

★ Teaching children

S.M.A.R.T

BODY SAFETY  
RULES

HELPFUL TIPS

for adults and caregivers

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# Body Safety Rules



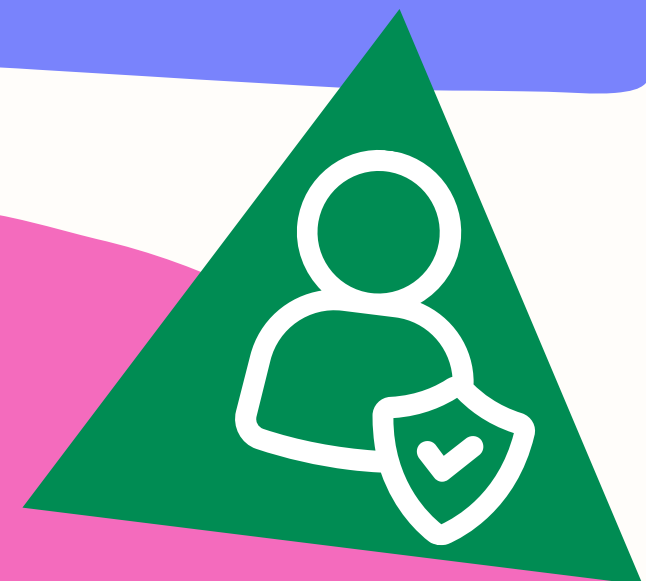
**S**afe, Unsafe and Confusing Situations



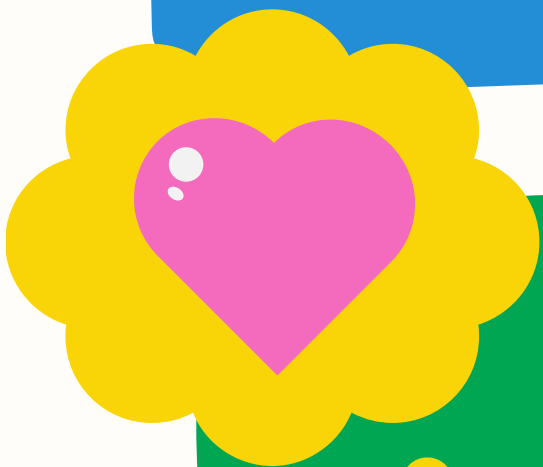
**M**odel Healthy Boundaries



**A**ddress Private Parts using Correct Names



**T**rust Triangle of safe adults



**R**ecognise Feelings



# S.M.A.R.T Body Safety Rules



## Safe, Confused and Unsafe Situations

The most commonly used terms to describe touch seem to be good and bad touch- but usually these touches don't hurt or feel bad. Using terms like 'bad' touch, add to the confusion and shame the child may already experience, especially when a known and trusted adult may be the offender.

**HELPFUL TIP:** Ensure your child knows that these rules apply to everyone. Tell them, "No one is allowed to make you feel uncomfortable, even if that person is your cousin, uncle, aunt or neighbour. It's never O.K., and I will always believe you."



## Model Healthy Boundaries

When children tell us they don't want to hug and kiss everyone at a family gathering, support them by helping them find another way to show respect to family members (such as shaking hands, high fives, saying goodbye). When we seek the child's permission, they get a sense of control over their body. It also helps the child realize that a predator will not ask permission, and it will help them spot those tricky people.

**HELPFUL TIP:** Encourage children to treat others with respect and dignity. "Just like it is not OK for you to hit and hurt other people, it is not OK for you to use tricks or force to touch other people in a way that makes them uncomfortable. You must respect others' feelings and their boundaries."



## Address Private Parts using Correct Names

Kids need to understand that no one is allowed to touch their private parts, look at their private parts or talk to them about private parts. Ensure you use the correct names of body parts- vagina, vulva, penis, breasts, testicles. If someone teaches your child a fun made-up name for their private parts, you will be alerted.

**HELPFUL TIP:** Keep your language simple and age-appropriate: "Mommy is washing your eyes, ears and your penis. Your body is special and it belongs to you. If anyone makes you uncomfortable, you can tell me or another safe grownup right away because our job is to keep you safe. Remember, bathing, toileting and sleeping are activities to be done in private."

# S.M.A.R.T Body Safety Rules

## Recognise Feelings



Being able to recognise our feelings is the first step in knowing when something doesn't feel right. Predators rely on the fact that children can be easily manipulated. Children who have a better sense of what feels O.K. and what doesn't — and are able to receive validation by communicating those feelings to safe and trusted grownups — are at a big advantage.

**HELPFUL TIP:** Share your own stories, and include as many feelings and sensations as you can. The important thing is to model what it means to listen to our gut feelings. For example: "I was so frustrated this morning, because I lost my office book and I knew I would be late for my meeting. My stomach felt queazy and my heart was racing as I frantically searched for it."

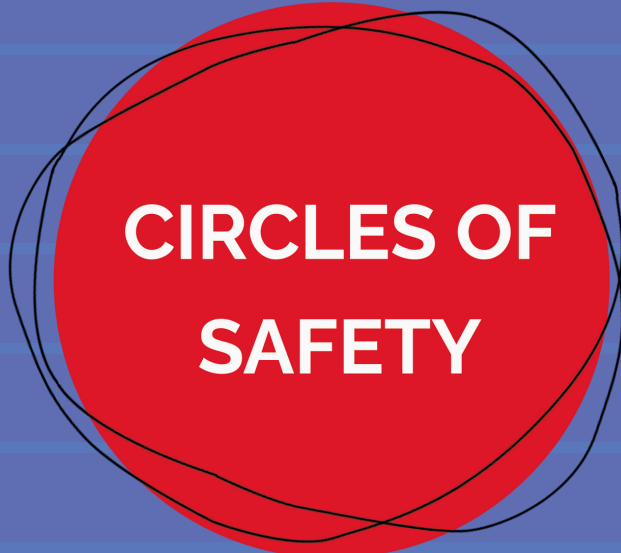
## Trusted Triangle



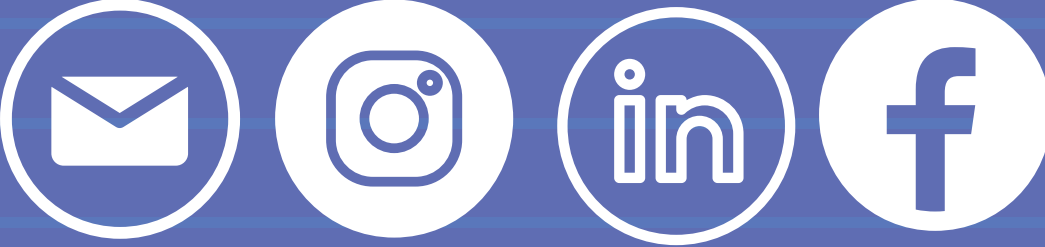
Help children identify at least three safe adults to be part of their trusted triangle, at least one of whom is not a family member. Sometimes children are afraid that they will "get in trouble" if they confide in their parents.

**HELPFUL TIP:** Let the child pick the people they wish to include. Ask "If you don't feel comfortable talking to me about something, who else can you talk to?" or "What if something happens at school or the playground, who would you talk to?"

**Teaching children body safety is a great way to protect children from sexual abuse. However, on its own, it won't be very effective. Adults also need to educate themselves on the facts of child sexual abuse, how to spot it and stop it and respond sensitively to disclosure.**



Circles of Safety (CoS) sensitises the community on prevention of child sexual abuse through education. We seek to cultivate a change in culture in which adults are no longer uncomfortable or afraid when discussing sexuality and related topics, but instead, acknowledge that no topic is too taboo or cumbersome when the safety of our children is at stake.



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