

Children's Literature: Prevention, Understanding & Healing from Maltreatment

Preliminary List

5/6/15

Compiled by Harold Johnson/CoDirector O.U.R. Children Project

Your Body Belongs to You: *In simple, reassuring language, the author explains that a child's body is his or her own; that it is all right for kids to decline a friendly hug or kiss, even from someone they love; and that you can still be friends even if you don't want a hug now. **Preschool – 1 yr.**

*Amazon text description

Amazing You!: Getting Smart About Your Private Part: *?Mom, where do babies come from?? Many parents live in fear of the day their child asks this question?which inevitably happens, often as early as the preschool years. Here is a picture book designed especially for young children who are becoming aware of their bodies, but aren?t ready to learn about sexual intercourse. Written with warmth and honesty,*Amazing You!* presents clear and age-appropriate information about reproduction, birth, and the difference between girls? and boys? bodies. Lynne Cravath?s lighthearted illustrations enliven the text, making this a book that parents will gladly share with their young ones. **Preschool – 2 yrs.**

*Amazon text description

It's MY Body: A Book to Teach Young Children How to Resist Uncomfortable Touch: *Preschool children learn safe boundaries, how to distinguish between "good" and "bad" touches, and how to respond appropriately to unwanted touches. This book is a powerful book for enhancing self-esteem. **Preschool – 3 yrs.**

*Amazon text description

I Said No! A Kid-to-kid Guide to Keeping Private Parts Private: *Helping kids set healthy boundaries for their private parts can be a daunting and awkward task for parents, counselors and educators. Written from a kid s point of view, I Said No! makes this task a lot easier. To help Zack cope with a real-life experience he had with a friend, he and his mom wrote a book to help prepare other kids to deal with a range of problematic situations. I Said No! uses kid-friendly language and illustrations to help parents and concerned adults give kids guidance they can understand, practice and use. Using a simple, direct, decidedly non-icky approach that doesn't dumb down the issues involved, as well as an easy-to-use system to help kids rehearse and remember appropriate responses to help keep them safe, I Said No! covers a variety of topics, including: What s appropriate and with whom; How to deal with inappropriate behavior, bribes and threats; When and where to go for help, and what to do if the people you re turning to for help don t listen; and Dealing with feelings of guilt and shame. **Preschool and up**

*Amazon text description

[*When Mommy Got Hurt - A Story for Young Children About Domestic Violence](#) Ilene Lee & Kathy Sylvester Charlotte, NC: KIDSRIGHTS (800) 892-5437 / FAX (704) 541-0113 *A young (androgynous) child tells this story about the parents' fight, how the mother & child leave to live somewhere safe, and the conversations the mother has with this child afterward. The story focuses on four points: Violence is wrong, it is not the child's fault, it happens in many families and it's OK to talk about it. Large softcover book with simple black & white drawings suitable for coloring, 3 - 9 years.*

*Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse: [Story Books for Helping Children with Family Violence](#) - Margaret Kearney, LCSW, CISW - text description

[*Daddy, Daddy, Be There](#) Candy Dawson Boyd & Floyd Cooper New York City: Philomel Books Division of Putnam & Grosset *Children's moving pleas for a father's love & support. This easy-to-read story touches on all that children want from their father - emotionally - as they go through the life span together. This book only touches on domestic violence, but its use as a tool for assessment & for exploration of wish-fulfillment cannot be denied. Picture book with multicultural illustrations in pastels, ages 3 - 10*

*Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse: [Story Books for Helping Children with Family Violence](#) - Margaret Kearney, LCSW, CISW - text description

[Samuel Learns To Yell & Tell: 1 \(Yell and Tell\)](#) + [Sara Sue Learns To Yell & Tell \(Yell and Tell\)](#): *Yell and Tell is the in the series of books addressing the subject of children dealing with sexual predators in a mature way. Yell and Tell is written in a musical rhyme and rhythm that children love. They will also be more inclined to remember what they read by this type of writing. It is told in a simple story telling manner introducing a delightful young boy named Samuel to lead the way. Children as young as four years old through pre-teens will find the story captivating, as well as instructional. Four times, young Samuel is discreetly challenged by his mother to consider how he should respond if he were faced with situations concerning sexual advances. **Ages 4+**

*Amazon text description

[The Right Touch: A Read-Aloud Story to Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse](#): **The Right Touch reaches beyond the usual scope of a children's picture book. It is a parenting book that introduces a very difficult topic--the sexual abuse of young children. This gentle, thoughtful story can be read aloud to a child by any trusted caregiver. In the story, young Jimmy's mom explains the difference between touches that are positive and touches that are secret, deceptive or forced. She tells him how to resist inappropriate touching, affirming that abuse is not the child's fault. The introduction provides valuable information about sexual abuse and guidance on what to do if your child experiences an abusive situation. Jody Bergsma's gentle illustrations soften the impact of this story; yet this portrayal of a dangerous situation is very realistic. If your child is old enough to sit still and listen to a story, he or she is old enough for *The Right Touch*. **Ages 4+***

*Amazon text description

Do You Have a Secret? (Let's Talk About It!): *Every child has secrets, and many secrets are fun to keep--for instance, a surprise birthday gift for Mom, or a secret handshake with a young friend. But sometimes, children have secrets that make them feel bad, and these secrets are best shared with their parents, or with some trusted older person. A child who is bullied might be inclined to keep it secret, but it's always best to tell parents about it. Or children who are touched intimately and improperly by an older person will soon feel better if they reveal the secret to parents. This book helps kids distinguish between good and bad secrets. Even very young children have concerns and anxieties, and *Tell Somebody Books* are written and illustrated especially for them. Parents are advised to read these books aloud while their preschooler listens and looks at illustrations of the boys and girls in each story. Many children in early grades will be able to read the stories for themselves. *Tell Somebody Books* encourage children to explore their feelings, and then to speak openly about things that trouble them. **Ages 4-7 years**

*Amazon text description

***Mommy & Daddy are Fighting** Susan Paris & Gail Labinski Seattle, WA: Seal Press (206) 283-7844 / FAX (206) 285-9410 *Three young sisters build a fort of blankets & huddle together to cope with their father's abuse against their mother. Picture book with washed illustrations, 4 - 8 years.*

*Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse: [Story Books for Helping Children with Family Violence](#) - Margaret Kearney, LCSW, CISW - text description

***Clover's Secret** Christine Winn & David Walsh, PhD Minneapolis, MN: Fairview Press (800) 544-8207 / FAX (612) 672-4980 <http://fairviewpress.org/> *In an imaginary land where people can fly, two girls form a friendship that helps one of them deal with the problems she faces at home. Picture book with colored pencil illustrations, 4 - 10 years.*

*Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse: [Story Books for Helping Children with Family Violence](#) - Margaret Kearney, LCSW, CISW - text description

***The Dragon & the Mouse** Steven Timm Available exclusively from: Touchstone Enterprise 2108 South University Drive Fargo, ND 58103 (701) 237-4742 *A mouse lives with a dragon who is abuse to him emotionally, physically, mentally and socially. In the end, the mouse leaves the living arrangement, but continues to be friends with the dragon. Picture book with vivid illustrations, 4 - 11 years.*

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***A Family That Fights** Sharon Bernstein Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Co. (847) 581-0033 *An 8 year old boy & his two younger siblings live in a home where the father abuses the mother. Picture book with illustrations in pencil, 4 - 12 years*

*Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse: [Story Books for Helping Children with Family Violence](#) - Margaret Kearney, LCSW, CISW - text description

***A Safe Place** Maxine Trottier [Childwork/Childsplay](#) - 1-800-962-1141 *A mother escapes to a domestic violence shelter with her young daughter, where she builds up her*

strength and gains the courage to begin a new life. As they leave, the little girl gives hope to a frightened boy just entering the shelter. Picture book with illustrations in colored pencil, **5-9 years**.

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***Hear My Roar: Lungin's Broken Family** Dr. Ty Hochban Buffalo, NY: Annick Press Ltd. A bear family struggles with the father bear's drinking and abuse. When the mother bear discovers how it is affecting the baby bear, she seeks help from the family doctor. Eventually they leave, seeking shelter from the violence. It is written in 5 short chapters, so young children will need to take breaks between chapters. Includes information for mothers and paraprofessionals on the effects of domestic violence on children and how to share this book with a child. Also validates the mother's reactions to the abuse. Be careful, when using this book, not to allow the child to infer that the drinking causes the abuse, or to assume that the abuse will end if the drinking does. Storybook with woodcut illustrations, **6 - 11 years**, 31 pages.

*Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse: [Story Books for Helping Children with Family Violence](#) - Margaret Kearney, LCSW, CISW - text description

***The Words Hurt** Chris Loftis Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press (908) 604-6311 Greg's dad never physically hurt anybody, but he yelled things that often made the people around him feel awful. One afternoon, though, Greg finally expressed his sad & hurt feelings to his father. This book is long, and may not hold the attention of some children. Storybook with graphic art illustrations, **8 - 12 years**, 44 pages.

Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse: [Story Books for Helping Children with Family Violence](#) - Margaret Kearney, LCSW, CISW

Young Adults (14+ yrs.):

[Why Me? Help for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse \(Even if They Are Adults Now\)](#)

by Lynn B. Daugherty

Published by Mother Courage Press, 1984
111 pages

The author is a psychologist in New Mexico actively involved in the treatment of children and adults who are/were victims of child sexual abuse. The book is written for teenagers and adults who were victimized as children as well as for their counselors, friends, relatives or spouses. The direct, well organized questions and answers provide a constructive approach to the past and future. © Cooperative Children's Book Center **Age 14 and older**

[Baltimore Child Abuse Center: Protecting Children from Sexual Abuse](#)

[Suggested Children's Books](#)

Baltimore Child Abuse Center understands it can be difficult for parents to begin a conversation with their children about bodies and boundaries. We invite you to use these books as communication tools to begin conversations about bodies, feelings, and boundaries with your children. Some books are more detailed than others, so we suggest that you read through each book first to decide what you are comfortable sharing with your children.

Expressing Your Feelings

- [Feelings](#) by Aiki
- [My Many Colored Days](#) by Dr. Seuss
- [How Are You Peeling?](#) by Saxton Freymann

Identifying Body Parts and Healthy Development

- [It's So Amazing! A Book about Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies and Families](#) by Robie Harris
- [My Body is Private](#) by Linda Welwood Girard
- [See How You Grow](#) by Dr. Patricia Pearse and Edwina Riddell
- [The Bare Naked Book](#) by Kathy Stinson
- [People](#) by Peter Spier
- [Bellybuttons Are Navels](#) by Mark Schoen

Touching, Healthy Boundaries, Secrets, and Surprises

- [Loving Touches](#) by Lory Freeman
- [The Secret of the Silver Horse](#) by Department of Justice Canada
- [Shelley Shares a Secret](#) coloring book developed by *ChildSafe*, a program of St. Vincent's Center
- [The Fire Station](#) by Robert Munsch

[Conversation topics and Scripts](#)

Opening lines of communication with children and teaching them about their bodies and healthy boundaries is extremely effective in preventing child sexual abuse. Teaching our children about their private parts also gives children the language to report when someone has made them feel uncomfortable. BCAC understands that sexual abuse and healthy sexual development is a difficult subject to address, so we have compiled tips, scripts, and suggested topics from various prevention programs to assist you in starting a conversation with your child and answering tough questions. Here are some kid-friendly phrases from [Prevent Child Abuse Vermont's](#) program [Care For Kids](#).

Answering Tough Questions...

About Bodies:

"Our bodies are good and special and deserving of care and respect, including the genitals." "Boys and girls have some parts that are different, such as private parts, and others that are the same, such as knees and toes."

About Babies:

"Babies need help with most things and deserve to be looked after. Children, as they grow, learn to do more things by themselves, like cleaning their own body parts."

About Feelings:

"Everyone has all kinds of feelings. When you're not sure what you're feeling, we call that mixed up or confused."

About Bedtime:

"Private parts are kept special. Small children sometimes need help washing and wiping their private parts. Older children and grownups do not need help from children with their private parts."

About Touching:

"Sometimes we like touching and sometimes we don't. Touching is never a secret. A person can say 'No' to touching. Don't touch a person who says, 'No touching'."

About Secrets and Surprises:

"Sometimes we want to keep a secret and sometimes we don't. Touching is never a secret. When you are sad or mixed up because someone asks you to keep a secret, you can ask two or three grownups for help."

Suggestions from Prevent Child Abuse Vermont (www.pcavt.org)

Establish Family Rules

Part of creating a safety plan for your family and teaching children healthy boundaries includes establishing concrete family rules that all members of the family must follow. Everyone should have a right to privacy in dressing, bathing, sleeping, and other personal activities. If any adult or child breaks this rule, there should be a discussion and repercussions. Teaching your children healthy boundaries early on is effective in preventing child sexual abuse in your family. Below are some examples of family rules, as suggested by [Talking About Touching](#), a program developed by [Committee For Children](#).

The Touching Rule:

- "A bigger person should not touch your private body parts except to keep you clean and healthy."
- "Sometimes kids need help keeping clean, and babies always need help getting clean. This is a time when a bigger person needs to touch a baby's private parts. This is a safe touch."

Always Ask First Rule:

- "Always ask your parents or the person in charge first if someone wants you to go somewhere with him or her. The person in charge is whoever is taking care of you at the time."
- "If someone wants to give you something, always ask the person in charge first."

Getting and Giving Safe Touches

- "There are many different types of touch. There are safe touches and there are unsafe touches. Safe touches are good for your body and don't make you feel confused or uncomfortable."
- "If someone makes you feel uncomfortable for any reason it is OK to tell a grown-up and ask for help."

Saying "No" to Unwanted Touches

- "If someone touches you in a way that hurts or that you don't like, you can say, 'Please don't do that.'"
- Model alternative ways of showing affection: "I see that you don't want to be hugged today. Could you shake my hand instead?"
Suggestions from Committee for Children (<http://www.cfchildren.org>)

Talking with Kids About Violence

Often events in the news spill into dinnertime conversations. Parents often ask how to talk to their children about violent events in the community or the news.

Our advice - be truthful and be an askable adult. Like any situation, answer what is asked but be available to answer more questions. Your children will seek you to provide them with knowledge, and if you don't provide it, odds are someone else will. Let tough conversations come from you.

Below is a list of suggested resources:

- * An Exchange article by Diane Levin: "When the World is a Dangerous Place — Helping Children Deal with Violence in the News"<<http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/9002>>."
- * A New York Times article, "Tips for Talking to Children About the Shooting"<<http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/9003>>.<<http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/9004>>"

- * Advice from National Child Traumatic Stress Network, "Talking to Children about the Shooting<<http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/9005>>g.<<http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/9006>>"
- * Advice from the National Association of School Psychologists, "A National Tragedy: Helping Children Cope<<http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/9007>>."
- * A resource from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Tips for Talking to Children and Youth after Traumatic Events<<http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/9008>>."
- * Fred Rogers' advice from Family Communications, "Helping Children Deal with Tragic Events in the News<<http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/9009>>."
- * Advice from the American Psychological Association, "Helping Your Children Manage Distress in the Aftermath of a Shooting<<http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/9010>>."
- * Resource "Acting Against Violence" <<http://mail.ccie.com/go/eed/9001>>