

"We all have the right  
to feel safe all  
the time".

"Nothing is so awful that  
you can't talk with  
someone about it".



# Protective Behaviours



## HOW DO I TALK TO MY CHILD ABOUT PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS?

This week we continue our theme on child safety with the next two tips for parents on how to talk to children about protective behaviours. Please talk to your child's teacher if you have questions about our Protective Behaviours curriculum.

5

### Discuss Good Touches and Bad Touches

Introduce ideas about good and bad touches by talking about how nice a hug or kiss can be. Explain that people often show they care about or love someone by touching them. Children often touch pets to show them how they feel. Talking about pets can be useful example to use to talk about the likes and dislikes a pet might have when they are touched in different ways.

You can also ask your child about the kinds of touches they like and dislike, e.g. being tickled. When talking to young children about tickling, help them to understand that something might be fun at first, but they are right to say no when it is not fun for them anymore.

- Sometimes adults do things that are not okay. Explain to children that sometimes even people who are good do things that are not okay.
- **Getting away** – Tell children that if someone is doing "not okay" touches or is hurting them, they should get away from that person as quickly as possible.

6

### Discuss Good Secrets and Bad Secrets

In some families, children are taught to keep surprises but not to keep secrets. A surprise is information that will eventually be shared, such as a present or party. Another idea is to teach children the difference between good and bad secrets. Children should always tell a trusted adult if anyone asks them to keep a secret about things that make them feel embarrassed, or uncomfortable.

- People who abuse children often depend upon the child to keep secrets. It is important to teach children to say no to this request.
- **Secrets vs. surprises** – Since child sexual abuse often involves messages about keeping the behaviour secret, children need to understand that surprises are fine but secrets are not.

7

### Tell your child to keep on telling until they feel safe again.

Talk to children about telling an adult if someone is hurting them or doing "not okay" touches.

- Since initial disclosures of abuse are often dismissed or not believed, the child should understand that they should keep telling adults until someone helps them.
- Explain that sometimes they may tell and the grown-up may not understand or may say "Don't be silly" or "I don't believe you".
- If something like this happens they should keep on telling until someone does believe them and does something to help.