



Caring Well

SUNDAY

“He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

MICAH 6:8, ESV



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9 Ways to Protect Your Child from Sexual Abuse

BY JUSTIN HOLCOMB AND LINDSEY HOLCOMB

Education is important in prevention against inappropriate sexual behavior or contact. Here are nine practical things parents and caregivers can do:

1. Explain to your child that God made their body. An explanation can look something like, “Every part of your body is good, and some parts of your body are private.”

2. Teach proper names of private body parts. It might be uncomfortable at first, but use the proper names of body parts. This knowledge gives children correct language for understanding their bodies, asking questions that need to be asked, and telling about any behavior that could lead to sexual abuse.

3. Invite your child’s communication. Let your child know they can tell you if anyone touches them in the private areas or in any way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Assure your child you’ll be proud of them for telling you and will help them through the situation.

4. Talk about touches. Be clear with adults and children about the difference between touch that is OK and touch that is inappropriate.

5. Don’t ask your child to maintain your emotions. Without thinking, we sometimes ask a child something like, “I’m sad, can I

have a hug?” While this may be innocent in intent, it sets the child up to feel responsible for your emotions and state of being.

6. Throw out the word “secret.” Explain the difference between a secret and a surprise. Surprises are joyful and generate excitement, because something will be unveiled that will bring great delight. Secrets, in contrast, cause isolation and exclusion.

7. Clarify rules for playing “doctor.” Playing doctor can turn body parts into a game. If children want to play doctor, you can redirect this game by suggesting using dolls and stuffed animals as patients instead of their own body.

8. Identify whom to trust. Talk with your kids about whom you and they trust. Then give them permission to talk with these trustworthy adults whenever they feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused about someone’s behavior toward them.

9. Report suspected abuse immediately. You’ve read these steps, now consider yourself an advocate against childhood sexual abuse. Report anything you know or suspect might be sexual abuse.

To read the full article, visit <https://erlc.com/resource/9-ways-to-protect-your-child-from-sexual-abuse/>

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