

Talking to Children about Difficult Topics:

Recommended reading lists



The Prevention and Training team at the Stephanie V. Blank Center for Safe and Healthy Children curated recommended reading lists to help parents and caregivers have healthy conversations about difficult topics and build protective factors for their children. Use discretion when deciding what books are best for your child's current development and understanding, and always read books yourself before sharing them with your child.

Reminders for parents and caregivers

- Talking about body safety, boundaries, consent and sexuality can be uncomfortable, but caregivers are the best source for this information.
- It is not a child's responsibility to defend against abusers and those who may wish to harm them. No child should feel as though abuse is their fault because they didn't or couldn't say no.
- It is never a child's fault when someone hurts them or touches them in an unwanted or unsafe way, whether or not they say no.
- It is important to encourage your child to always tell a trusted adult if they are harmed or feel unsafe, whether through physical touch or something else.

Recommended reading lists

The book recommendations are broken out by the four categories listed below with suggested age ranges for each.



Be on the lookout for Blank Center staff favorites as indicated by the green star.

BODY SAFETY, BOUNDARIES
AND SECRETS

FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS



PUBERTY AND SEX

TRAUMA, ABUSE AND ASSAULT

Body safety, boundaries and secrets book recommendations

Book suggestions

Age suggestions

Book suggestions	Age suggestions
Some Parts Are NOT for Sharing Julie Federico	Birth to 3 years
When I Was Little like You Jane Porett	2 to 4 years
The Right Touch: A Read-Aloud Story to Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse Sandy Kleven	2 to 4 years
The Bare Naked Book Kathy Stinson	2 to 6 years
The Berenstain Bears Learn about Strangers Stan and Jan Berenstain	3 years and older
Your Body Belongs to You Cornelia Spelman	3 years and older
My Body Belongs to Me Jill Starishevsky	3 to 5 years
My Body Belongs to Me from My Head to My Toes Pro Familia	3 to 7 years
 Only for Me Michelle Derrig	3 to 8 years
Those Are MY Private Parts Diane Hansen	3 to 8 years
Amazing You!: Getting Smart about Your Private Parts Gail Saltz	3 to 8 years
It's MY Body: A Book to Teach Young Children How to Resist Uncomfortable Touch Lory Britain	3 to 8 years
 Fred the Fox Shouts "No!" Tatiana Y. Kisil Matthews	3 to 9 years
I Said No! A Kid-to-kid Guide to Keeping Private Parts Private Zack and Kimberly King	3 to 12 years
No Trespassing - This Is MY Body! Pattie Fitzgerald	4 to 8 years
I Can Play It Safe Alison Feigh	4 to 8 years
The Trouble with Secrets Karen Johnsen	4 to 10 years

Body safety, boundaries and secrets book recommendations

Book suggestions

Age suggestions



<p>Some Secrets Should Never Be Kept Jayneen Sanders</p>	3 to 12 years
<p>Telling Isn't Tattling Kathryn M. Hammerseng</p>	4 to 10 years
<p>Know Tiny Secrets: How to Keep Your Body Private and Safe Latasha Fleming</p>	5 to 10 years
<p>U Touch I Tell Chi Hosseinion</p>	7 to 9 years
<p>A Smart Girl's Guide: Digital World: How to Connect, Share, Play and Keep Yourself Safe Carrie Anton</p>	9 to 12 years
<p>Will Ladybug Hug? Hilary Leung</p>	Birth to 3 years
<p>My Body Is Private Linda Walvoord Girard</p>	3 to 8 years



<p>My Body's Mine: A Book on Body Boundaries and Sexual Abuse Prevention Kayla J.W. Marnach</p>	3 to 12 years
<p>Let's Talk about Body Boundaries, Consent and Respect Jayneen Sanders</p>	3 to 12 years
<p>An Exceptional Children's Guide to Touch: Teaching Social and Physical Boundaries to Kids McKinley Hunter Manasco</p>	3 to 12 years
<p>Uncle Willy's Tickles: A Child's Right to Say No Marcie Aboff</p>	4 to 8 years
<p>No Means No! Jayneen Sanders</p>	4 to 8 years
<p>Kindergators: Hands Off, Harry! Rosemary Wells</p>	4 to 8 years
<p>Miles Is the Boss of His Body Samantha Kurtzman-Counter and Abbie Schiller</p>	4 to 8 years



<p>Don't Touch My Hair! Sharee Miller <i>Available as a board book for younger children</i></p>	4 to 8 years
<p>Sorry, I Forgot to Ask! Julia Cook</p>	4 to 8 years

Body safety, boundaries and secrets book recommendations

Book suggestions	Age suggestions
C Is for Consent Eleanor Morrison <i>Available as a board book for younger children</i>	4 to 8 years
Me, Myselfie and I: A Cautionary Tale Jamie Lee Curtis and Laura Cornell	4 to 8 years
Listening to My Body Gabi Garcia	4 to 10 years
Rex Finds His Roar The CARE Center	4-8 years

Feelings and emotions book recommendations

Book suggestions	Age suggestions
Ruby Finds a Worry Tom Percival	3 to 6 years
When Sadness Is at Your Door Eva Eland	3 to 7 years
Freckleface Strawberry Julianne Moore	3 to 8 years
You, Me and Empathy Jayneen Sanders	4 to 8 years
You Weren't with Me Chandra Ghosh Ippen	3 to 12 years
Once I Was Very, Very Scared Chandra Ghosh Ippen	3 to 12 years
A Little SPOT of Anger: A Story about Managing BIG Emotions Diane Alber	4 to 8 years
 If I Had a Giant Toe: A Children's Book about Self-Esteem Jill D. Clark	4 to 8 years
Grumpy Monkey Suzanne Lang	4 to 8 years
The Way I Feel Janan Cain	4 to 8 years
Is a Worry Worrying You? Ferida Wolff and Harriet May Savitz	4 to 8 years

Feelings and emotions book recommendations

Book suggestions

Age suggestions


The Breaking News Sarah Lynne Reul	4 to 8 years
The Foster Dragon Steve Herman	4 to 8 years
Maybe Days: A Book for Children in Foster Care Jennifer Wilgocki	4 to 8 years
The Invisible String Patrice Karst	4 to 8 years
Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls Francesca Cavallo and Elena Favilli	8 to 11 years
My Strong Mind: A Story About Developing Mental Strength Niels van Hove	5 to 8 years
What to Do When the News Scares You: A Kid's Guide to Understanding Current Events Jacqueline B. Toner	6 to 12 years
Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss Pat Schwiebert and Chuck DeKlyen	All ages
The Memory Box: A Book About Grief Joanna Rowland	4 to 8 years




Puberty and sex book recommendations

Book suggestions

Age suggestions

It's Not the Stork!: A Book about Girls, Boys, Babies, Bodies, Families and Friends Robie H. Harris	4 to 8 years
It's So Amazing! A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies and Families Robie H. Harris	7 to 10 years
Sex Is a Funny Word Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth	8 to 12 years
Guy Talk (Growing Up) Lizzie Cox	8 to 12 years
Guy Stuff: The Body Book for Boys Dr. Cara Natterson	9 to 12 years
Celebrate Your Body (and Its Changes, Too!): The Ultimate Puberty Book for Girls Sonya Renee Taylor	8 to 12 years
 The Period Book: A Girl's Guide to Growing Up Karen Gravelle	8 to 12 years
The Care and Keeping of You 1: The Body Book for Younger Girls Valorie Schaefer	8 to 12 years
The Care and Keeping of You 2: The Body Book for Older Girls Dr. Cara Natterson	10 years and older
Celebrate Your Body 2: The Ultimate Puberty Book for Preteen and Teen Girls Drs. Carrie Leff and Lisa Klein	10 years and older
Melissa Alex Gino	13 years and older

Trauma, abuse and assault book recommendations

Book suggestions	Age suggestions
The Big Bad Wolf in My House Valerie Fontaine	4 to 8 years
A Terrible Thing Happened Margaret M. Holmes	3 to 12 years
Please Tell: A Child's Story about Sexual Abuse Jessie	4 to 8 years
The Day My Daddy Lost His Temper Dr. Carol Santana McCleary, PsyD	4 to 8 years
Monty's Day in Court: What to Expect When You Have to Testify in Court Jessica Miles	9 to 12 years
Healing Days: A Guide for Kids Who Have Experienced Trauma Susan Farber Straus, PhD	6 to 11 years
 The Kid Trapper Julia Cook	6 to 12 years
When You Know What I Know Sonja K. Solter	8 to 12 years
Speak Laurie Halse Anderson <i>Trigger warning: Sexual assault</i>	13 years and older
Fault Line C. Desir	13 years and older

The age recommendations listed are approximate, and every book is not meant for every child or family. Consider your family values when selecting books, and choose books that are age-appropriate for the child.

This is general information and not specific medical advice. Always consult with a doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns about the health of a child.