

Books on Difficult Topics for Kids and Teens

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The Strong4Life Child Protection team at the Stephanie V. Blank Center for Safe and Healthy Children have curated recommended reading lists to help parents and caregivers have healthy conversations about difficult topics and build protective factors for their children. Use discretion when deciding what books are best for your child's current development and understanding, and always read books yourself before sharing them with your child.

Recommended reading lists

The book recommendations are broken out by the four categories listed below with suggested age ranges for each.

BODY SAFETY, BOUNDARIES AND SECRETS	FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS
PUBERTY AND SEX	ASSORTED TOPICS



Be on the lookout for Strong4Life Child Protection team favorites as indicated by a green star.

NEW

Check out new book recommendations (as of spring 2025) as indicated by the blue NEW banner.

Last update: Spring 2025

Reminders for parents and caregivers

- Talking about body safety, boundaries, consent and sexuality can be uncomfortable, but caregivers are the best sources for this information.
- It is not a child's responsibility to defend against abusers and those who may wish to harm them. No child should feel as though abuse is their fault because they didn't or couldn't say no.
- It is never a child's fault when someone hurts them or touches them in an unwanted or unsafe way, whether or not they say no.
- It is important to encourage children to always tell a trusted adult if they are harmed or feel unsafe, whether through physical touch or something else.

Body safety, boundaries and secrets

Book suggestions

Age suggestions

Some Parts Are NOT for Sharing

Julie Federico

Birth to 3 years

When I Was Little Like You

Jane Porett

2 to 4 years

The Right Touch: A Read-Aloud Story to Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

Sandy Kleven

2 to 4 years

The Bare Naked Book

Kathy Stinson

2 to 6 years

The Berenstain Bears Learn About Strangers

Stan and Jan Berenstain

3 years and older

Your Body Belongs to You

Cornelia Spelman

3 years and older

My Body Belongs to Me

Jill Starishevsky

3 to 5 years

My Body Belongs to Me from My Head to My Toes

Pro Familia

3 to 7 years

Only for Me

Michelle Derrig



3 to 8 years

Those Are MY Private Parts

Diane Hansen

3 to 8 years

Amazing You!: Getting Smart About Your Private Parts

Gail Saltz

3 to 8 years

It's MY Body: A Book to Teach Young Children How to Resist Uncomfortable Touch

Lory Britain

3 to 8 years

Fred the Fox Shouts "No!"

Tatiana Y. Kisil Matthews



3 to 9 years

I Said No! A Kid-to-Kid Guide to Keeping Private Parts Private

Zack and Kimberly King

3 to 12 years

No Trespassing - This Is MY Body!

Pattie Fitzgerald

4 to 8 years

I Can Play It Safe

Alison Feigh

4 to 8 years

The Trouble With Secrets

Karen Johnsen

4 to 10 years

Body safety, boundaries and secrets

Book suggestions

Age suggestions



Some Secrets Should Never Be Kept
Jayneen Sanders



3 to 12 years

Telling Isn't Tattling
Kathryn M. Hammerseng

4 to 10 years

Know Tiny Secrets: How to Keep Your Body Private and Safe
Latasha Fleming

5 to 10 years

U Touch I Tell
Chi Hosseinion

7 to 9 years

A Smart Girl's Guide: Digital World: How to Connect, Share, Play and Keep Yourself Safe
Carrie Anton

9 to 12 years

Will Ladybug Hug?
Hilary Leung

Birth to 3 years

My Body Is Private
Linda Walvoord Girard

3 to 8 years



My Body's Mine: A Book on Body Boundaries and Sexual Abuse Prevention
Kayla J.W. Marnach



3 to 12 years

Let's Talk About Body Boundaries, Consent and Respect
Jayneen Sanders

3 to 12 years

An Exceptional Children's Guide to Touch: Teaching Social and Physical Boundaries to Kids
McKinley Hunter Manasco

3 to 12 years

Uncle Willy's Tickle: A Child's Right to Say No
Marcie Aboff

4 to 8 years

No Means No!
Jayneen Sanders

4 to 8 years

Kindergators: Hands Off, Harry!
Rosemary Wells

4 to 8 years

Miles Is the Boss of His Body
Samantha Kurtzman-Counter and Abbie Schiller

4 to 8 years



Don't Touch My Hair!
Sharee Miller
Available as a board book for younger children



4 to 8 years

Sorry, I Forgot to Ask!
Julia Cook

4 to 8 years

Body safety, boundaries and secrets

Book suggestions

Age suggestions

C Is for Consent

Eleanor Morrison

Available as a board book for younger children

4 to 8 years

Me, Myselfie and I: A Cautionary Tale

Jamie Lee Curtis and Laura Cornell

4 to 8 years

Listening to My Body

Gabi Garcia

4 to 10 years

I Can Say No

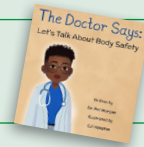
Jenny Simmons

5 to 8 years

The Doctor Says: Let's Talk About Body Safety

Dr. Pat Morgan

3 to 8 years



Don't Hug the Quokka!

Daniel Errico

3 to 7 years

Feelings and emotions

Book suggestions

Age suggestions

Ruby Finds a Worry

Tom Percival

3 to 6 years

When Sadness Is at Your Door

Eva Eland

3 to 7 years

Freckleface Strawberry

Julianne Moore

3 to 8 years

You, Me and Empathy

Jayneen Sanders

4 to 8 years

You Weren't with Me

Chandra Ghosh Ippen

3 to 12 years

Once I Was Very, Very Scared

Chandra Ghosh Ippen

3 to 12 years

A Little SPOT of Anger: A Story about Managing BIG Emotions

Diane Alber

4 to 8 years

If I Had a Giant Toe:

A Children's Book About Self-Esteem

Jill D. Clark

4 to 8 years



Feelings and emotions

Book suggestions	Age suggestions
Grumpy Monkey Suzanne Lang	4 to 8 years
The Way I Feel Janan Cain	4 to 8 years
Is a Worry Worrying You? Ferida Wolff and Harriet May Savitz	4 to 8 years
The Breaking News Sarah Lynne Reul	4 to 8 years
Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls Francesca Cavallo and Elena Favilli	8 to 11 years
My Strong Mind: A Story About Developing Mental Strength Niels van Hove	5 to 8 years
What to Do When the News Scares You: A Kid's Guide to Understanding Current Events Jacqueline B. Toner	6 to 12 years
NEW The Rhino Suit Colter Jackson	4 to 8 years
NEW My Monster and Me Nadiya Hussain	3 to 5 years
NEW Laxmi's Mooch Shelly Anand	4 to 8 years



Scan or click the QR code, or visit Strong4Life.com/read, for more book recommendations on feelings, emotions and building resilience in kids.



More book recommendations →

Puberty and sex

Book suggestions

Age suggestions

It's Not the Stork!: A Book About Girls, Boys, Babies, Bodies, Families and Friends

Robie H. Harris

4 to 8 years

It's So Amazing: A Book About Eggs, Sperm, Birth, Babies and Families

Robie H. Harris

7 to 10 years

Sex Is a Funny Word

Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth

8 to 12 years

Guy Talk (Growing Up)

Lizzie Cox

8 to 12 years

Guy Stuff: The Body Book for Boys

Dr. Cara Natterson

9 to 12 years

Celebrate Your Body (and Its Changes, Too!): The Ultimate Puberty Book for Girls

Sonya Renee Taylor

8 to 12 years



The Period Book: A Girl's Guide to Growing Up

Karen Gravelle



8 to 12 years

The Care and Keeping of You 1: The Body Book for Younger Girls

Valorie Schaefer

8 to 12 years

The Care and Keeping of You 2: The Body Book for Older Girls

Dr. Cara Natterson

10 years and older

Celebrate Your Body 2: The Ultimate Puberty Book for Preteen and Teen Girls

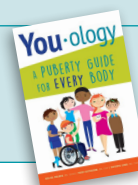
Drs. Carrie Leff and Lisa Klein

10 years and older

NEW

You-ology: A Puberty Guide for Every Body

Dr. Melisa Holmes, FACOG, Dr. Trish Hutchison, FAAP, and Dr. Kathryn Lowe, FAAP



7 to 10 years

NEW Assorted

The list below includes a variety of topics: domestic violence and unhealthy relationships, trauma and violence, sexual abuse and assault, poverty and challenging circumstances, foster care, adoption and families, parental incarceration, divorce and separation, grief and loss, medical conditions, and social media and digital safety.

Book suggestions	Topic(s)	Age suggestions
Some Days He Growled N. Kimball Ostrowski	Domestic violence and unhealthy relationships	5 to 18 years
The Big Bad Wolf in My House Valérie Fontaine	Domestic violence and unhealthy relationships	4 to 8 years
The Day My Daddy Lost His Temper Dr. Carol Santana McCleary, PsyD	Domestic violence and unhealthy relationships	4 to 8 years
A Terrible Thing Happened Margaret M. Holmes	Trauma and violence	3 to 12 years
When You Know What I Know Sonja K. Solter	Sexual abuse and assault	8 to 12 years
Please Tell: A Child's Story About Sexual Abuse Jessie	Sexual abuse and assault	4 to 8 years
Healing Days: A Guide for Kids Who Have Experienced Trauma Susan Farber Straus, PhD	Sexual abuse and assault	6 to 11 years
 The Kid Trapper Julia Cook	Sexual abuse and assault	6 to 12 years
Speak Laurie Halse Anderson <i>Content warning: Sexual assault</i>	Sexual abuse and assault	13 years and older
Fault Line C. Desir	Sexual abuse and assault	13 years and older
Home Tonya Lippert	Poverty and challenging circumstances	5 to 9 years
Saturday at the Food Pantry Diane O'Neill	Poverty and challenging circumstances	3 to 7 years
The Foster Dragon Steve Herman	Foster care	4 to 8 years
Maybe Days: A Book for Children in Foster Care Jennifer Wilgocki	Foster care	4 to 8 years

Assorted

Book suggestions	Topic(s)	Age suggestions
Monty's Day in Court: What to Expect When You Have to Testify in Court Jessica Miles	Foster care	9 to 12 years
A Is for Always: An Adoption Alphabet Linda Cutting	Adoption and families	2 to 6 years
The Adopted Dragon Steve Herman	Adoption and families	4 to 10 years
Tuxedo Baby Victoria Smith	Adoption and families	4 to 7 years
A Family Is a Family Is a Family Sara O'Leary	Adoption and families	3 to 7 years
Far Apart, Close in Heart: Being a Family When a Loved One Is Incarcerated Becky Birtha	Parental incarceration	4 to 8 years
See You Soon Mariame Kaba	Parental incarceration	4 to 8 years
Two Homes Claire Masurel	Divorce and separation	2 to 5 years
Thursday Ann Bonwill	Divorce and separation	3 to 7 years
The Kids' Book of Family Changes: Understanding Divorce and Separation Catherine and Jenny Stephenson	Divorce and separation	4 to 10 years
The Invisible String Patrice Karst	Divorce and separation	4 to 8 years
The List of Things That Will Not Change Rebecca Stead	Divorce and separation	8 to 12 years
The Rough Patch Brian Lies	Grief and loss	4 to 8 years
The Laugh Fay Evans	Grief and loss	3 to 7 years
Dear Moon Stephen Wunderli	Grief and loss	3 to 8 years
The Treasure Box Dave Keane	Grief and loss	4 to 8 years

Assorted

Book suggestions	Topic(s)	Age suggestions
Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss Pat Schwiebert and Chuck DeKlyen	Grief and loss	All ages
The Memory Box: A Book About Grief Joanna Rowland	Grief and loss	4 to 8 years
★ My Journey With the Wind: A Magical Story of Grief Ashley Wolfe 	Grief and loss	4 to 10 years
Specs for Rex Yasmeen Ismail	Medical conditions	4 to 8 years
Brave Like Mom Monica Acker	Medical conditions	6 to 8 years
★ Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You Sonia Sotomayor 	Medical conditions	4 to 7 years
Migraine and Mia Kat Harrison	Medical conditions	4 to 8 years
Just Roll With It Veronica Agarwal and Lee Durfey-Lavoie	Medical conditions	8 to 12 years
Magic Air: Ten Kid-Sized Steps to Surgery Alana Smith	Medical conditions	3 to 6 years
Making Happy Sheetal Sheth	Medical conditions	6 to 12 years
Different: A Great Thing to Be! Heather Avis	Medical conditions	3 to 7 years
The Brain Forest Sandhya Menon	Medical conditions	5 to 10 years
Come Over to My House Eliza Hull and Sally Rippin	Medical conditions	3 to 9 years
Finally Heard Kelly Yang	Social media and digital safety	8 to 12 years
Social Media Survival Guide Holly Bathie	Social media and digital safety	10 to 18 years
On the Internet: Our First Talk About Online Safety Dr. Jillian Roberts	Social media and digital safety	6 to 8 years

Assorted

Book suggestions	Topic(s)	Age suggestions
Teach Your Dragon Online Safety Steve Herman	Social media and digital safety	4 to 10 years
The Berenstain Bears' Computer Trouble Jan and Mike Berenstain	Social media and digital safety	4 to 8 years
Chicken Clicking Jeanne Willis	Social media and digital safety	3 to 8 years
#Goldilocks: A Hashtag Cautionary Tale Jeanne Willis	Social media and digital safety	3 to 8 years
Troll Stinks Jeanne Willis	Social media and digital safety	3 to 8 years
If You Give a Mouse an iPhone: A Cautionary Tail Ann Droyd	Social media and digital safety	4 to 10 years
But It's Just a Game Julia Cook	Social media and digital safety	7 to 12 years
The Technology Tail: A Digital Footprint Story Julia Cook	Social media and digital safety	6 to 11 years
Webster's Friend Hannah Whaley	Social media and digital safety	2 to 7 years

The age recommendations listed are approximate, and every book is not meant for every child or family. Consider your family values when selecting books, and choose books that are age-appropriate for the child.

This is general information and not specific medical advice. Always consult with a doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns about the health of a child.



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