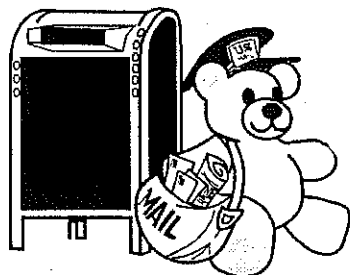


THE TEDDY

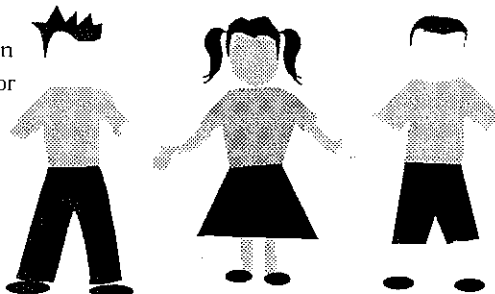


BEAR POST

A NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOLERS

Teaching Personal Safety to Children

Children learn about body awareness and personal safety from the children and adults around them. In order for children to learn how to protect themselves from unwanted touching, they must first become aware of their own bodies. When they learn about physical boundaries they feel comfortable setting limits with others. Then they are ready to be taught that other people also have boundaries that need to be respected.



Suggestions for modeling respectful behavior, which teaches personal safety, are:

1. Teach your child the correct names for all body parts. Explain that everyone's body is special and private and belongs to her/himself.
2. Let your child know that no one has the right to touch them without their permission...not Daddy, Mommy, Auntie, Uncle, no one. Let him/her choose whether or not they feel like hugging or kissing, and if they don't want to, don't push or bully. Support your child and say to Grandma or Auntie, "She doesn't want to hug or kiss right now, and that's O.K.. It's her choice." Offer ways for your child to say what he feels, such as, "I don't like that. Please stop." Sometimes children feel more comfortable just saying "No," and walking away, or putting their hand out to say, "Stop". Role-play so your child will be confident when the need to be assertive arises.
3. Talk about the difference between "good touch" and "bad touch". Good touch, such as hugs and holding hands with family and friends, makes children feel safe and loved. Good touch is never forced and is never a secret. Bad touch makes children feel uncomfortable, overwhelmed, afraid, guilty and "yucky". Some examples of bad touch are: hitting, unwanted touching of a child's body, especially private parts, and being forced to touch someone else's body and/or sexual parts. Knowing the difference between "good" and "bad" touch will help keep your child safe.

4. A caution about tickling...be sensitive to your child's response and preferences. When children laugh, it is a reflex. Adults may interpret it as fun, but some children can feel out of control and uncomfortable and may end up crying.
5. Role-play with your child how to handle situations of potential abuse. For example, "What would you do if someone offered

you treats or toys to touch you in a private place on your body?" Rehearse what to say and what to do. Develop a plan of action and discuss it so your child won't have to think and will just react confidently. Make sure your child feels comfortable telling you and other trusted adults anything that happens without fear of ridicule or punishment. Praise your child for coming to you and telling and for taking care of him/herself. Acknowledge your child's efforts to make safe choices about relationships and activities. Tell her what you liked specifically: "I was proud of you when...".

6. Model respect for your own body. Let your children know when you want privacy, when you don't want to be touched, and where you don't want to be touched. Make sure that other adults also respect your body...children learn healthy boundaries from you, their role model.

SUGGESTED READING:

What are some books that I can read to my child about personal safety? Many books are available at Hawaii State Library branches and at local bookstores to help children understand personal safety. Don't hesitate to ask for recommendations.

Some suggestions are:

- *Your Body Belongs to You* by Amy Bahr
- *My Body is Private* by Linda Walvoord Girard
- *Sometimes It's OK To Tell Secrets* by Amy Bahr
- *Your Body is Your Own* by Amy Bahr
- *Strangers Don't Look Like the Big Bad Wolf* by Janis Buschman and Debbie Hunley



THE TEDDY BEAR POST is published 4 times a year and is distributed by The Parent Line Distribution Center.

Please call 593-0437 or write to: distributionctr@theparentline.org to revise your count/address.

Funded by Hawaii Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Branch (808) 733-4054

Linda Lingle, Governor • Chiyome Fukino, M.D., Director of Health

We provide access to our activities without regard to race, color, national origin (including language), age, sex, religion or disability.

Write to the Affirmative Action Officer at Box 3378, Honolulu, HI 96801 or call 586-4616 within 180 days of a problem.

Please visit our website at: <http://www.theparentline.org>





"A PARENT ASKS"

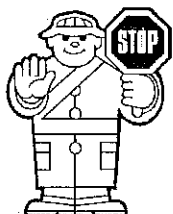
What should I do when my 3 year old daughter refuses to give her grandma a hug when we are going home? I am so embarrassed!

If your child doesn't want to cuddle and doesn't want to kiss, respect her wishes and be careful not to force her. Giving and receiving affection is about sharing, not forcing.



Both the giver and the receiver need to feel comfortable. When you respect her boundaries she is learning to respect her own boundaries and also the boundaries of others.

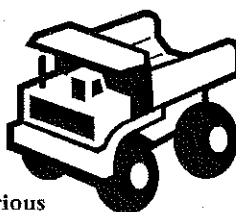
During a quiet time at home, talk with her about different ways she likes to say goodbye to grandma. She may want to blow a kiss, wave, "high five", or just say "Bye Grandma". Let grandma know privately what you are doing so that she is comfortable with your daughter's choice and doesn't try to tease or push her into giving a hug. This might feel awkward at first. But the reward will be in knowing that when and how your daughter does show affection, it is her choice—genuine, not forced. You will also be letting your daughter know that you trust her to respect her own comfort zone and will honor her decisions. This is a big step in teaching her about personal safety.



SAFETY WORKS

Always read the label to know if a toy is safe for your child's age. Keep broken toys and toys with small parts or sharp edges away from children younger than 5 years old. Proper supervision is always

important. Keep in mind that younger siblings will be curious about an older child's toys. Read labels and look for toys that are safe as well as fun for your child.



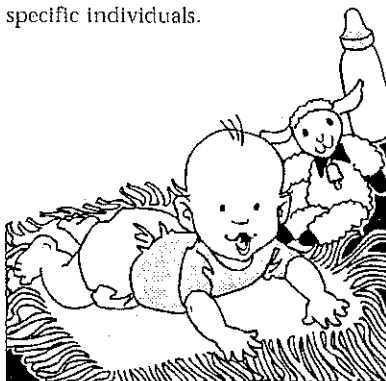
PARENTS WANT TO KNOW

When your child squeals while reaching for a toy, you may wonder about whether his speech skills are developing on schedule. Before concluding that your child's speech development is delayed, please remember that each child develops at his or her own pace and may well be within a normal range of development. It is also important to remember:

- Children understand more than they can express
- Girls seem to communicate earlier than boys
- Language can develop smoothly or in spurts
- Speech development will vary so please do not compare your child to another.

SOME SPEECH MILESTONES TO LOOK FOR:

- **3 months of age** - knows mother's voice, knows father's voice, and makes vowel sounds.
- **6-8 months of age** - makes consonant sounds, may say 'dada' or 'mama' but does not yet use these words to refer to specific individuals.



- **1 year old** - attaches 'mama' and 'dada' to the right person, says 2-3 words in addition to 'mama' and 'dada', understands simple commands, recognizes his or her name, and recognizes words as symbols for objects (for example, points to the garage when you say "car").
- **18 months old** - says nouns, verbs, and a few action phrases. Can say names of special people, adds gestures to speech, and follows simple instructions.



- **2 years of age** - combines words and makes simple sentences like 'Daddy go.' Knows simple body parts, makes sounds of familiar animals, and has increased understanding of what others are saying.
- **3 years of age** - uses sentences 3 to 5 words long and repeats words overheard in conversations. Gives first and last name and holds up fingers to tell age. Knows a familiar tune or song, asks "why" and "who" questions, and names common pictures and things.

If your child is between 0 to 3 years old and you suspect your child may be delayed in speech development or other developmental areas (e.g., physical, cognitive, psychosocial), please contact your physician or the Early Intervention Section of the Department of Health (H-KISS) at 973-9633. For more developmental information, see:

www.kidsource.com

www.keepkidshealthy.com

THE PARENT LINE: Free statewide phone line for parents and others caring for children. Call for support, encouragement, information, and ideas about handling behavior or about community resources.

Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
and Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

O'ahu ph. 526-1222. Neighbor island parents call toll-free: 1-800-816-1222.

