



Guidance for early years and childcare settings

Our Talk PANTS campaign and materials encourage parents and carers to have simple conversations with their children which can help keep them safe from sexual abuse.

All of our materials build on Talk PANTS, which was first developed by the Council of Europe. Initially aimed at parents and carers of five to eleven year olds, Talk PANTS teaches children that their private parts are private, their body belongs to them, and that they should always tell an adult if they're upset or worried.

We developed this into five easy-to-remember rules – each starting with a letter of PANTS. We've also created a friendly dinosaur called Pantosaurus who can help engage children with the rules and make it easier to start the conversation. Our kids' activity pack, sing-along with Pantosaurus, and Playtime with Pantosaurus game all help to break the ice too.

All these materials have been so warmly received that we decided that we should also be speaking to three to five year olds too.





Talking PANTS with children aged three to five years

Many parents of younger children and those who work with them have commented on how useful Talk PANTS can be when having conversations with children at a younger age. Our materials help you have simple conversations at appropriate opportunities, without mentioning abuse or even sex, so there's nothing scary about it.

Research suggests the rules are most valuable when taught at a young age, and children can start to be taught them from around the age of three. However, we understand that this is a sensitive subject matter to approach with younger children.

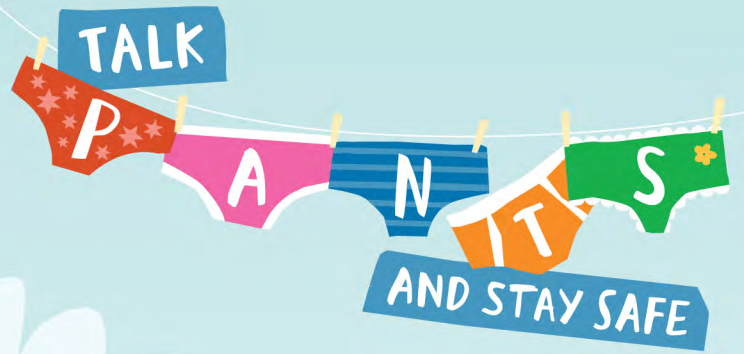
That's why we've put together this guidance with the help of parents and staff from the early years and childcare sector. It aims to support early years and childcare providers who would like to introduce Talk PANTS.



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

Sam's mum





Three ways to start Talking PANTS

1. Share the PANTS information with parents

We have developed a draft letter/email to send to parents with the Talk PANTS guide explaining how it is intended to be used and the benefits of talking PANTS with their young child. The letter also highlights where they can get more information on the campaign and sources of help and support. You should identify someone within your setting such as the designated child protection officer who would feel most comfortable discussing any queries parents may have, so that their name can be the parents' point of contact. **See appendix 1**

2. Invite parents to an information session

We have drafted guidance notes on how this might be most successfully done based on feedback from early years and childcare sector staff and parents.

See appendix 2

3. Talk PANTS directly with children

We recommend delivering some of the messages directly to children and fitting them around the themes and topics that you cover during the day. However, this is a decision for your early years setting, best taken in consultation with parents of the children who use your services. We have drafted a set of notes to help guide you, if you decide to do so. **See appendix 3**

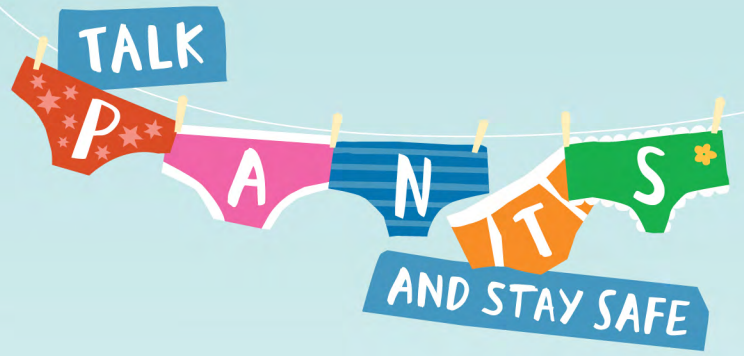


Talk PANTS resources

We have Talk PANTS guides available to download at nspcc.org.uk/pants

- * for parents
- * for foster carers
- * for children (including additional guides for children with autism or learning difficulties)
- * in Welsh.

You'll also be able to find out more about our icebreakers – the kids' activity pack, sing-along with Pantosaurus video, and Playtime with Pantosaurus game. We also have a British Sign Language video for children.



Thank you!

By starting to Talk PANTS to children early and often, you're taking really important steps to help keep them safe. You should feel proud for doing something amazing.

Children 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



NSPCC helpline

If you're worried about a child, even if you're unsure, our professional practitioners are here every day of the year to provide help, advice and support. Call us on **0808 800 5000** or email help@nspcc.org.uk





APPENDIX 1

Draft letter/email for early years and childcare settings to send home with the Talk PANTS guide

Dear parent/carer,

Please find enclosed a booklet that we are promoting to parents as part of the NSPCC's Talk PANTS campaign. The guide helps parents have simple conversations with their children that can help keep them safe from abuse. It's specially created for parents of early years and primary school children, with engaging and age-appropriate messages.

Talk PANTS centres on five key rules:

- Privates are private.
- Always remember your body belongs to you.
- No means no.
- Talk about secrets that upset you.
- Speak up, someone can help.

Although some parents may feel this is a sensitive area to discuss with their child, we feel that sharing messages such as these with children at an early age can be very beneficial in helping to protect your child. Research from the NSPCC also suggests that the messages are most valuable when taught at a young age.

We hope you find this booklet useful – for more information about the campaign go to [nspcc.org.uk/pants](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/pants)

Yours sincerely,

<Insert name of school contact>





APPENDIX 2

Guidance for staff in early years and childcare settings organising an awareness session with parents to introduce the materials

Before the session

1. Send out a letter/email explaining the key elements of Talk PANTS, inviting parents to a session to introduce the materials (a draft is included on the next page).
2. Prepare a session outline where you follow a plan to introduce the main aim of the campaign and talk through the key messages using the pull out poster.
3. Keep the session short and focused on the key messages of the booklet and resources. While the session does not need to be overly formal, you may want to consider how you enable questions from parents whilst ensuring the conversation stays on subject.
4. It may be useful to trial your presentation with a sample audience of colleagues or parents who can give you feedback to help fine-tune your presentation.
5. Ensure that staff who are delivering the session are reminded of the organisation's guidance if any disclosures about children occur and have signposting in place if adults disclose historical abuse.
6. Recognise it is a sensitive subject and seek support for your team in advance if you feel you need training/skills enhancement to be more comfortable delivering this.
7. Identify a staff member, such as your designated child protection officer to be present at the session in the role of identifying and offering support to parents.

During the session

8. Begin by offering an opportunity afterwards for anyone who may wish to speak on a one-to-one basis. Also outline that you recognise this is a sensitive subject and make sure you have helpline numbers readily available for anyone who may need support. The NSPCC helpline number is listed at the end of this document. Also clearly outline the limits of confidentiality during the session, as outlined in your own child protection policy and procedures.
9. Reassure the parents that they are best placed to have this conversation with their child and it can be done in a way that is not scary. Abuse, or even sex, do not need to be mentioned.
10. Reinforce the messages around parental choice to decide when their child is ready to hear this information and how they choose to do so.
11. Encourage the parents to use the various support websites and helpline numbers at the end of the booklet if they feel they still have concerns and would like to speak to someone.

After the session

12. Follow up on any concerns or queries raised at the session by parents and/or staff.
13. You may want to include links to the NSPCC's Talk PANTS webpage in your next newsletter or on your website for parents to access.



Suggested letter/email to parents, to be amended as required

Dear parent/carer

We are currently supporting the NSPCC in sharing their Talk PANTS campaign, which has been developed to help prevent abuse from happening to any child.

Talk PANTS encourages parents to have simple conversations with their children to help keep them safe, teaching children five key messages:

- Privates are private.
- Always remember your body belongs to you.
- No means no.
- Talk about secrets that upset you.
- Speak up, someone can help.

Although some parents may feel this is a sensitive area to discuss with their child, we feel that sharing messages such as these with children at an early age can be very beneficial in helping protect your child. Research from the NSPCC also suggests that the messages are most valuable when taught at a young age.

The resources for the campaign include a booklet which helps parents to have simple conversations with their children that can help keep them safe from abuse. It's specially created for parents of early years and primary school children, with engaging and age-appropriate messages.

We are organising a session to introduce parents to the guidance and discuss any concerns you may have.

The session will be on **X (insert date)** at **X (insert location)** from **X (time)** to **X (time)**. Please contact **X (insert name)** on **X (tel/email/way of contacting organisation)** to let us know if you are able to attend.

For more information about the Talk PANTS campaign and materials visit **nspcc.org.uk/pants**

Yours sincerely

<insert name of contact for the session or other signatory>





APPENDIX 3

Integrating Talk PANTS into your themes and activities

1. Identify which themes and activities you currently cover that include 'keeping safe' and private parts.
2. Review the Talk PANTS materials and see which parts could be broken down and used in a series of messages for children – integrating them into their tasks and topics to be covered, such as private parts, secrets, 'no means no'.
3. Decide how you are going to engage parents to support covering Talk PANTS with their children and how you are going to get approval to do so, if you feel this is necessary. This might be via a letter or email to parents (suggested draft on the next page). This could also incorporate the offer of a session to discuss the messages with parents in advance of the materials being delivered and their chance to consent/decline this for their child. Guidance for running a parent's information session is in **Appendix 2**.
4. Recognise it is a sensitive subject and seek support for your team in advance if you feel you need training/skills enhancement to be more comfortable delivering this.



Getting started

If you have decided to introduce Talk PANTS within your setting, and have obtained the relevant permissions, here are some considerations for getting the conversations started:

- It's a good idea to make the conversations relevant in some way, such as when changing clothes or during toilet training. This gives you the opportunity to remind children that the parts of their body covered by their underwear are private and no one should ask to see or touch them. And no one should ask a child to touch or see what's covered by their underwear.
- Feel free to use language and ideas you know the children in your setting will understand and adapt it according to age groups/development.
- You might want to introduce storybooks that involve pants in some way (such as *Aliens Love Underpants*) and use these as conversation starters to talk about elements of Talk PANTS.
- You may have concerns about the most appropriate terms to refer to private parts. Different settings, and indeed parents, will have views on this. However, Talk PANTS doesn't involve talking in this detail, simply referring to "anything underneath your pants" and "privates are private" so this doesn't need to be an issue. If you are worried about the use of terminology, seek advice from your manager before having the conversations.

How and when you talk PANTS to the children in your early years setting is your choice. It's about weaving simple conversations about staying safe into the daily routine. You'll know when they're ready and how much detail you need to go into.



Draft letter/email, to be amended as required

Dear parent/carer

We are currently supporting the NSPCC in sharing their Talk PANTS campaign, which has been developed to help prevent abuse from happening to any child.

Talk PANTS encourages parents to have simple conversations with their children to help keep them safe, teaching children five key messages:

- Privates are private.
- Always remember your body belongs to you.
- No means no.
- Talk about secrets that upset you.
- Speak up, someone can help.

Although some parents may feel this is a sensitive area to discuss with their child, we feel that sharing messages such as these with children at an early age can be very beneficial in helping protect your child. Research from the NSPCC also suggests that the messages are most valuable when taught at a young age.

The resources for the campaign include a booklet which helps parents to have simple conversations to help keep their child safe and is aimed at the parents of early years and primary school children. We are also considering how these simple messages can be communicated through our day-to-day activities.

To discuss this, and share the Talk PANTS guide, we are organising a session with parents on **X (insert date)** at **X (insert location)** from **X (time)** to **X (time)**.

Please contact **X (insert name)** on **X (tel/email/way of contacting setting)** to let us know if you are able to attend.

If you are unable to come to the session, and do not consent to these messages being given to your child, we would be grateful if you could return the below slip/respond to this email by **date X** to let us know.

You can view the campaign messages online at **nspcc.org.uk/pants** before you decide.

I do not consent to my child(ren) receiving Talk PANTS information.

Name of child: _____

Keyworker/group: _____

Parent/carer name: _____

Parent/carer signature: _____

Date: _____

Yours sincerely,

<insert name of contact for the session or other signatory>