

The Underwear Rule

Privates are private

Be clear with your child that parts of their body covered by underwear are private. No one should ask your child to touch or look at parts of their body covered by underwear.



If anyone tries to touch their private parts, tell your child to say "no" and to tell an adult they trust about what has happened.

In some situations, people - family members at bathtime, or doctors and nurses - may need to touch your child's private parts.

Explain that this is OK, but that those people should always explain why, and ask your child if it's OK first.

Always remember your body belongs to you

Let your child know their body belongs to them, and no one else.

It can be helpful to talk about the difference between good touch and bad touch:



Good touch is helpful or comforting like a hug from someone you love.

Bad touch is being touched in a way that that makes you feel uncomfortable.

No one has the right to make them do anything with their body that makes them feel uncomfortable. And if anyone tries, tell your child they have the right to say no.

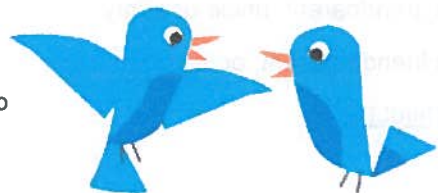
This can be a good time to remind your child that they can always talk to you about anything which worries or upsets them.

No means no

Make sure your child understands that they have the right to say "no" to unwanted touch - even to a family member or someone they know or love.

This shows that they're in control of their body and their feelings should be respected.

If a child feels confident to say no to their own family, they are more likely to say no to others.



Talk about secrets that upset you

Your child needs to feel able to speak up about a secret that's worrying them and confident that saying something won't get them into trouble.

To help them feel clear and comfortable about what to share and when, explain the difference between 'good' and 'bad' secrets.

Bad secrets:

- make you feel worried, uneasy, sad or frightened
- may be asked to be kept in exchange for something
- bad secrets often have no end time.

Good secrets:

- can be nice things like surprise parties or presents for someone else
- will usually be shared in the end

It's important that your child knows the difference because 'secrets' are often an abusers greatest weapon in stopping a child from telling anybody about [abuse](#).

Phrases like "it's our little secret" are their way of making a child feel worried, or scared to tell someone what is happening to them.



Speak up, someone can help

Tell your child that if they ever feel sad, anxious or frightened they should talk to an adult they trust.

A trusted adult doesn't have to be a family member. It can also be:

- a teacher
- a grandparent, uncle or aunty
- a friend's parent, or
- [ChildLine](#)

Whoever they feel most comfortable talking to, reassure your child this adult will listen, and can help stop whatever is making them upset.

The more your child is aware of all the people they can turn to, the more likely they are to tell someone as soon as they have a worry.

Remind your child that whatever the problem, it's not their fault and they will never get into trouble for speaking up.

