



Home Connection

Protecting Children from Inappropriate Touch

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Students have been learning about good (appropriate) and bad (inappropriate) touch in different situations. Although this is a very difficult topic, the discussion is vital to our children's safety. Experts estimate that 1 in 4 girls, 1 in 7 boys, and 15 to 25 percent of all children may be sexually abused. Sadly, most abusers are *not* strangers, but people the child know. They may be relatives, friends, or caregivers.

In health class, children were taught that only their parents or a doctor or nurse should touch them in the areas covered by a bathing suit. We have helped them identify good and bad touches. In the next lesson, we will teach children how to respond if someone touches them in an inappropriate way or place. Children will learn to say no, get away from the situation, and tell someone, a trusted adult, what happened.

Children need to feel empowered to say no if they feel they are being touched inappropriately. A child who reports inappropriate touch or sexual abuse to you needs your support. You might say something like, "I know it was hard for you to tell me about what happened. I want you to know this is *not* your fault. I am going to take care of you and help you." Reassure the child that telling is the right thing to do.

If you know a child who has been abused or touched inappropriately, contact the Fairfax County Child Protective Services Hotline, (703) 324-7400. You can call anytime, day or night. Social workers at Child Protective Services are trained to help children who have been abused.

Encourage your child to talk to you about any questions she or he has about this topic.

Thank you,

Your Child's Teacher