



Do you know good and bad secrets?

» » Girls and boys love secrets. They are exciting and thrilling, especially when an adult shares them. Children know not to reveal secrets because they have a strong code of honour when it comes to “snitching”.

People take advantage of this code and the fun that surrounds secrets and tell children that they want to show them something that only the two of them are allowed to know. Often the secrecy is then reinforced by threats. This is often directed at the world in which the child lives and is therefore very effective, e.g. they threaten to kill their pet.

It is important therefore for children to distinguish between good and bad secrets and to know that bad secrets should definitely be passed on.

Do you know what a good, bad and strange touch is?

» » Girls and boys should be encouraged to consciously perceive different touches and reflect on which ones are okay for them and which ones are not. Children notice when pleasant touches turn into unpleasant ones. It is important to give them explicit permission to reject unpleasant and alienating touches.

The information that adults do not always accept a “no” should not be omitted: some unpleasant touches have to be accepted, however, such as when visiting the doctor or in hospital.



ECHT KLASSE!

— REALLY SWELL!

Parent information

» » Travelling exhibition on preventing sexual abuse for primary schools complete with activity stations

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I'm smart, I'll get help!

» » The aspect of getting help is the most essential part of preventive education. Children should learn that it is not a sign of weakness if they get help, but that it is appropriate and smart, because there are many situations in which girls and boys are not able to help themselves alone. Children should therefore be encouraged to get help and learn where they can get said help.

They should also be taught that it can be difficult – they will not necessarily get help right away at the first attempt. They sometimes need to conjure up a considerable amount of courage to talk about bad experiences.

They should learn who they can confide in without fear of blame or punishment. Clear references to people they can confide in and to local support services as well as to the free children's helpline make it easier to get help and should be repeated regularly.



I am allowed to say NO!

Children are allowed and must be allowed to set boundaries and say “No” in certain situations. The fact that they can also exercise this right towards adults and older adolescents and that they should be encouraged to do so is an important aspect of prevention. This is because an upbringing that expects unconditional obedience and unquestioning conformity from children in all situations is unfortunately still widespread.

Girls and boys should be taught that they have rights and that adults are not allowed to dispose of them as they wish. Often children get into situations in which they may very well refuse to be touched, but their “no” is ignored. It is therefore necessary to prepare them for these situations and encourage them to repeat a clear “no” if necessary or get help.

Situations also exist, of course, in which adults are unable to accept a defiant “no” in order to protect the child.



My body belongs to me!

Sexual education appropriate to the age of a child plays an important role in prevention. When children possess a language for sexuality and sexualised acts and have a comprehensive knowledge of their bodies, it is easier for them to talk about transgressions and violence. They say “no” more confidently and show resistance more often at the right moment.

By promoting positive body awareness, we empower girls and boys to be proud of their bodies and feel comfortable in their own skin. The more they feel and perceive themselves as unique and valuable personalities, the more their self-esteem and self-confidence grows. A self-confident child is more likely to be able to resist sexual assault.

I trust my feelings!

It is important to familiarise children with the multitude of emotions they might experience and to encourage them to take their feelings seriously and express them. This is because a child who is sexually exploited usually has strong doubts about their own perception of feelings, since the perpetrator forces them to ignore them.

If a child has learned to perceive and trust their own feelings, however, they are more likely to be able to assess whether sexual assault is actually taking place.

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For further information
see: www.petze-kiel.de

School prevention of sexual abuse
of girls and boys

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