

# TOUCHING AND PERSONAL SAFETY



Understanding and demonstrating appropriate touching is the first step toward promoting personal safety



Sometimes People Touch You



Touching Others



Can We Touch



Where Can People Touch Me



My Touching Rules



Talking About Sex



I Don't Know Strangers



It's Not Ok To Hurt Me

Personal Safety Questions

My Sentences About Touching

# Teaching About Touching and Personal Safety

Personal safety is a real concern for many parents and teachers of children with special needs, including autism. Although it is not known exactly how many people with disabilities are molested and sexually or physically abused, it is agreed by most that the percentages are high. It has been estimated that 80 percent of girls with disabilities and 30 to 50 percent of disabled boys are sexually abused by the time they reach the age of 18(Harvard Education Letter, April, 1999). These are shocking statistics, yet some sources believe the actual numbers in both cases to be even higher. And during the lifetime of a person with disabilities, the likelihood of abuse may rise further.

Although we would never intentionally put our students or children in a potentially dangerous situation, abuse of any kind can occur anywhere. It's not realistic or possible to protect our students or children 24 hours a day. But, parents and teachers have found that the best way to protect children from the danger of abuse is to educate them and teach them about what they should do. This is especially true, albeit a more challenging task, for students with disabilities.

The information presented in this unit should be learned as a life long skill and as such, revisited and reviewed regularly. Some of the skills may, in fact, be life-saving with regards to personal safety. Since it is often very difficult for our students and children to communicate when something wrong or hurtful has occurred, parents and teachers need to be alert to any changes on the part of a child which may indicate abuse, and make every effort to help them communicate any such events to us.

Personal safety issues go hand in hand with learning about modesty, independence and dealing with sexual situations. The following stories and activities cover the topics of touching, talking about sex or sex related topics, strangers, molestation and abuse. Much of this information has been the driving force behind the development of this curriculum because, ultimately, we want our students and children to be safe.

## The goals and anticipated progression of skills for this unit:

- The student will be able to identify the "private areas".
- The student will identify appropriate and inappropriate places to touch another person.
- The student will identify appropriate and inappropriate places to be touched.
- The student will demonstrate the appropriate response of "no touching" or "stop touching" when touched inappropriately.
- The student will demonstrate how to tell a trusted adult if touched inappropriately by another person.
- The student will understand the word "stranger" and differentiate between familiar people and strangers.
- The student will demonstrate how to tell a trusted adult if a stranger talks to him, tries to take him away or gives him something.
- The student will demonstrate understanding of personal topics, which he/she can not talk about with others.

This is a vitally important story because it explains the concept of personal safety in simple language that students with a wide range of disabilities can understand. Some of the information is presented as an absolute. I don't typically use the words always and never in my stories, but this type of story is an exception. Since it is difficult for so many autistic students to 'read' people and understand the intentions of others, I have found it is easier to give them very specific rules regarding their safety.



## Sometimes People Touch You

- ↪ Sometimes, people will touch you.
- ↪ If people touch you on the arm, shoulder, hand or back, it is usually okay.
- ↪ If people touch you and it is not okay, you need to say, "No, don't touch me."
- ↪ It is not okay for people to touch your private areas. My swimsuit or my underwear covers my private areas.
- ↪ It is not okay for people to touch my private areas even when I'm wearing my clothes.
- ↪ Sometimes, a doctor, a nurse or my mom may need to touch my private areas. That's usually okay.



- ↪ But other people should not touch my private areas.
- ↪ If someone touches my private areas I need to tell them, "No, touching!" I need to tell a teacher and my parents when someone touches my private areas.
- ↪ It is never okay for a student, friend or adult to touch my private areas.
- ↪ Kissing is also touching. It is okay for my family to kiss me.
- ↪ It is not okay for students, friends or other adults to kiss me. If someone kisses me, I need to say, "No, don't kiss me."
- ↪ I need to tell my teacher and Mom or Dad if someone won't stop kissing me.
- ↪ It is never okay for people to touch my private areas. I will say, "No, don't touch me."



I will do a good job of telling a teacher and my parents when someone touches my private areas.

It is not O.K. for people to touch your private areas.

Only your doctor and sometimes a nurse can touch your private areas.

If someone touches your private areas you need to tell them, "No touching". you need to tell a teacher or parent that someone touched your privates.

don't touch

My private areas

My private areas

doctor

nurse

touch

"No touching!"

tell

teacher

parents

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Besides teaching students the rules regarding their own personal safety, we need to explain that these rules apply to everyone. This story explains that no one's personal safety should be violated and everyone should follow the same rules.



# Touching Others

- ↪ Sometimes, it's okay to touch people.
- ↪ Sometimes, it's not okay to touch people.
- ↪ It is okay to touch friends on the arm, on the back, or on the shoulder.
- ↪ It is usually okay to shake hands with people.
- ↪ It is usually okay to hug family members.
- ↪ Sometimes, it's okay to hug teachers and friends.
- ↪ But sometimes, people don't want a hug. If you aren't sure, you need to ask someone for a hug.
- ↪ If someone doesn't want a hug and says, "No," I won't give a hug.



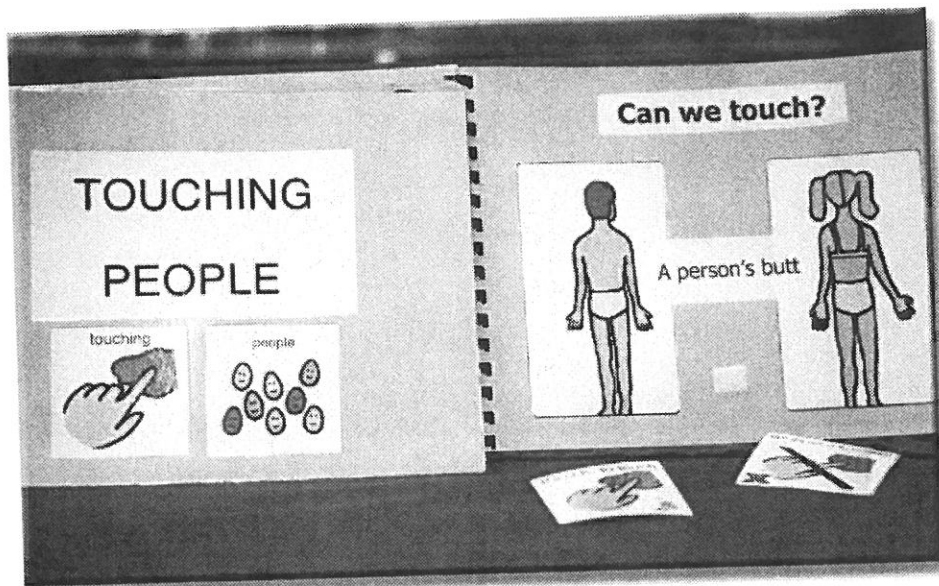
- ✎ It is not okay to hug strangers or most adults. It is not okay to ask strangers or most adults for a hug.
- ✎ Sometimes, people will tell you not to touch them. It's important to remember, don't touch if someone says, "No touching."
- ✎ The areas on our bodies covered by a swim suit or underwear are private areas. We never touch someone's private areas!
- ✎ It is wrong to touch a person's private areas. People may be angry and upset if someone touches their private areas. It is never okay to touch people's private areas!
- ✎ Kissing is touching. It is okay to kiss Mom or Dad and other family members.
- ✎ It is not okay to kiss friends, students, or other adults.

↳ People may get mad and upset if you kiss them. It is wrong to kiss people at school. It is wrong to kiss people when they say, "No kiss."

↳ I will do a good job of touching people the right way. I will remember to only touch people on the arm, hand, back or shoulder.



If someone says, "No touching," I will remember not to touch them.



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