NSPCC

THE TALK PANTS GUIDE FOR PARENTS

A simple conversation to help keep your child safe from sexual abuse

EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

Talk PANTS is here to help you have a simple but important conversation with your child to help keep them safe from sexual abuse. From P through to S, each letter provides a simple but valuable message that can help children understand their body belongs to them, and they should tell someone they trust if anything makes them feel upset or worried.

You've probably already talked to them about things like crossing the road safely. Having this conversation can feel just as natural, and be just as easy.

Over 1.5 million parents and carers have already **talked PANTS**, and we want every family to have this simple but vital conversation.

Talking regularly with children about these important messages really can make a big difference.

WHY
TALK
PANTS?

An important conversation to have

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.

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

Talk PANTS never mentions sex

We know you might feel your child is too young to talk about sex. And that's why Talk PANTS never mentions it. Our messages for children are practical, reassuring and age-appropriate.

These messages help children understand their body belongs to them and they have a right to say no. Children are encouraged to tell a safe adult who they trust if anything happens that makes them worried or upset. They also let children know if anything happens that makes them feel that way, it's never their fault. You've probably already talked to them about things like crossing the road safely. Having this conversation can feel just as natural, and be just as easy.

We never use scary words

Talking PANTS is about using simple, child-friendly language to give your child the confidence and knowledge to understand what is and isn't OK.

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

WHAT ARE THE PANTS RULES?

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 chat with your child about keeping safe – and then go into more detail when you are both ready.

Now it's time to talk PANTS.

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

Privates are private

Be clear with your child that your underwear covers up your private parts and what 'private' means. It's good to use the correct names for their body parts if you're comfortable doing so.

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 doesn't belong to anybody else. No one has the right to make them do anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. If somebody does make them do something, it's never their fault, even if the person who has made them feel uncomfortable has told them it is their fault.

If someone asks to see or tries to touch them underneath their underwear they should try to say no and tell a safe adult who 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 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.

Explain to your child they should always talk about stuff that makes them worried, including secrets. And that sharing it shouldn't get them into trouble, even if somebody has told them it will. If something has happened that makes them feel uncomfortable, it's never their fault.

Explain very clearly to your child that children are never to blame for other people making them uncomfortable.

Speak up, someone can help

Tell your child it's always good to talk to a safe adult who 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 has happened, 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.

WHEN'S THE RIGHT TIME?

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.
- 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 or Talk PANTS 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 10).
- 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 4-6), our resources 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 resources are here to help

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

You can read our 'Pantosaurus and the Power of PANTS' story book with your child. It's available from **nspcc.org.uk/shop** and all profits will support our vital work, fighting for every childhood.

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

Find out more at **nspcc.org.uk/pants**

We also have a huge range of other PANTS products. This includes colourful back-to-school accessories, colouring books and a PANTS activity pack that has lots of roarsome ways to remember the rules!

Order yours at **nspcc.org.uk/shop**

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

1.5 MILLION

PARENTS HAVE ALREADY TALKED PANTS SO WE KNOW IT REALLY HELPS

"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 her, but had finally taken an important step to help her keep safe. That's why I want all parents to talk PANTS.

Mabel's mum

"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

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 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/pantsguides

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 have any concerns at all about a child, don't hesitate to contact the NSPCC Helpline. Dedicated NSPCC child protection specialists will be able to give advice and support. You can email **help@nspcc.org.uk** or call **0808 800 5000**

How to respond if your child tells you about abuse
If a child tells you about something that's happened to them after talking PANTS, it could be very difficult for both of you, and you might not know what to do what to do next.

We've got advice to help you take the next steps: **nspcc.org.uk/whattodo**

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.

We change the law. We visit schools across the country, helping children understand what abuse is. And, through our Childline service, we give young people a voice when no one else will listen.

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

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