



Preventing sexual assault

Ages 6-7

Did you know?

- Sexual assault is an act that is sexual in nature, with or without physical contact, committed by an individual without the consent of the victim or in some cases through emotional manipulation or blackmail, especially when children are involved (Government of Quebec, 2001).
- No matter what their social background, both girls and boys can be the victim of sexual assault.
- All adults are responsible for children's safety. Children must be made aware of sexual assault just as they are educated about any other type of assault.

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A PARENT?

Teach children the basic safety rules

It's important to tell children that the basic safety rules can also help prevent sexual assault.

To avoid certain risks, they must:

- Refuse to get into someone's car without their parents' permission.
- Stay away from a stranger if they are alone.
- Say no to candy or gifts if they don't have permission to take them.
- Always tell a parent or person in charge where they are.
- Always be with someone else when they're away from home (it's safer and more fun).
- Be able to dial 911 and know their home phone number.
- Say no to touching or hugging they don't like.
- Talk to a parent (or an adult they trust) if they experience situations that make them sad or that upset or hurt them.

Teach children important concepts about preventing sexual assault

You don't have to go into details when talking to children about preventing sexual assault. Simply tell them that:

- No one has the right to touch their genitals (penis, vagina, breast, buttocks), even if they know and like the person and the person asks them to keep it a secret.
- They have the right to say no if they don't want to be touched or if touching makes them uncomfortable. There are two situations in which an adult has the right to touch their penis or vagina: for health reasons or hygiene purposes.

- If someone touches their genitals, they must say “no,” yell, run away, or talk to a parent or someone they trust.
- There are good secrets and bad secrets.
 - A good secret is something fun and happy. These are secrets that someone tells them to keep for a while but that will be eventually revealed. These include a surprise party, birthday gift or surprise visit.
 - A bad secret causes pain or fear, and children have to share these types of secrets. This type of secret shouldn’t be kept, even if they are told never to tell anyone. For example, when someone forces a child to kiss them or touch their private parts. Children should never keep these secrets; they need to talk to an adult they trust.

Play games with children to find solutions to unexpected situations

Ask them: What would you do if...

- someone you don’t know asks you for help?
- someone you don’t know touches your private parts?
- someone you know touches your private parts?
- someone exposes and forces you to look at their private parts?
- someone you know asks you to touch their private parts and keep it a secret?

The goal isn’t to make children afraid but rather to give them tools to deal with a situation that puts them at risk, such as sexual assault.

Tips

Praise children when they follow the safety rules.

Emphasize solutions instead of danger and fear when you talk about sexual assault.

Teach them to trust their “inner voice.” This “voice” is similar to an alarm system that sends signals they need to listen to. Help children by regularly asking them to tell you how they feel.

WHAT CAN HELP YOU?

Book for parents

ROBERT, Jocelyne. *Parlez-leur d’amour et de sexualité*, Les Éditions de l’Homme, 1999.

Books for children and their parents

JUSTICE CANADA. *The Story of the Little Horse*, 1999.

This story is also available online (choose the language at the top of the page): www.lespasseurs.com/le_secret_du_petit_cheval.htm

ROBERT, Jocelyne. *Te laisse pas faire! Les abus sexuels expliqués aux enfants*, Les Éditions de l’Homme, 2000.

THIERRY, Lenain. *Touche pas à mon corps, Tatïe Jacotte!*, Les 400 coups, 1999.

Web sites

www.agressionssexuelles.gouv.qc.ca/en/

www.kidsintheknow.ca

Do you need a professional resource?

Call Info-Santé at 811 or the parent help line at 1-800-361-5085.

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Page layout: Alphatek

This tool was produced thanks to funding from the Secrétariat à la jeunesse as part of the Stratégie d’action jeunesse 2009-2014.