

NSPCC



**THE
TALK**



**GUIDE
FOR PARENTS**



**Simple conversations to help
keep your kids safe from abuse**

EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

YOUR
NAME

This guide belongs to

.....

and

.....

YOUR
CHILD'S
NAME



We all want to keep our children safe

You've probably already talked to them about things like crossing the road safely. But have you spoken to them about how to stay safe from sexual abuse? We know it's a conversation no parent wants to have, but we believe it can feel just as natural, and be just as easy, as the road safety chat.

We call it talking PANTS. From P through to S, each letter gives an important message for children as young as four to help them stay safe.

That's why we want all parents to **talk PANTS** – because we know that talking regularly with children about these important messages really can help them stay safe.



WHY
TALK
PANTS?



An important conversation to have

We know what you might be thinking: this isn't for my child. Of course, no parent ever wants to think their child will be affected by sexual abuse. But that's exactly why it's vital you have this conversation – to help keep them safe.

We also understand that talking about this topic might feel daunting. But it doesn't have to be. PANTS has been created specifically – with the help of parents and professionals – to make sure these conversations are as easy and appropriate as possible for children as young as four.

PANTS never mentions sex

We know you might feel that your child is too young to talk about sex. And that's why PANTS never mentions it. It's not about learning about the birds and the bees, but practical and reassuring messages to stay safe.

We never use scary words

The last thing we want to do is upset or scare your child. Talking PANTS is about using simple, child-friendly language to give your child the confidence and knowledge to stay safe.

“I wholeheartedly think talking PANTS should be up there with how to cross the road.”
Parent of six-year-old girl



Finding the right moment

Every family is different and when and where you have these conversations may depend on your child's age or how grown up they are – it's all about whatever feels natural for you and them.

Looking for good times to start the conversations? Here are a few examples other parents have told us worked for them:



- * When you're running your child's bath, or helping them with things like getting dressed or applying cream.
- * Car journeys are a great time to talk.
- * Whether it's on the way home from school, or a weekend walk to the shops, you'll feel more at ease as you stroll and chat together.
- * Going swimming is a great time to talk about the idea that what's covered by your pants and your swimwear is private.
- * If they've had a lesson about personal relationships at school, ask them what they remember when they get home.
- * Singing along to our song with the help of our friendly dinosaur Pantosaurus can help create the right moment (find out more on page 6).
- * If their favourite TV programme is handling a sensitive storyline encourage them to talk about anything that upsets them.



HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT WORDS?

How to get started

How and when you talk PANTS with your child is always your choice. After all, you know them better than anyone.

Once you're comfortable with all the messages (pages 8-9) our series of 'Icebreakers' make it easy to start talking PANTS, all with the help of our friendly dinosaur Pantosaurus. Through games, songs and activities they introduce the main messages in fun and interesting ways. And you can start today...

Our icebreakers!

Share our **Keep and learn kids' pull-out** – and make remembering the rules fun.

Your kids can **Sing along with Pantosaurus** – his song is a catchy introduction to the key PANTS messages.

There's also **Playtime with Pantosaurus** – online, on a tablet or phone, this free game lets them play basketball and dive, all while learning the PANTS rules.

Find these fun icebreakers at nspcc.org.uk/pants



Want a really roarsome way to remember the rules? **Pantosaurus' kids' pack** is bursting with fun activities, stickers, a door hanger and a bookmark. Order yours at nspcc.org.uk/shop

Now it's time to talk PANTS

So you know about our icebreakers and you've worked out when to start the conversation with your child.

Now you're ready to teach your child the five PANTS rules. We'll take you through each letter of PANTS so you know what to say about each one.

You can start off by having a simple talk with your child about keeping safe – and then go into more detail when you are both ready.

P RIVATES
ARE PRIVATE

A LWAYS REMEMBER YOUR
BODY BELONGS TO YOU

N O MEANS NO

T ALK ABOUT SECRETS
THAT UPSET YOU

S PEAK UP, SOMEONE
CAN HELP



WHAT ARE
THE PANTS
RULES?



Privates are private

Be clear with your child that your underwear covers up your private parts and what 'private' means.

Explain to them that no one should ask to see or touch their private parts, or ask them to look at or touch anyone else's.

Sometimes doctors, nurses or family members might have to. Explain that this is OK, but that those people should always explain why, and should ask them if it's OK first.

Always remember your body belongs to you

Let your child know their body belongs to them, and no one else. No one has the right to make them do anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

If someone asks to see or tries to touch them underneath their underwear they must say 'No' – and tell an adult they trust. This might be a family member, teacher, support worker or a doctor.

No means no

Make sure your child understands that they have the right to say 'No' to unwanted touch – even to a family member or someone they know or love.

They're in control of their body and no one should ever make them do things that make them feel uncomfortable.



Talk about secrets that upset you

Explain to your child that they should always talk about stuff that makes them worried – and that sharing it won't get them into trouble.

Explain the differences between 'good' and 'bad' secrets. Bad secrets make you feel sad, worried or frightened, whereas good secrets can be things like surprise parties or presents for other people which make you feel excited.

Any secret should always be shared in the end.

Speak up, someone can help

Tell your child it's always good to talk to an adult they trust, about anything that makes them sad, anxious or frightened, so they can help. And it doesn't have to be a family member. It can be a teacher or a friend's parent, for example.

Reassure them that whatever the problem, it's not their fault and they will never get into trouble for speaking out.

They can also call Childline on **0800 1111** and a friendly person will help.



WHAT PARENTS SAY ABOUT PANTS

Since we launched PANTS we've spoken to many parents who have had the conversation...



I used swimming as a great opportunity to have a chat with my six-year-old daughter. I started with a question about why boys' swimwear is different to girls' and this led to a conversation about privacy. It gave me a really good starting point to introduce a delicate subject really easily.

Katherine's mum





OVER
400,000
PARENTS HAVE
ALREADY TALKED PANTS
SO WE KNOW
IT REALLY HELPS



I found it so empowering to have these really clear messages to use with my five-year-old. He understood what I was telling him – in fact he made me laugh one day after school when he stood up and proudly said “I know that what’s under my pants is private and I have told my teacher about this!”

Sam's mum



If the unthinkable happened and someone pushed physical boundaries with my daughter, would she know what to do? Would she tell me? Would she even know that it was wrong?

I felt so proud after we'd had the conversation and so relieved that I hadn't scared or somehow corrupted her, but finally taken an important step to help her keep safe. That's why I want all parents to talk PANTS.

Mabel's mum





By starting to talk PANTS with your child you're taking really important steps to help keep them safe. You should feel proud for doing something amazing.

But remember this isn't a one-off conversation. It's better to have these chats little and often and adapt it as your child gets older – it will help to reinforce the messages and make sure they remember them. Just pick the moments that feel natural for you.



Get the PANTS guide that's right for you

We have a range of other PANTS guides for parents, carers and children, including guides in a number of different languages and guides for people with a disability.

- * Guide for foster carers
- * Guide for parents with a learning disability
- * Guide for parents of children with autism
- * A film for deaf children

You can find these at nspcc.org.uk/pants

Your child may naturally have some questions

But don't worry – we can help you answer them. You can find loads more information and support about talking PANTS at **nspcc.org.uk/pants**

Talk to us

If you ever need to talk, we're here 24/7. Call us on 0808 800 5000 or email us at **help@nspcc.org.uk**

NSPCC

Together we can help children who've been abused to rebuild their lives. Together we can protect children at risk. And, together, we can find the best ways of preventing child abuse from ever happening.

But all this is only possible with your support. Every pound you raise, every petition you sign, every minute of your time, will help make sure we can fight for every childhood.

[nspcc.org.uk](https://www.nspcc.org.uk)



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