



awareness to action
Wisconsin
Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

HOW TO TALK TO CHILDREN ABOUT HEALTHY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

INFANCY (0-2 YEARS OLD)

Keeping the lines of communication open with your children – regardless of their age – will help you have open and honest discussions about sexuality. Take some time to understand your own values, feelings and beliefs. Remember, children learn by observation, so how you express yourself non-verbally is just as important as what you say to them.

HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

- Learn through relationship with caregivers
- Focus on developing a sense of trust
- Learn about body through sense of touch
- May be able to make basic distinction between males and females
- May explore genitals
- May have spontaneous reactions that appear sexual, such as an erection
- No inhibitions about nudity

TIPS FOR FACILITATING HEALTHY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Using correct terms for body parts
- Modeling “comfortable” touch (e.g., hugs that are not forced upon the child)
- Help children establish boundaries (i.e. during diapering or bath time tell child that genitals are off limits to others except as need for health or hygiene reason)



CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
Prevention Board

