

Reading with Children

A Quick Guide for Parents & Caregivers



Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Note

Conversations about child sexual abuse can feel challenging or emotional. For children and adults, these topics can be made to feel less isolating if we are able to practice open, healthy and trusting conversations about them.

We recognize the importance of equipping parents and caregivers with knowledge and tools for them to feel confident in having these conversations with the children in their lives.

Through these conversations, children can learn key messages about rights to their body and how to identify and talk to trusted adults in their lives if something ever happened that made them feel sad, scared, or worried.

For more resources, support and information, contact

CCASA's Support & Information Line
@ 403-237-5888

or

Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence
@ 1-866-403-8000



Child Sexual Abuse Definition

Child Sexual Abuse is defined as when a bigger or older person (adult or teen):

Looks at or touches the private parts of a child's body for no good reason.

Asks the child to look at or touch their private parts.

Shows the child sexual images (including pictures, movies, magazines or websites of people with no clothes on).

Speaks to a child using sexual language.

Child Refers to Anyone Under the Age of 18

How Children Disclose

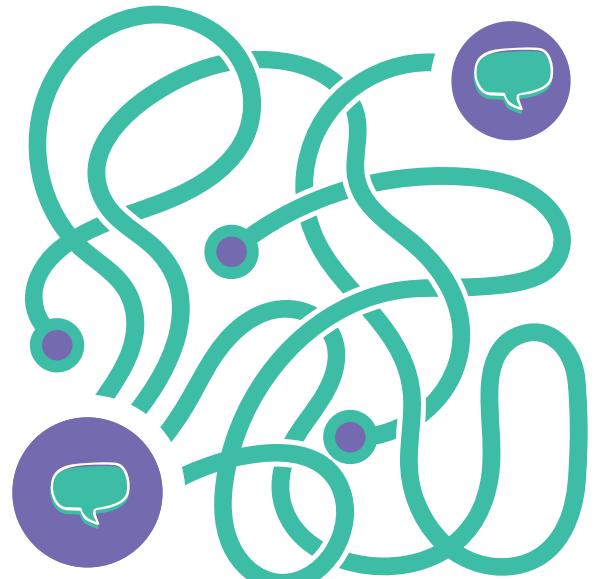
Disclose: is defined as making something known, often a secret or a private thing.

Children tell a little at a time

Children often do not have a linear narrative so disclosures can happen a little at a time, which is usually the result of the child needing to feel a sense of safety. Children and youth might make vague statements to "test the waters" around what an adult's reaction might be.

Statements could include:

- A dislike for someone
- A change in relationship with someone they used to like.
- An aversion to certain people or places.
- Something is happening at home.
- A secret that cannot be shared.



Children try different ways of talking about it

Some indicators or phrases could be:

- "A friend of mine" speaking in hypothetical terms about themselves
- "I don't like _____ anymore"
- "Can I stay at your house?"
- "What if" statements

How Children Disclose

Children might take it back

We can see that sometimes based on adult reactions, children may take their disclosure back.

Some reasons by a child might recant their disclosure may include:

- Children see the reaction of them telling
- Children see changes and consequences to telling and may try to turn back time
- Children who recant disclosures often affirm their abuse later in life
- Young people may withdraw based on negative reactions or fear of

Children often don't tell their parents first

We know disclosing can be tough and scary and because of this we see that children often don't tell their parents first due to their relationship being so important. In considering this, we see that children often disclose to teachers, coaches, grandparents or other trusted adults first.



Supporting a Disclosure

When supporting a child who discloses child sexual abuse:

Listen to them

Showcase active listening when speaking to a child by reflecting, responding, with empathy and support to establish trust.



Mirror their language

Mirror a child's body language, meet them at their level and use words that they are using.



Use Key Messages

Use empowering messages to validate and reassure the child's feelings, i.e., "it takes a lot of courage to share what has happened," "thank you for sharing, you did the right thing by telling me".

When a child discloses to you, it means that they feel safe and trust you.

Giving supportive messaging helps build the foundation for a child's healing journey.

To be a supportive listener here are some messages to convey:

- **"I believe you"**
- **"Your feelings are normal / valid"**
- **"It's not your fault"**



Reporting

Every adult (age 18 & up) in Alberta has a **legal obligation** to report concerns of child abuse or neglect to **Alberta Children's Services**.

This can be a hard conversation to have but the **child's safety is your main priority**.

Unlike Children's Services, there is **no** legal obligation to report to the **police**.

Though it is important to note that **Children's Services** may decide to call the **police** themselves, depending on the circumstances.



Dialogic Reading

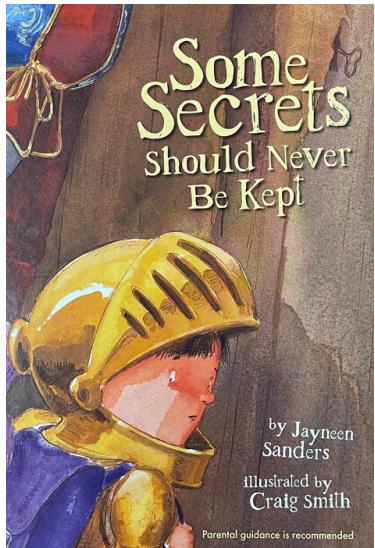
Dialogic reading is an interactive reading approach used to speak with the child about the book, instead of just reading to them. This allows children to have an active role and participate in their learning as well as share and explore their thoughts.

Emotional literacy is the act of being able to express or recognize emotions and feelings through our speech and communication, and the practice of dialogic reading can support a child in identifying emotions of characters in the book and link them to the situations the characters are going through and experiencing.

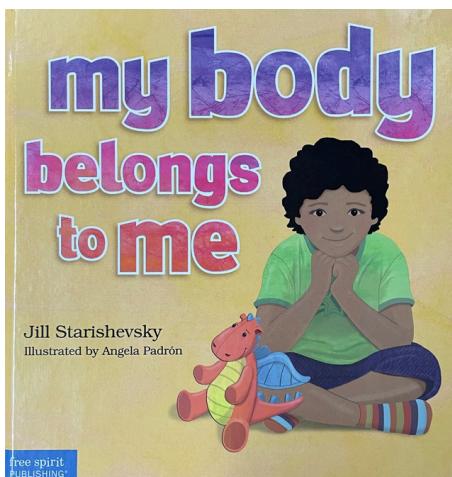
Through engaging children in this dialogue, we can help support them in learning about the world around them and can be especially critical when working with something like learning about child sexual abuse.



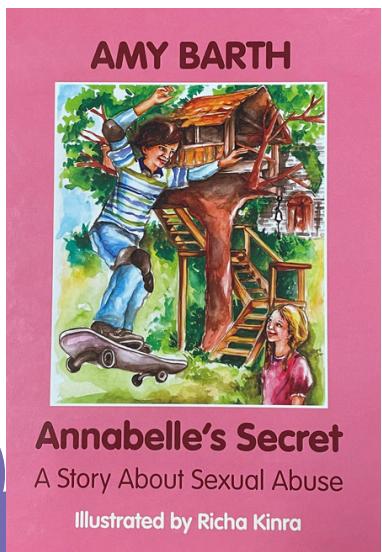
Books used by CCASA for Dialogic Reading



My Body Belongs to Me
by Jill Starishevsky



Some Secrets Should Never be Kept
by Jayneen Sanders



Annabelle's Secret
by Amy Barth

Key Reminders for Dialogic Reading

1. Use of age-appropriate prompts
2. Being mindful of your child's developmental stage and interest
3. Repetition is key to reinforce important messages for children to retain
4. Most important of all – have fun!



PEER & CROWD Reading Models

There are two acronyms that can help us pose these types of questions when reading.

Initially developed by Whitehurst and colleagues. The **PEER** and **CROWD** acronyms are widely used today.

P - Prompt

C - Completion

E - Evaluate

R - Recall

E - Expand

O - Open-Ended

R - Repeat

W - 'Wh'

D - Distancing

PEER Reading Model

P
Prompt

The adult will periodically prompt the child as part of the reading process. Once the child responds to this prompt.

E
Evaluate

The adult will evaluate the accuracy of the response.

E
Expand

The adult will then expand on what the child has shared.

R
Repeat

The adult will repeat the prompt to allow the child the opportunity to recite the response.



PEER Reading Model

An example of this could look like:

"How do you think the boy is feeling in this picture?" as the **prompt**, a child's response could look like "happy."

The adult would **evaluate** the response and say "that's right the boy is happy because they got a new a new toy" as part of the **evaluation** and **expansion** portion.

Finally, the adult will **repeat** the prompt to allow the child another opportunity to recite the response. This could look like asking how the character feels, or by getting the child to **repeat the expanded** answer back.



CROWD Reading Model

C Completion

Includes fill in the blank prompts such as:

“The ball is “blank” (round).

R Recall

Prompts which are questions about the book that was already read.

Example: “can you tell me what happened to the pirate in this story?”

O Open-Ended

Questions that allow the child to focus and examine what is happening in the story.

Example: “can you tell me what’s happening in this picture?”

CROWD Reading Model

W
'Wh'

Prompts which usually begin with who, what, where, when, why or how questions which can help teach children new vocabulary and like open ended questions focus on pictures.

Example: "where did the family drive to in the story?"

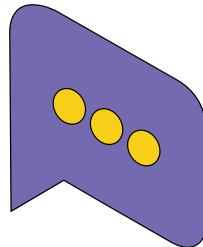
D
Distancing

Prompts children to relate experiences outside of the book to what they are seeing in the story.

Example: such as "this child is playing a game with their grandma, when we go to grandma's what games do you like to play?".

Using these prompts, children can move from passive listeners to storytellers during reading time.

Phone Resources



CCASA Support & Information Line

- 403-237-5888
- 9am-9pm
- 365 Days a Year

Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence

- 1-866-403-8000
- 9am-9pm
- 365 Days a Year
- Call or Text

24 Hour Sexual Violence Support Line

- 1-866-956-1099
- 24 Hour a Day
- 365 Days a Year
- Call or Text

CCASA Youth Programs

“Who Do You Tell?”TM

“Who Do You Tell?”TM is a child sexual abuse education and safety program for elementary school aged children, their parents, and teachers.

This program provides children with the skills and knowledge needed to recognize abuse, promote healthy relationships, learn about body autonomy, and empower children to access support from trusted adults in order to reduce the impacts of sexual violence.

Birch Grove

Birch Grove – is a youth program addressing the roots of sexual violence and planting seeds of change.

In this multi-session program, youth learn about various forms of sexual violence and examine the attitudes and beliefs that are at the root of it.

The latter half of the program focuses on envisioning a world without sexual violence and recognizing the role we each play in creating change.

CCASA Support Programs

Calgary Sexual Assault Response Team (CSART)

Individuals who have been sexually assaulted in the last 7 days (168 hours) can access confidential services at the Sheldon M. Chumir Urgent Care Centre, where the CSART team has a specialized space. CSART services are also available through any Calgary emergency department.

Police & Court Support (PACES)

The Police and Court Support Team exists specifically to support and advocate for people who have experienced sexual violence as they navigate the legal system or are considering doing so.

We provide specialized information, education, and support to people who have experienced sexual assault recently or in the past, as well as their families.

Counselling

We provide free one-on-one and group counseling for individuals impacted by any form of sexual violence, including sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault.

We also provide counseling to anyone supporting an individual who has been impacted by sexual violence.

Programs are available for those 12 years of age & up