

1 in 4 girls is sexually abused before the age of 18.

1 in 6 boys is sexually abused before the age of 18.

– Darkness to Light - [www.d2l.org](http://www.d2l.org)



**K**eeping children safe is a parent's job. Yet talking to your children about body safety may feel intimidating. What do you say to a young child or adolescent? There is no perfect age to talk with your child, this should be an ongoing dialogue throughout their lifetime.

Avoid falling back on the old warning of "strangers"; unfortunately all too often those who perpetrate children do so because they are familiar to the child. Perpetrators do so because they have access to the child. Show that you are available to talk with your children and learn to listen to what they might be telling you through non-verbal cues and/or behaviors.

NEW HAMPSHIRE  
NETWORK OF  
CHILDREN'S  
ADVOCACY  
CENTERS 

New Hampshire Network of Children's Advocacy Centers promotes an environment where children are free from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and neglect by striving to ensure children and families have access to the high quality, comprehensive, specialized and culturally competent services of a local Children's Advocacy Center. For more information, please contact Amanda Peterson at 603-422-8253.



The New Hampshire Network of Children's Advocacy Centers is a Chapter Member of National Children's Alliance.

Additional support and information is available through the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence who can connect you with your local sexual violence agency. Please call their statewide 24-hour hotline at 1-800-277-5570. All services are free and confidential.



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# Talking with your child about BODY SAFETY

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30-40% of victims are abused by a family member.

Another 50% are abused by someone outside of the family whom they know and trust.

Approximately 40% are abused by older or larger children whom they know.

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**T**hese tips for talking with your child about body safety are not meant to be the complete answer, but offer general guidelines for speaking with your child.

## THE DO'S

- ↪ DO talk with your child at a quiet time, without distractions so that you have their attention.
- ↪ DO talk about what parts of the body are considered “private” and which are not private – using whatever language is commonly used in your home. Some parents use the analogy that any part of the body covered by underwear is considered private.
- ↪ DO talk about whom CAN touch their private parts, i.e.: a Doctor as part of an exam, the child themselves, parents and/or caregivers who would be assisting with toileting or bathing. It is appropriate to distinguish between those normal activities as opposed to contact with their private areas not in the context of assisting with toileting or cleaning.
- ↪ DO talk about that it is not ok for anyone else to touch their private parts, including other children. Inquire in an open manner whether anyone else has touched them and who that is.
- ↪ DO talk about what your child should do if someone touches them – who they should tell, help them identify who to go to. Make it clear to your child that he or she can always tell you and that you will never be mad at them for telling you. Again, help children identify who else they can go to if you are not available, such as a teacher, family member, counselor, etc.
- ↪ DO pay attention to changes in your child’s sleeping, eating or toileting habits as they can sometimes be indicators of abuse.
- ↪ DO show support for whatever your child tells you, try not to show that you are upset as this will impact their comfort level in being honest about the topic.
- ↪ Do tell your children that they must never go into another person’s home or car without your knowledge. Make it clear that this includes neighbors, friends, family members and acquaintances. Help your children understand that it is important that you ALWAYS know where they are and with whom.

## THE DO NOT'S

- ⊗ DO NOT ASK DIRECT QUESTIONS – such as “Has Uncle Bob ever touched you.” Inquire in general about different people that your child is in contact with.
- ⊗ DO NOT USE DOLLS OR STUFFED ANIMALS FOR DEMONSTRATION – this can invite “magical thinking” into the scenario as children commonly engage in pretend play with these toys.

Only 10% of children are abused by strangers.

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**I**f your child does disclose something that is concerning – avoid the temptation to ask direct or leading questions. Bring this information to the attention of the appropriate authorities: the Division for Children Youth and Families (1-800-894-5533) and/or your local police department. Ask for help, get support for yourself and let your child know that you are proud of them for talking to you. If you have any questions or for further information, please feel free to contact the New Hampshire Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers at 603-422-8253.