

Teaching about Privacy

For Families and Caregivers of Children with I/DD

- What does “teaching about privacy” mean?
 - Learning the difference between public and private is an important stage in developing a sense of modesty and learning what is socially appropriate.
 - Teaching privacy can begin as early as age two or three; for example, learning the correct names for body parts and that certain body parts are private.
 - Modeling privacy is an important tool to help children learn the concept.

- The concept of privacy can be applied to four areas: one’s body, behavior, place, and conversation.
 - Children can learn which parts of the body are private. For example, the parts of the body that can be covered by a swimming suit are private.
 - Children can learn who can see the parts of their body that are private. For example, their parents can help them bathe and dress or their doctor can perform a medical exam.
 - Children can learn the difference between public and private behavior. For example, it is okay to brush your hair in public, but not to undress in public.
 - Children can learn the difference between public and private places. A private place is where no one can see you and where no one can enter without your permission. For example, the bedroom and bathroom at home are private places.
 - Children can learn the difference between public and private conversation. This will help teach the child socially appropriate behavior and help foster inclusion in social situations.

- We all have the right to privacy.
 - Privacy is an important aspect of all people’s lives. It is a basic human right and should be respected.
 - When privacy is respected it communicates a sense of dignity for the individual.
 - Understanding privacy means understanding that our body is special and we make the decision about who can touch us.

Couwenhoven, T. (2007). *Teaching children with down syndrome about their bodies, boundaries, and sexuality*. Woodbine House. Bethesda, MD.

Ludwig, S. (n.d.) Information series: Explaining privacy. Canadian Down Syndrome Society
<http://www.kcdsg.org/files/content/Explaining%20Privacy%20and%20Sexuality.pdf>