



BLUE SKY BRIDGE

Child Abuse Intervention & Education

School Program Parent Guide



"Thank you, Blue Sky Bridge!

You helped our family to start the conversation about body safety early,
and now my son has the language that he needs to help him stay safe."

-Parent

Before... set the stage

Blue Sky Bridge is coming to your child's school to talk about body safety. As a parent, you may wonder "how do I protect my child from sexual abuse without scaring them?" Research shows the single most important thing you can do to protect your child from abuse is to talk about it. Our program offers the opportunity to start a conversation that will serve as the foundation for open and honest dialogue with your child about all topics.

During... know the content

Our curriculum is carefully crafted to cover specific learning objectives that are informed by research. Below is a summary of each day's content. Links to the videos and materials we use are available on our website.



Day one

- **Private parts** (the parts covered by a swimsuit)
- **Safe versus unsafe touch**
- The three touching rules

Day two

- Secrets versus surprises
- **Trusted adults**

Day three

- The No, Go, Tell safety plan
- Practice scenarios

Day four

- Video
- Review & practice
- It might be someone you know...

An anonymous pre- and post-survey are given during the first and last sessions to measure learning.

*items in **bold** are topics covered in the kindergarten program.



After... talk it out

Children receive a worksheet each week. Each worksheet has a section for adults with a summary of what was taught and ideas on how to reinforce learning.

Keeping the conversation going...

Protecting kids from sexual abuse is not accomplished in a single conversation, but in ongoing conversations grounded in honesty and trust. Below are a few examples of language you can use to help tackle the hard but critical pieces of prevention.

Promote empathy

"I made a mistake and I'm sorry. I didn't realize that I embarrassed you. Thank you for telling me how you are feeling."

Reinforce boundaries

"If you have that icky feeling in your stomach or feel uncomfortable, it's okay to make up a reason that you need to leave."

Nurture healthy sexuality

"It's okay to look at and touch your own body. You can do that in your bedroom or in the bathroom."

Practice Honesty

"I'm not sure how to answer that question but I'm really glad you asked me. I'm going to find the answer so we can learn together."

Emphasize consent

"If you don't want a hug from someone, even me, you can say no."

Encourage dialogue

"If anyone ever breaks the touching rules you can always talk to me about it. You will not be in trouble. I want to know."



Don't panic...use the 5 R's

Part of talking about child sexual abuse is accepting a child may disclose abuse to you. Being prepared will help ensure you support the child as they take this important step towards healing.

Remain calm.

- Take deep breaths to manage your emotions.
- Use your own support system to process the experience.

Respect the child.

- BELIEVE them. Children do not make up allegations of sexual abuse.
- Many survivors report the trauma of not being believed as worse than the abuse.

Refrain from conducting your own investigation.

- Only ask questions that get at the basics (who, what, when & where).
- Use open ended questions (those that don't have yes/no answer) like "tell me more."
- Remind the child it is not their fault and you will be there for them.

Refuse to discuss this with others.

- Instead, go to the appropriate agency.
- Respect the child's privacy.
- Ask the child if it is o.k. to tell others; this is empowering.
- Check yourself. Sharing information to keep other kids safe or get support is okay. Gossip isn't.

Report the disclosure.

- Don't wait – make a report by calling the statewide hotline at 1-844-CO-4-KIDS



Responding to a disclosure

“I believe you”

“It’s not your fault”

“I’m going to call someone whose job it is to keep kids safe”





Vocabulary

Bribe

Something of value given to you to keep a secret and not tell.

No, go, tell

A three step action plan for getting help with unsafe situations. Say NO, leave the situation, and tell a trusted adult.

Personal Information

Information you would rather not share, like having a “crush” on someone. Personal information doesn’t involve anyone being hurt or breaking of the touching rules.

Personal space

An invisible bubble or boundary we keep around us to feel safe.



Private parts

The parts covered by a swimsuit in the front and back.

Safe touch

A touch that we want that makes us feel good or happy.

Secret

Something you are asked to keep quiet about forever and when shared, makes people feel sad, mad or yucky.

Surprise

Something you are asked to keep quiet about for a short time and when shared, makes people happy.

Touching rules

1. My body belongs to me. I do not have to share my body. This means I am the boss of my body.
2. No one is allowed to make me touch their body and I will not make anyone touch my body.
3. No one is allowed to touch my private parts except to keep me safe and healthy.

Trusted Adult

An adult (over 18) you feel comfortable talking to about anything.

Unsafe touch

A touch that hurts our bodies or a touch we do not want. Even a hug can be an unsafe touch if we don't want it.



SOME SIMPLE TIPS

To help keep your children safe from sexual abuse

Be present!

Show up unexpectedly to places where your child is – sports games, music lessons, while with the sitter, etc. This lets those around your child know you are involved in your child's life and interested in all the people he/she interacts with.

Have a secret-free home

Offenders rely on children that can keep secrets. Know that there is a difference between a "surprise" (think birthday present), versus a "secret" which is not meant to be told and does not make people feel good or safe.

Teach body-safety rules

Each person is in charge of their own body and no one is allowed to touch their body or make them touch another person's body.

Teach the name of body parts: penis, vagina, butt and breasts

This shows a potential offender that you communicate with your child about their body. Also if a child needs to tell about something happening to a body part, there will be no confusion.

Be a questioning parent

Ask detailed questions about play dates, sleepovers (e.g., who will be present, will there be older siblings around, will the internet be used), summer camps (e.g., kinds of abuse prevention the staff has received), and day care providers (e.g., background and reference checks). Discuss your own rules for the child.

Teach on-line safety tips

Don't allow children to give out their on-line address, turn off the internet at night, keep the computer in a common area, check up on the sites your child has visited, have rules regarding computer access and usage.

Have a safety plan

For playdates, sleepovers, teen-dates, etc. Let your child know that they can call you at any time to be picked up, no questions asked.

Use Teachable Moments

Use topics that come up naturally during the day to promote safety and empowerment

Listen

Listen to your child with an open mind and open heart—truly hear what they are trying to tell you.