

# Body Safety 101

A caregiver's guide to empowering your  
child and safe body boundaries



face it®

A MOVEMENT TO END CHILD ABUSE

Founded By



KOSAIR  
CHARITIES



# Possible Warning Signs

While not always present, warning signs may include:



Strong efforts to avoid, or to be with, a specific person without an obvious reason



Displaying knowledge or interest in sexual acts that are inappropriate to his or her age



Pain when toileting, trouble walking or sitting, or pain, itching, bleeding, or bruises in or around the genitals



Sudden changes in behavior, such as becoming more withdrawn, or being more aggressive toward family friends, pets, or toys



Unexplained episodes of anger, rage, or moodiness



Sleep disturbances, such as nightmares or bedwetting



Difficulty concentrating or staying on task, irritability, lacking motivation, and showing little or no emotion

90%

of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser. Only 10% are abused by strangers.<sup>1</sup>

1 in 10

children will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday.<sup>2</sup>



The last four warning signs can be signs of stress which may or may not be related to sexual abuse. If your child has any physical symptoms such as pain, itching, bleeding or bruising, seek medical care right away. Remember, children may not react as adults might expect. Often there are no warning signs.

# *Safe Caregivers & Safe Situations*

Most victims of sexual abuse were abused by someone they knew or in a place they were familiar with. You can take steps to surround children with safe caregivers in safe environments.

- ◆ Abusers often become friendly with potential victims and their families, earning trust and gaining time alone with children. Observe your child with others, and listen to your gut. If you feel uncomfortable with the way an adult is interacting with your child, step in.
- ◆ Ask your babysitter for background checks, including criminal and child abuse/neglect checks.
- ◆ Check that all of your child's programs require background checks, personal interviews, and professional recommendations for all adults—including volunteers—who work with children.
- ◆ Monitor children's Internet and smartphone use. Offenders have been known to use the Internet to lure children into physical contact.

# *Educate & Empower Your Child*

Talking to your child about their bodies, body safety, and personal boundaries is key in keeping them safe. Child safety is an adult responsibility.

- ◆ Use the correct names for body parts, including their genitals, as they are learning to identify them (starting as early as possible).
- ◆ Make sure your child knows the difference between "okay" and "not okay" touches. No one should ask to see or touch the private parts of their body, except a medical provider or a caregiver who is helping them clean or use the restroom. No one should show them pictures of private parts. Teach them if those things occur, tell a trusted adult. Teach children that once they can bathe and use the restroom on their own, they should not accept such help from adults and older children.
- ◆ Teach children that it's okay for them to say "no" if they don't want to hug or kiss someone, including family, and always respect their decision.
- ◆ Educate children about the difference between good secrets and bad secrets. A surprise party is a good secret because it isn't kept for long. A secret that they are told to keep forever is not okay.

# Responding if a Child Tells You About Abuse

If a child discloses abuse, how you respond could be as important as anything else that will follow. It is critical for you to stay calm, listen carefully, and be a source of safety and support. Allow the child to share at his or her own pace, using his or her own language. Do not press the child for details or make remarks that question the child's experience. Just let the story unfold. Then report the incident to Child Protective Services or law enforcement. Consult with your child's doctor immediately if you find out about sexual abuse or assault to determine if your child should be seen at an emergency department or at the Child Advocacy Center.



faceitmovement.org



kacac.org



pcaky.org



kosair.org

Call Kentucky's Child Protection Hotline (toll free) at

**1-877-KYSAFE1(597-2331)**

or use the online reporting system at **www.reportitky.org**.

Always call 911 if a child is in imminent danger and needs immediate protection.

Go to [faceitabuse.org](http://faceitabuse.org) to learn more about the Face It® movement and how you can be the face that ends child abuse and neglect.

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