

Touch in Healthy Relationships

Irene van der Zande, Executive Director/Co-Founder

Kidpower is an educational charitable organization that, since 1989, has brought "People Safety" education to over 1.2 million children, teenagers, and adults, including those with special needs, from many different cultures - close to home and around the world. For publications; free articles, podcasts and e-newsletter; and information about our services and locations, please visit www.kidpower.org.

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To have healthy relationships, you need to have good boundaries. To have good boundaries, you need to have an understanding about what is safe and what is not safe both emotionally and physically and to have skills to communicate with others about your boundaries.

Touch, teasing, and affection are often areas that can create problems in relationships. Here's a summary of our basic Kidpower rules.

Regardless of age, touch or games for play, teasing, and affection need to be:

- Safe
- The choice of each person
- Allowed by the adults in charge
- Not a secret

Touch for health and safety might not be a choice, but is never a secret.

Problems should not be secret. Touch should not have to be secret. Presents or games should not have to be secret.

If you have a safety problem, tell an adult you trust and keep telling until you get the help you need.

For children, the Kidpower safety rules about touching private areas is that your private areas are the parts of your body covered by a bathing suit, and for play or teasing, other people should not touch your private areas nor should they ask you to touch their private areas nor should they show you movies or pictures about people touching private areas. For health or safety, such as if you're sick, your parents or doctor might need to touch your private areas, but it is never a secret.

Knowing the rules is important, but people also need skills in communicating about boundaries. This is why our Kidpower teaching method emphasizes coaching our students to be successful in practicing the skills they need to keep themselves emotionally and physically safe.