

PANTS: Your questions answered

As you talk PANTS with your child, it's natural for them to have some questions. We've got advice to help you answer them accurately and in an age appropriate way.

Tips and advice on talking PANTS

We've answered some common questions that parents have asked us. And we've got tips on how to answer questions your child may ask you.

Won't talking to my child about this topic scare them?

PANTS is all about giving child-friendly practical and reassuring advice. We don't want to upset or scare families and we definitely don't want to make children feel they can't accept a hug or a kiss from an adult.

We want to make talking about sexual abuse and keeping safe as easy as teaching your child about crossing the road safely.

All the information we've provided has been developed with parents and experts in parenting and child protection. And with Pantosaurus and our exciting activities, children can learn in a fun way.

What if my child says something that worries me?

If your child says something that seems far too 'adult' for their age, or worries you in any other way, your initial response is really important. You should try to stay calm. Whatever you think and feel, it's about reacting with love, support, openness and reassurance. If your child tells you something, whether it's about them or a friend, know that it's probably a huge relief for them to be able to tell you.

The next step is to get some advice – talk to a teacher at school, children's services or get in touch with us on 0808 800 5000. We're here 24/7 to give advice and support.

If it's nothing to worry about, you can feel assured that you've checked it out. If the professional advises that it might need more exploration, they can support you along the way.

You know your child best and how you respond will depend on the situation and the circumstances. But it may be appropriate to say:

Thank you for talking to me about this. You can always talk to me about anything that is worrying you.

What happened was horrible but it's not your fault. No child should ever be treated like that.

I'm here to help and look after you and I'm taking what you say very seriously. I'm going to think about what you said and I may need to get advice from someone who knows about these things.

If you remember anything else or are worried, come and talk to me.

Your child can also get confidential support from Childline by calling free on 0800 1111 or through [Childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk).

Does this mean I have to talk to my child about sex?

In our PANTS materials, we never talk about sex or use scary words. We focus on keeping safe and rules that help children understand important messages, like their body belongs to them and they should tell an adult if they're upset or worried.

Does PANTS only apply to strangers?

It's a difficult thing to think about but we know that children are sometimes sexually abused by adults who are family members and by people who are known to them. They can also be sexually abused by young people.

You don't want to alarm or distress your child and anything you say should be age appropriate for your child.

When talking PANTS with your children you should always emphasise that if anyone (even a member of the family or friend) touches them in an inappropriate way or makes them feel uncomfortable, they should tell an adult they trust.

If you have concerns that your child is being abused you can discuss it with the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000. Our experts are here 24/7 to give advice and support.