveness and Support (Unit III)*  
 Preschool/Kindergarten is divided into two units:

- Unit I: Personal Safety
- Unit II: Touching Safety

Grades 1, 2, and 3 are each divided into three units:

- Unit I: Personal Safety
- Unit II: Touching Safety
- Unit III: Assertiveness and Support

Those of you working with Grade 1, 2, or 3 will choose a unit. If you are in the Preschool/Kindergarten group, you will need to divide the curriculum up by the lessons listed on the chart. Take a moment to decide who will take which section.

Each one of you will take responsibility for studying the lessons within your section. You will then summarize what you learned about those particular lessons for your group. This will help to give everyone a good idea of the flow and content of the lessons without studying every single card yourself.

Take 10 minutes to examine the cards. Get a sense of the titles and concepts. Identify common themes. Notice how children practice the skills. Notice how transfer of learning is addressed.

### **Introduce small-group reports.**

I would like each of you to take 3–4 minutes to report back to your small group. Include what you've learned about the flow and content of the lessons and add any highlights.

### **Identify the major themes for the group.**

Unit I of Preschool/Kindergarten and Grades 1–3 addresses personal safety. These lessons introduce common safety issues affecting children. Lesson topics include car safety, traffic safety, and fire safety for Preschool/Kindergarten and walking safety, fire safety, and gun safety for Grades 1–3.

Unit II of Preschool/Kindergarten and Grades 1–3 addresses touching safety. Lessons about touching safety include a Touching Rule and Safety Steps to help children stay safe. There are also lessons that emphasize the positive aspects of touch in children's everyday lives.

Unit III of Grades 1–3 addresses assertiveness and support. Lessons are provided that increase children's ability to stand up for themselves in an assertive, but not aggressive, way and to ask for help in difficult, uncomfortable, or dangerous situations. Lessons 13–15 of the Preschool/Kindergarten curriculum address assertiveness and support by reinforcing the Safety Steps—which include saying “No” and seeking the support of a grown-up.

### **Present teaching-time guidelines.**

Depending on class size, Preschool/Kindergarten lessons take 20–35 minutes. Grades 1–3 lessons take 25–40 minutes.

The lessons break down as follows:

- Warm Up/Review (5 minutes)
- Story and Discussion (5–15 minutes)

- Skill Practice (5–20 minutes)
- Activities (5–10 minutes)

You can space the lesson over the week by scheduling skill practice and activities at another time if necessary.

**Address recommendations for implementation.**

It is recommended that the lessons be taught once or twice a week by the classroom teacher. Why? Classroom teachers know their students best; students will feel more comfortable disclosing to the classroom teacher; and teachers can reinforce skills throughout the day.

It is also recommended that the lessons be taught in order. To successfully develop lesson concepts and student skills, it is important that lessons be presented in sequence since they build on one another.

**Explain how the Booster Lessons are used.**

There are two Booster Lessons per grade level. These should be presented in sequence with the rest of the lessons. Following the completion of the program, each Booster Lesson is presented twice more during the year. The review of safety rules and skills contributes greatly to retention.

**Address role-plays as a teaching strategy.**

The Skill Practice section—which includes role-plays—is an important part of the lessons. *Talking About Touching* teaching strategies are based on Social Learning Theory, which was first outlined by Bandura in 1973. According to this theory, children learn best by first observing a skill demonstration, and then practicing the skill while receiving feedback and reinforcement. In the lessons, the teacher models the skills being taught and then provides an opportunity for students to practice. The teacher then gives feedback on performance and reinforces effective use of skills through transfer-of-learning opportunities.

**Address the use of puppets within the lessons.**

Educators have long observed young children's captivated response to puppets. When it comes to children's engagement in a topic, puppets can have a compelling effect. Preliminary research indicates that use of puppets can increase effectiveness of programs (Davis and Gidycz, 2000).

The Warm-Up/Review and Skill Practice sections of the *Talking About Touching* curriculum are designed so that a puppet can be used to speak the words the teacher normally would. A puppet can also be a character in the role-plays. Keep in mind that the children do not need a perfectly polished performance. The mere presence of a puppet, accompanied by the use of simple movements and a normal voice, will delight them.

A puppet icon appears on the lesson cards wherever a puppet might be used. A hand puppet with a kindly demeanor, arms, and recognizable face is recommended. The arms are necessary so that the

children can identify different kinds of safe touch—for example, holding or shaking hands and patting on the back.

### **Model a lesson demonstrating the use of puppets and role-plays.**

*[Note to facilitator: Choose and present portions of a lesson from Grade 1, Unit II or III, that uses a puppet for the Warm-Up and Skill Practice. Debrief participants about the lesson by explaining how puppets help make role-plays about unsafe or unwanted touch safer for children and the teacher.]*

### **Introduce “Teaching the Curriculum” activity.**

Now I want to give each of you a chance to teach a lesson. In a moment, I am going to have you choose and study one lesson from the section that you explored earlier. You will have five minutes to study. When I call time, you will each have ten minutes to present your lesson to your group. Try to leave time to facilitate at least one of the Skill Practice activities in your mock lesson. When each of you is presenting your lesson, the others in your group will act as students and try to give age-appropriate answers. It is a good idea to pick one person in your group to be timekeeper to keep you on track. Any questions?

### **Debrief participants about the teaching activity.**

How did teaching the lesson go? What was it like to be the teacher? What was it like to be the student? What did you like about the curriculum? What questions do you have about using the curriculum?

BREAK: 15 minutes

## **V. Identifying, Reporting, and Handling Disclosure of the Sexually Abused Child (1 hour, 30 minutes)**

### **Set up video: *Reporting Child Abuse: A Personal Responsibility.***

The video that we are about to see demonstrates indicators of abuse. The truth is that indicators of abuse are not always visible. And in fact, some of the behavioral indicators are less obvious. This video will help us learn more about how to recognize the signs and identify abuse. It also includes information about how to handle disclosures.

### **Show video.**

*[Note to facilitator: Length of video is 30 minutes.]*

### **Debrief participants about the video.**

**Talking About Touching®: A Personal Safety Curriculum**

What are your reactions to the video?

What are some penalties for not reporting? (*Fines, jail time, license revocation.*)

What is the procedure for reporting? (*Every state is different. In California, for example, you must file a written report within 36 hours to CPS or the police. If a child is in imminent danger, you should report it to the police immediately; then follow up with a written report to CPS.*)

How do you know when to report? (*Reasonable suspicion is all it takes. If you suspect abuse, make a report and let the experts decide.*)

How can you distinguish accidental injuries from intentional abuse? (*Look at repetitiveness or frequency of injuries, the nature of how they occurred, and where the mark is. For example, marks on knees and elbows are often accidental signs. Signs of physical abuse can often be seen on the tops of arms, thighs, or face. You can also look at the behavioral symptoms of students, such as aggressiveness, hypersexualized behaviors, or avoidance/withdrawal.*)

What does a report include? (*Your name, work address, name and location of child, nature of abuse, extent of abuse, any other information that led you to believe abuse was occurring, parents' address, language and ethnicity of family, other siblings.*)

How long does CPS have to respond? (*Within 10 days if the report suggests abuse.*)

### **Explore reasons why children don't tell.**

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 9: Why Don't Children Tell?]*

Please turn to Handout 9. Let's look at why children don't tell. They may be too young or fearful. They may have been bribed or told that the abuse is normal. They may feel threatened or guilty. They may want affection or want to please the adult. They may not have the necessary language skills.

### **Discuss how to recognize the four types of disclosure.**

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 10: Types of Disclosure.]*

Please turn to Handout 10. There are four types of disclosure. The first is called "direct disclosure." In this type of disclosure, children come in privately to talk directly and specifically to the teacher about what is going on. This is one of the less common ways for children to disclose.

When a child gives you a direct disclosure, you want to encourage him or her to tell you more about the incident without asking leading questions. Use open-ended questions like "Can you tell me more?"

The second type of disclosure is called "indirect disclosure." This is where a child does not come right out and tell you something is happening. An example would be if a child said: "My brother wouldn't let me sleep last night" or "My baby-sitter keeps bothering me." A child may talk in these terms

because she or he hasn't learned more specific vocabulary, feels too ashamed or embarrassed to talk more directly, has promised not to tell, or for a combination of reasons. Another example of indirect disclosure is dropping subtle clues like "He's creepy."

When a child gives you an indirect disclosure, you want to gently encourage him or her to be more specific, within the limits of the child's vocabulary. Bear in mind that in order to make a report you do not need to know exactly what form the abuse has taken.

A third type of disclosure is called a "disguised disclosure." This is where a child will say: "I know someone with a touching problem."

When a child gives you a disguised disclosure, you want to encourage him or her to tell you what he or she knows about the "other child." It is probable that the child will eventually tell you whom he or she is talking about.

A fourth type of disclosure is one with "strings attached." In this instance, a child will say: "I have a problem, but if I tell you about it, you have to promise not to tell anyone else."

When a child gives you this type of disclosure, let the child know that you want to help him or her and that the law requires you to make a report. Explain that it is important for you to share the information with other adults who can help. Just as the abuse itself is against the law, it is also against the law for you not to report. Respect confidentiality by discussing the abuse only with those directly involved in the legal and support process.

### **Share guidelines for responding to disclosure.**

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 11: Responding to Disclosure.]*

Please turn to Handout 11. Here are some guidelines for responding to disclosure:

- Don't panic or express shock.
- Find a private place to talk.
- Express your belief in the child.
- Reassure the child that it was not his or her fault.
- Tell the child that she or he did the right thing by telling.
- Determine the child's need for safety.
- Let the child know that you will support him or her.
- Tell the child what you will do.
- Make the report.

Create times during the day when you are available for students to come and speak with you if needed.

When a child discloses:

- Don't make empty promises; for example, "Everything will be okay."
- Don't ask leading questions; for example, "Did your cousin touch you there?"

Remember, the role of the teacher is NOT to investigate but to set in motion a process of getting help for the child.

### **Introduce “Responding to Disclosure Role-Play.”**

Please turn to Handout 12. Take a moment to read the instructions for this activity. The purpose of this role-play is to have the experience of handling a disclosure. You do not have to do it perfectly.

Any questions? Please pick a partner and get started.

### **Debrief participants about activity.**

What are some of the things the “teachers” did or said that made you as a “student” want to disclose? What did you learn as a “teacher”?

### **Discuss “Reasonable Cause to Believe.”**

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 13: Reasonable Cause to Believe.]*

Please turn to Handout 13. Here are some guidelines to consider when trying to determine whether you have a reasonable cause to believe that a child is being abused:

- Resolve doubt in favor of the child.
- Rely on your support systems at school and in your community.
- Trust your instincts—your gut feelings.
- Call Child Protective Services for advice.
- Discuss your observations or concerns with coworkers.
- Make sure the child understands that you are there for her or him and that if she or he has any problems, you will try to help.

Remember, a report is a request for an investigation. Mandated reporters do not need to prove the abuse.

### **Share some final thoughts about reporting responsibility.**

*[Note to facilitator: Display transparency of Handout 14: Reporting Responsibility.]*

Please turn to Handout 14. Here are some things to consider in regard to reporting responsibility:

- A report is not a proven fact. It is the raising of a question.
- All mandated reporters are required to report any abuse—if they have “reason to believe”—as soon as possible.
- What is the procedure for your program?
- What is the relationship between your program and CPS?
- There is a penalty for the willful failure to report. However, if a report is made in good faith, you are

immune from liability.

While we cannot be certain that things will get better if we report, we can be certain that things *won't* get better if we don't. It is important to take the time to review the reporting policy for your state, school, or organization.

## VI. Closure (15 Minutes)

**Share a favorite quote or inspiring story and your final thoughts on the training.**

**Instruct participants to fill out the staff training evaluation form.** [*Handout 15: Talking About Touching Staff Training Evaluation.*]

**Distribute Certificates of Completion.** [*Handout 16.*]

**Thank participants for attending the training. Let them know how you can be a resource for them in the future. Let them know how Committee for Children can be a resource for them in the future.**

## References

Bandura, A. (1973). *Aggression: A Social Learning Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

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Wurtele, S. K., Kast, L., Miller-Perrin, C. L., and Kondrick, P. (1989). "A Comparison of Programs for Teaching Personal Safety Skills to Preschoolers." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 57, 505–511.

## Handouts

- Handout 1 *Talking About Touching* Staff Training Agenda
- Handout 2 Goals for the *Talking About Touching* Staff Training
- Handout 3 Scope of the Problem
- Handout 4 Defining *Abuse*
- Handout 5 Successful Social-Competence Curriculum
- Handout 6 Key Concepts
- Handout 6A Key Concepts
- Handout 7 The Touching Rule—Preschool/Kindergarten
- Handout 8 The Touching Rule—Grades 1–3
- Handout 9 Why Don't Children Tell?
- Handout 10 Types of Disclosure
- Handout 11 Responding to Disclosure
- Handout 12 Responding to Disclosure Role-Play
- Handout 13 Reasonable Cause to Believe
- Handout 14 Reporting Responsibility
- Handout 15 *Talking About Touching* Staff Training Evaluation
- Handout 16 Certificate of Completion



# ***Talking About Touching*** **Staff Training Agenda**

- 8:15–8:30**      **Check-in**
- 8:30–12:00**      **Welcome and Goals**
- Defining Child Abuse: An Overview**
- Talking About Touching* Orientation**  
                         (Key Concepts, Format, and Content)
- 12:00–12:30**      **Lunch**
- 12:30–3:45**      ***Talking About Touching* Curriculum Exploration and Practice**
- Identifying, Reporting, and Handling Disclosure of the Sexually**  
                         **Abused Child**  
                         (Video Viewing and Discussion)
- 3:45–4:00**      **Closure**

# Goals for the *Talking About Touching* Staff Training

Participants will be able to:

- Effectively teach the *Talking About Touching* program.
- Understand the issue of child abuse.
- Identify indicators of abuse.
- Learn to handle disclosure.
- Understand the responsibilities of mandated reporters.

# Scope of the Problem

- At least 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys will be sexually abused before reaching the age of 18.
- 80%–90% of abusers are known, loved, and trusted by the child.
- Child abuse happens in all racial, religious, ethnic, and economic groups.
- 2 million incidents of child abuse and neglect were reported in 1994 (up from 60,000 in 1974).
- Only 2% of child sexual abuse occurs in daycare settings.
- 3% of child sexual abuse is violent (as opposed to manipulative).
- A third of all cases of child abuse involve children under the age of 5.
- 80%–90% of prison inmates were abused as children.

# Defining Abuse

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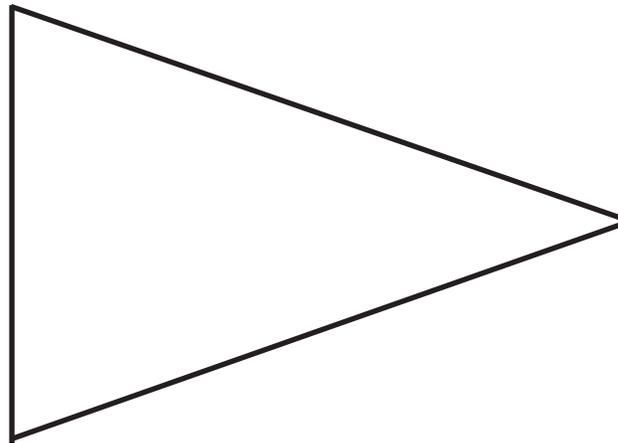
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# Successful Social-Competence Curriculum

Telling/asking for help



Decision making

Assertiveness

Skills are taught at each level.

Emphasis changes depending on development.

# Key Concepts

Safety Rules

Touch

The Safety Steps

Support Systems

Body Parts

Blame

Secrets

# Key Concepts

## 1. Safety Rules

Children learn personal safety in the context of other safety training. They learn that there are specific safety rules regarding touch.

## 2. Touch

Children learn that there are safe, unsafe, and unwanted touches. Children have a right to say how and by whom they are touched.

## 3. The Safety Steps

Children learn the Safety Steps: (1) Say words that mean “No”; (2) Get away; and (3) Tell a grown-up. These steps help children generate a variety of ways to respond to inappropriate requests and remove themselves from unsafe situations.

## 4. Support Systems

Children learn to identify specific people to whom they can go for help. They learn to persist in asking for help until they get it. They learn that all sexual contact with adults, even that which they have successfully resisted, must be reported.

## 5. Body Parts

Children learn that certain parts of their body are private and not to be touched by others except for health or hygiene reasons.

## 6. Blame

Children learn that sexual contact with an adult is never the child’s fault, no matter how it started or how long it lasted. It is always the adult’s fault.

## 7. Secrets

Children learn not to keep touching secrets.

# The Touching Rule

## Preschool/Kindergarten

A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.

# The Touching Rule

## Grades 1–3

No one should touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy.

# Why Don't Children Tell?

- Too young
- Bribed
- Fearful
- Threatened
- Want affection
- Told that the abuse is normal
- Want to please adults
- Feel guilty
- Don't have the language

# Types of Disclosure

- Direct
- Indirect
- Disguised
- Strings attached

The role of the teacher is not to investigate, but to set in motion the process of getting help.

# Responding to Disclosure

- Don't panic or express shock.
- Find a private place to talk.
- Express your belief in the child.
- Reassure the child that it was not his or her fault.
- Tell the child that she or he did the right thing by telling.
- Determine the child's need for safety.
- Let the child know that you will support him or her.
- Tell the child what you will do.
- Make the report.

# Responding to Disclosure Role-Play

**Instructions:** Find a partner and sit side-by-side. Decide who will start out playing the role of the teacher receiving the disclosure and who will play the role of the student disclosing the abuse. You will have three minutes for each role-play.

**“Teacher” Instructions:** You will start the role-play. You have noticed your “student” behaving strangely in class. You have asked to talk with him or her privately. When the “student” discloses, practice some of the strategies for responding to disclosure found on Handout 11.

**“Student” Instructions:** Choose one of the following scenarios or create your own if you’d like:

- You are a five-year-old whose uncle has been putting you to bed at night. He’s been touching the parts of your body covered by a bathing suit.
- You are a six-year-old whose aunt has forcibly made you watch her and her boyfriend have sexual intercourse.
- You are a seven-year-old whose babysitter has asked to play touching games with you.
- You are an eight-year-old whose eighteen-year-old brother insists on bathing with you. He has recently asked you to touch him in inappropriate places.

For your chosen scenario, disclose to the “teacher” using one of the methods of disclosure found on Handout 10.

**“Debrief” Instructions:** At the end of the three-minute role-play, the “student” should share what the “teacher” did that made him or her want to disclose and anything that made it difficult to disclose. The “teacher” should share what the experience was like and what she or he learned.

At the end of the debrief, switch roles and repeat the process.

# Reasonable Cause to Believe

- Resolve doubt in favor of the child.
- Rely on your support systems at school and in your community.
- Trust your instincts—your gut feelings.
- Call CPS for advice.
- Discuss your observations or concerns with coworkers.
- Make sure the child understands that you are there for her or him and that if she or he has any problems, you will try to help.

Remember:

A report is a request for an investigation. Mandated reporters do not need to prove the abuse.

# Reporting Responsibility

- A report is not a proven fact. It is the raising of a question.
- All mandated reporters are required to report any abuse—if they have “reason to believe”—as soon as possible.
- What is the procedure for your program?
- What is the relationship between your program and CPS?
- There is a penalty for the willful failure to report. However, if a report is made in good faith, you are immune from liability.

While we cannot be certain that things will get better if we report, we can be certain that things *won't* get better if we don't.

# Talking About Touching Staff Training Evaluation

	Poor	Adequate	Good	Excellent
<b>Defining Child Abuse: An Overview</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Talking About Touching Orientation</b> (Key Concepts, Format, and Content)	1	2	3	4
<b>Talking About Touching Curriculum Exploration and Practice</b>	1	2	3	4
<b>Identifying, Reporting, and Handling Disclosure of the Sexually Abused Child</b> (Video Viewing and Discussion)	1	2	3	4
<b>Value of today's training for you</b>	1	2	3	4

• What did you like most about today and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• What one thing would you change and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Leaving the training today I feel . . . \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

• Other comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Certificate of Completion

\_\_\_\_\_

has completed Staff Training  
in the use of

*Talking About Touching®: A Personal Safety Curriculum*

a Committee for Children program

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Trainer

committee  
for *children*

Educating the heart and mind

