



Home Connection

Protecting Children from Inappropriate Touch

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Students have been learning about appropriate and inappropriate touch in different situations. Although this is a very difficult topic, the discussion is vital to our children's safety. Experts estimate that 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 a person the child knows. They may be relatives, friends, or caregivers.

Children need to feel empowered to say no if they feel they are being touched inappropriately or approached by others that cause discomfort. We have encouraged children in such situations to say no, get away if they can, and tell someone what happened. If a child reports inappropriate touch or sexual abuse to you, you need to be supportive. You might say something like, "I know it was hard to tell about what happened. I want you to know this is not your fault. I am going to take care of you and help you, so this person cannot hurt you again." 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.

We have used the example of a stoplight to help children understand good, bad, and confusing touches or approaches from others that make them feel uncomfortable:

- Green is for good touches, like hugs from parents or guardians.
- Red, for bad touches, means stop.
- Yellow is for confusing touches or approaches from others, touches or approaches that feel not quite right and may confuse the child.

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

Thank you,

Your Child's Teacher