

# TALKING TO YOUR 3-5 YEAR-OLDS A CONVERSATION GUIDE

## TALKING TO YOUR 3-5 YEAR-OLDS

There are so many things to look forward to when kids move out of their twos, from potty training to increased independence and even body awareness.

By this age, your kids are starting to discover their bodies and may notice that not everyone is the same. They most likely don't have any inhibitions about nudity (do you have a little streaker at home?), and you might even find your preschooler touching themselves more than usual.

But don't fret - this is the perfect time to start talking to your preschooler about their body. So take a deep breath and read the tips below to get started!

## CONVERSATION GUIDE

- As early as your child can label their eyes, nose, and ears, you'll want to start giving them the correct vocabulary to name their private parts - vulva, vagina, penis, buttocks, etc. Nicknames can cause confusion if a child discloses sexual abuse, so giving your child the right words to use can help.
- Avoid good/bad-touch terminology. This can cause confusion because it can still be sexual abuse, even when the touch could feel good. Also, if someone touches your child and they associate it with "being bad," they may be afraid to tell you for fear of getting in trouble.
- Talk about private parts and the boundaries for those parts. For example: "It's not okay for someone to ask you to touch their private parts with any part of your body, including your mouth."
- When talking about these topics, use the same attitude and tone as you do when speaking about crossing the street safely.
- Talk to your preschooler about the differences between comfortable and uncomfortable touch. "Sometimes touch might feel uncomfortable, even if you like the person. If it's uncomfortable, it's OK to say no."
- Most importantly let them know they can tell you anything & you will believe them. This isn't a one-time, one-sided conversation. Be sure to keep the discussion going as they get older & listen to what they have to say.
- Let them know they don't have to hug or kiss anyone they don't want to. Not even grandma. How about a high-five instead?