

Having the conversation with children about difficult topics can be daunting for parents and caregivers. How do you start? How should you talk? How do you answer tough questions? Jumping right into conversations about body safety can seem overwhelming, so we wanted to make this process a little easier for parents and caregivers by using a resource widely available to everyone: books.

Children's Cove and Eight Cousins Bookshop developed a list of books carrying the themes of challenges many children may face and to assist parents in discussions.

Below is a list of books which have some important messages which you can practice with your children as you practice to #havetheconversation.

For Younger Children (3 years old to 6 years old)

The Rabbit Listened

By: Cori Doerrfeld

Sometimes we just need someone to listen. Taylor is sad and frustrated. One by one his animal friends try to help him, by talking, shouting, cleaning up, or laughing. Rabbit understands just what Taylor really needs. A good reminder lesson for everyone big and small.

What to focus on, questions and conversation:

- **Themes:** Strong emotions such as anger, loss, pain, sadness; compassion; fortitude and, trying again
- The crows destroy Taylor's block building. Look at Taylor's expressions on two pages (when the crows arrive and the page after). Can you imagine what Taylor is feeling? Can you show me what Taylor is feeling? Have you ever felt that way? Would you like to share a time when you felt like Taylor? (**Note:** there are two discussions for this question. The first is when Taylor expresses surprise, shock, distress. The next page Taylor expresses sadness and loss.)
- "Taylor was alone." Have you ever felt alone? Do you sometimes like being alone? When does it feel good to be alone? When does it feel bad to be alone? Is there a grown-up who helps you when you feel bad? Who listens to you? Conversations about three trusted grown-ups.
- Taylor decides to build again. Look at Taylor's expression. Can you imagine what Taylor is feeling? Can you show me what Taylor is feeling? Have you ever felt that way. Would you like to share a time when you felt like Taylor?

Say Something

By: Peter Reynolds

Everyone has a voice, and it is more than OK to use it! This brightly colored and exciting book teaches its readers that everyone can make a difference with their words, actions and their voices.

What to focus on, questions and conversation:

- **Themes:** Speaking up and using your voice.
- "If you see someone being hurt" section: What color is this page? Why do you think the page is red? Let's practice saying, "Hey! Stop!" Put our your hand. "Stop!" If someone is being hurt, you can say, "Stop!" If you are being hurt, you can say, "Stop!"
- "Sometimes you'll say something and no one will be listening." Discuss how it is important that everyone has at least three trusted adults they could talk to about anything if they needed help. Who are three specific adults inside and outside of your family you could talk to. Continue telling people until someone listens.

Don't Touch my Hair

By: Sharee Miller

Don't Touch my Hair sparks an important conversation on personal boundaries for children as Aria explains that her hair should not be touched without asking for permission first. This message lets readers of all ages know that their body is their own, and no one can tell them otherwise!

What to focus on, questions and conversation:

- **Themes:** My body; Permission
- Your body belongs to you. Like Aria, practice using phrases about the body starting with “This is my . . .” e.g. This is my hair. This is my knee. This is my mouth.
- You have control over your body. Like Aria, practice using phrases about the body starting with “Don't touch my” Don't touch my hair. Don't touch my leg. Etc.
- Talk about permission. Practice asking for permission. May I touch your hair?
- Talk about accepting when someone does not give permission. May I touch your hair? No. Okay!

For School Age Children (6 years old - 10 years old)

Not in Room 204

By: Shannon Riggs, Jaime Zollars (Illustrator)

At a report card conference, Mrs. Salvador informs Regina's mom that Regina is doing a great job, but she is very quiet. Regina thinks of the secret she keeps so quiet—the one even her mom doesn't know. Will Regina find the courage to tell Mrs. Salvador her terrible secret? This helpful book provides a tool for adults to gently discuss sexual abuse with young children.

What to focus on, questions and conversation:

- **Themes:** Abuse; Silence; trusted adults beyond parents
- Talk about social standards. We show respect. We do not steal. We are kind. We keep our bodies to ourselves.
- Talk about privacy and secrets. How do you know when to keep a secret and when to tell a secret?
- The book is vague about what is happening to Lillian. Demonstrate and help find vocabulary to talk about Regina's experiences.
- Talk about Regina's perspective. Why does Regina like the rules of Room 204? Why is Regina quiet?
- Use Mrs. Salvatore's model and discuss stranger danger along with abuse from a loved one.
- Use Mrs. Salvatore's model and demonstrate knowledge and strength. I know exactly what to do. I can help.
- Who are the adults in your life that help you?
- Who are the adults in your community that (can) help you?

A Bad Case of the Stripes

By: David Shannon

Camilla loves lima beans more than anyone, but has a hard time telling anyone else. Then some peculiar events begin to take place. *A Bad Case of the Stripes* brings those inside feelings of not being true to yourself to the surface and lets children hear that they can, and should, express themselves for who they are and not be scared to use their voice!

What to focus on, questions and conversation:

- **Themes:** Be true to yourself
- Have you ever been made fun of for liking something?
- How did that make you feel?

- What happens when Camilla stops eating lima beans? Talk about the action and reaction pattern in the book. When someone suggests something, Camilla becomes it. She is susceptible to outside influence and is constantly changing.
- What cures Camilla? Not lima beans! What makes her better? When the old lady says, “I knew the real you was in there somewhere,” what does she mean?
- When do you feel the most you?
- Who in your life makes you feel happy to be you?
- Talk about the adults/friends that believe (in) you.

For more information about these books, how to discuss important themes and messages from the book list, or for other suggested titles, please contact Sara Hines head of the Children’s Book department at Eight Cousins Bookshop in Falmouth, MA. Please email her at book@eightcousins.com or visit her at the store.



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For more information on how to have important conversations about body safety, to learn more about child sexual abuse, or how Children’s Cove can provide support and resources visit: <https://www.childrencove.org/parents-caregivers/> Parents, caregivers, concerned community members, or anyone can call confidentially to ask about child sexual abuse or services which may be available.



www.ChildrensCove.org | 508-375-0410

#havetheconversation