

“Safe touch- a key to GOOD mental health and relationships”



I still remember how my parents used to warn me against the 'chhele dhoras' (kidnappers) when I was young. They would always remind me not to speak or respond to any stranger or accept any gifts from them.

Now it's my turn to caution my kids, their friends and all my students against the predators of our society. Safety lessons are the need of the hour, considering the rampant rape cases, murders, suicide and more.

In today's times, we hear a lot about child abuse and molestation. It's high time; we should start teaching our young children about “Good Touch Bad Touch” to prevent more damage. Most of the time, targets are very young children, 6-10 years of age. They are too young to understand the difference between right and wrong.

Every single day, the media reports such cases where young children, both boys and girls, are sexually abused by an adult around us. The problem is that they do not even know what is happening.



It is still a sensitive topic for parents to talk to their children, so most of them do not want to go there. At times, we hesitate to take up and speak on sensitive topics.

But, the fact remains that it is very important for the betterment of our young children that they know about all this and can deal with it if they ever come across a situation like this. What is good touch bad touch? The goal here is to inform your child about the dangers, without causing any anxiety.

Start Sensitizing Children from a Very Young Age

Talk , Talk and Talk more! Start talking to your child about good touch bad touch as early as possible so that they are equipped to understand this sensitive issue.

Come Out of Your Inhibitions

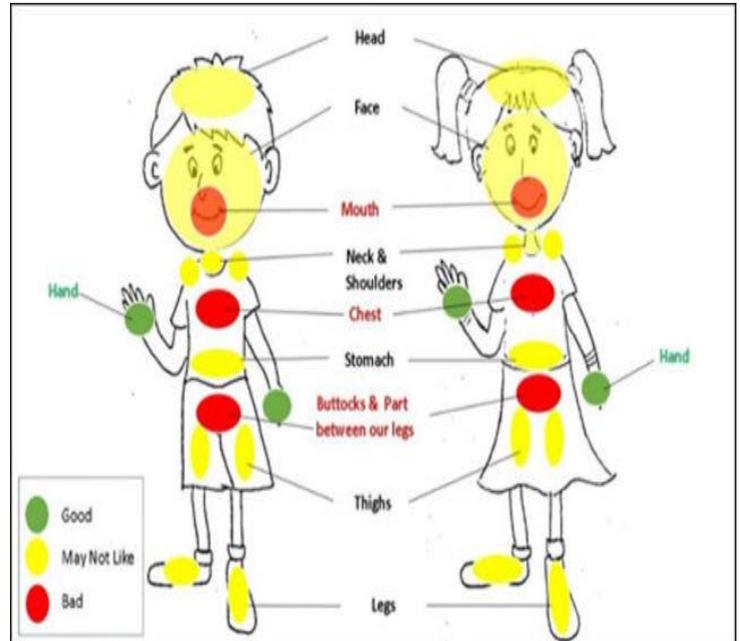
As parents, at times we are not comfortable taking up these sensitive topics, but, the learning has to start at home and it's all about your child's safety. Put aside your doubts and inhibitions and talk to your little ones in a simple way and with a play methodology like we do for many other things.

Trust your Child

Children are naturally very instinctive. If your child says uncomfortable around someone, even if that person's a part of your family, take it seriously. Beware and keep a check. Never dismiss what your little one says, thinking a child can say just about anything.

Start by Telling Children About Their Private Parts

Tell them that the body parts we usually keep covered are our private parts and no one has the permission to touch you there. Give them your own example that even parents touch you there only if they are bathing or cleaning you, not otherwise.



Make Them Understand the Difference Between Good and Bad Touch

Good Touch – It feels, pleasant and good, it is a way to show care, love and help. Explain with the help of examples like when mommy hugs you or papa gives you a goodnight kiss or your grandparents hold you in their arms and you hold your friend's hands while playing.

Bad Touch – Touches that make you uncomfortable and you feel unpleasant and you want to stop it there and then. Again, use some examples to explain them like, it is a bad touch if you feel hurt, if you do not want to be touched, if someone touches your private parts without a reason, if someone touches you and tells you not to tell anyone, all these are examples of a bad touch.



Become Your Child's Best Friend – Spend quality time with your children. Listen to them when they are sharing about what they did during the day. Assure them that they can share anything with you.

Our job is not done yet. Alerting children is not enough, we have to teach them what to do if ever face a situation like this. Tell them to follow these simple things:

- Tell your children that if someone touches you in a way that you do not like, **say NO**. It's your body and no one can touch in a way that you do not like or that makes you uncomfortable.
- **Get away from that place as fast as you can**. Try not to be alone with that person in the future.
- **Immediately call for help**, go to a trustworthy person like your parents or your teacher and tell them everything that happened. You can **scream** for help if you do not have your elders nearby.
- Tell them **not to be scared** of that person and **not to feel bad** about themselves. They have not done anything wrong. It's the other person who is guilty, not them.



All of us want our children to be safe and secure and give them THE BEST . We want to protect them against all odds. Our children come in contact with many people every day and there are good and bad people around them.

So , it becomes our responsibility to sensitize them, makes them emotionally strong ,helps them to grow normally ,equip them so that they are ready to face and handle any odd situation or person coming their way.

Come, let's join hands to make this world a better and safer place for our young generation. Although many children this age tend to tell stories, it is vital that as a parent, you support them, and believe them. They need to know they can trust you, and that you will protect them.



Thank you for taking the time to read about my reflections. I hope you have found something useful here.

Next month's topic: 'Coping with exam: How parents can help'

Happy parenting & best of luck for us!

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Parents who are willing to contribute are encouraged to email their thoughts to tigpsar.counselor@gmail.com