



P.S. Happy Bear

Support for the Inclusion of Anatomical Terms

Why is it important to include the names of the private parts?

- (1) Children must understand that it is “OK” to say these words when talking about safety. Some children have been taught that talking about private parts is “bad” or dirty.” This may hinder them from making a disclosure for fear of punishment for using “bad” words.
- (2) Although each family may use different names to label the private parts of the body, children should learn one name that is universally understood if the child needs to ask for help. In some instances, a child’s initial disclosure is ignored when the child cannot communicate the details about the touching when he/she doesn’t have the proper language.

From Preventing Child Sexual Abuse: Sharing the Responsibility

“We strongly encourage teaching children the names of all their body parts, including genitals. For ease of discussion, these parts can then be referred to collectively as ‘private parts.’” **Happy Bear practices this philosophy.**

How do parents feel about the use of anatomical terms?

- (1) In a national survey of parents of children participating in personal safety/child sexual abuse prevention programs, 85% of respondents agreed that children need to be taught the correct names of their genitals.
- (2) Parents should, however, be provided with the rationale for use of these terms when their children will participate in such a program. **This rationale is discussed during the Parent Meeting prior to the play.**

References:

Wurtele, S., & Miller-Perrin, C. (1992). Prevention of child sexual abuse: Sharing the responsibility. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Conte, J.R. & Fogarty. (1989). Attitudes on sexual abuse prevention programs: A national survey of parents. School of Social Work-University of Washington, Seattle, WA.