

Trust and Secrets

Touching and Other Inappropriate Behavior

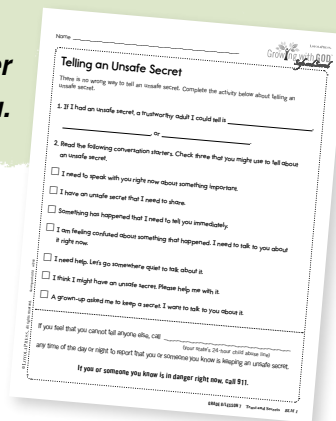
Young people should never be asked to keep secrets from their parents. This includes but is not limited to secrets about touching. Say: **No one has the right to touch you in any way that makes you feel afraid, worried, or confused. Let me know about any time someone made you feel this way even if it happened a long time ago or if that person is no longer in your life.** Provide assurance that it is never a young person’s fault if an adult or another young person makes him or her feel distress. Make sure to use appropriate terminology for body parts, including genitals. Say: **You can tell me anything.** Explain that it’s OK to tell an unsafe secret even if it means breaking a promise made not to tell.

Identifying Trustworthy Adults

Help your child understand that the job someone has, the position he or she holds, or a familial relationship does not automatically make that person trustworthy. Ask: **Who are some people you see as trustworthy in your life?** Avoid identifying trustworthy people for your child as someone you might consider safe may not be in the eyes of your child..

Telling an Unsafe Secret

It is beneficial for your child to have language he or she can use to communicate with you about unsafe secrets or distressing situations. Review the conversation starters in “Telling an Unsafe Secret” handout together. You might end your discussion by saying: **I will support you, and I am always here to listen.** Decide where to keep the completed handout. Say: **Telling is always the right thing to do. There is nothing you could ever tell me that would stop me from loving you.**



Guided by God's Gift of Emotions

Emotions are a gift from God that can help us identify and respond to various situations. Let your child know that he or she can tell you about any situation, especially those that are frightening, confusing, or potentially unsafe. Discuss different ways to recognize and respond to such situations. Say: **I want to help you stay safe. You can tell me about any situations that make you feel distress. It is never too late to tell, even if a long time has passed or if the person who caused you distress is no longer in your life.**

