

# **Empowering Young Minds: How Might I Teach Children About Body Safety Through a Book?**

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Transcript

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Hello, I'm Victoria Grenz, and today I'm going to talk to you about empowering young minds. I'm a mom of two girls, and I have thought about teaching them about body safety without feeling uncomfortable myself, and hence making them feel uncomfortable. So, I did research on sexual abuse awareness and body safety, and how might I teach children about body safety through a book.

My innovative approach, I considered my stakeholders, who are my children between the ages of three to five, and the parents of the children. For the children, I took into consideration their feelings on how learning about body safety may make them feel scared, sad, or even confused. And for the parents, I took into consideration the reluctance of teaching their children about body safety or sexual abuse awareness because they feel like it may never happen to their kids, or their kids are just too young to learn about that. So, over the course of six weeks, I was inspired by my research to write a children's book that is simple, relatable, and fun to read.

For the emotional intelligence part of my project, I kept in mind how delicate – for self and others – how delicate the subject may be for myself and others, but also how important it is to provide kids with the tool to help them learn how to be more aware of their bodies, and speak up for themselves. And for myself, I didn't have experience writing a book, so just not having the experience of writing the book. And to help with that with that lack of experience, I read a lot of short story books with my toddler for inspiration. And for my audience, I searched for other books that are similar to my topic. I read through some of the reviews of those books to learn more about the current parents' thoughts on those books. And for value to others, I considered how this could be valuable to caregivers, like providing them with a tool to teach kids about body safety, and helping give children validation for what they may be feeling or experiencing.

My creative thinking process was interesting because I found myself struggling creatively. So, I reached out to my instructor for help, and she suggested that I could write a children's book. And I said, "OK. It's going to force me to step out of my comfort zone. Let's do this." My approach is unique because it was inspired by a moment I had with my toddler. In the moment, I figured out that I needed to write a story from a child's point of view. I kind of patted her little butt, and she turned around and said, "Hey, don't touch my butt." So, I wrote this children's book called Bernadette: Brave as a Bear, written by me. And this book is dedicated to all the parents and children, to inspire education on body safety, and to speak when they feel unsafe.

Bernadette is a happy and brave little girl. She loves to dance. She loves to play outside. Bernadette has an older sister named Valentina. She loves to play hide-and-seek with her. Bernadette lives with her dad, mom, and older sister. She loves to give them hugs because it makes her feel happy. On a warm and sunny day, Bernadette's mom took her on a playdate with her friends, Jacob and Lisa. Bernadette, Jacob, and Lisa first played hide-and-seek. They played

outside. While they played outside, Jacob ran up behind Bernadette and Lisa, and he touched their butts. That made Bernadette and Lisa feel sad and hurt. Bernadette quickly turned around and said, "Hey, don't touch my butt, I don't like that." She then ran inside to tell her mom what happened.

Bernadette's mom hugged her and said, "You did the right thing. You are brave as a bear." The moms then said to the kids, "If a stranger, friend, or anyone you know touches your butt, or any part of your body that makes you feel sad, hurt, or a sick feeling in your tummy, put your hand up and say 'No,' or 'Stop.' Then find your parent or adult that you trust, and tell them what happened." Later that day, Bernadette hugged her mom and said, "Thank you for making me feel brave as a bear. I love you, Mommy." So, that was my book.

So, the benefits and impacts. The results were better than I expected them to be. The feedback I got back from the stakeholders, the benefit that it provided them with, the opportunity to discuss body safety with them. So, they said it did give them a bonding and teaching moment, and they were able to discuss the body safety further, and what to do in these types of situations, like how I wrote in my book. And the impact that my book had was that the parents actually went out and they shared the book with other parents that they are friends with, so that they could share it with their book, because they just thought it was just a cute, witty story, and they loved it. Here's a quote that I got from one of the parents: "I feel proud reading this book. We're giving our children a chance to save themselves. This book is an opportunity to discuss safety and give the child a sense of ownership over themselves."

Thanks for listening. In conclusion, throughout this process, I acquired some new creative thinking skills, such as mind mapping, and rephrasing the word "creative" to "curious" to help with the creativity, as well as also reaching out for help when I needed it. And then I also learned how to write a children's book. And through writing one, and stepping out of that comfort zone, I feel more courageous now. And I really enjoyed working on this project. It's something that I can now keep, and I can share personally, and with my community and other family members. And here are the resources to my project. Thanks again..

END OF TRANSCRIPT.