



The Right Touch: A Read-Aloud Story to Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse (Jody Bergsma Collection)

By Sandy Kleven

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The Right Touch: A Read-Aloud Story to Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse (Jody Bergsma Collection) By Sandy Kleven

The Right Touch reaches beyond the usual scope of a children's picture book. It is a parenting book that introduces a very difficult topic--the sexual abuse of young children. This gentle, thoughtful story can be read aloud to a child by any trusted caregiver.

In the story, young Jimmy's mom explains the difference between touches that are positive and touches that are secret, deceptive or forced. She tells him how to resist inappropriate touching, affirming that abuse is not the child's fault.

The introduction provides valuable information about sexual abuse and guidance on what to do if your child experiences an abusive situation. Jody Bergsma's gentle illustrations soften the impact of this story; yet this portrayal of a dangerous situation is very realistic. If your child is old enough to sit still and listen to a story, he or she is old enough for *The Right Touch*.

Used by parents and teachers nationwide to help children avoid sexual abuse, this book won the 1999 Benjamin Franklin Parenting Award. It was a finalist for the Small Press Award and was also "Selected as Outstanding" by the Parent Council, Ltd.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

PreSchool-Grade 3AA picture book that clearly instructs children on how to deal with unwanted and inappropriate touching through a heart-to-heart talk between a little boy and his mother. The author sensitively distinguishes between the loving touch we all need and "secret, deceptive, or forced touching." Children are encouraged to listen to their own feelings, assert their right to stop unwanted contact, and get help from trusted adults "even if it is supposed to be a secret." An informative foreword to adults gives valuable information on communicating personal safety to children and advice for helping those who report abuse. The illustrations of big-eyed children, comfy teddy bears, and fuzzy pets are not distinguished but do contribute to the cozy, safe tone of the book. The primary audience will be parents looking for materials to help them introduce this important topic, but older children will find the clarity and warmth of the message reassuring on their own. A Carolyn Lehman, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA
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From the Author

Teaching prevention skills really does help children. When they know this problem exists in the world, they are less apt to go along with the lies and manipulation of the perpetrator. But there are more subtle positive impacts from the book. Accounts told to me personally over the course of a long career, accounts supported by research on the subject, show that when children disclose to a parent, the response is often dismissive. "You must have misunderstood him," "He wouldn't do that." Or even, "Don't let me ever hear you say that again." THE RIGHT TOUCH, also educates parents. It demonstrates an appropriate loving response to a disclosing child. Sure, there are other dynamics a-foot when parents won't listen. A disclosure often comes as a world-shaking shock and if a parent has at least been exposed to the idea of listening, believing and helping, they have these ideas to fall back on. When a child discloses, a jarring image of what they are saying flashes in the mind, with the stunned sense that asks "How could someone do this?" These disclosures are hard to hear. The mind wants to retreat. I think this is why so many readers post violent responses to the news stories about a sexual abuse arrest. As disclosures play out in life, adults in the circle around the disclosing child, do not necessarily display the same vigilant abhorrence. The response is, in a sense, just as violent, and it may come from the same root -- they want to expunge it, make it disappear -- so they decide it never happened. They say "I can't believe it," and they don't, because the child is often disclosing to the non-offending partner of the one accused. Telling Mom about Dad. Telling Mom about her boyfriend. Given the accounts of adults victimized as children, speaking to me personally, or in the extensive literature on the subject, I have to believe that *not believing* the child is more common than belief and action. THE RIGHT TOUCH helps with this knee-jerk denial, this "head in the sand" reaction. It introduces the possibility of such harm and prepares a parent for an appropriate response.

About the Author

Sandy Kleven is a children's clinician, writer, poet, and film maker. She has worked assisting families for about thirty years. She was the writer for an Emmy Award-winning docudrama, *The Touching Problem* and past director of the SOAPBox Players, an acclaimed prevention theatre group. Her new book for children, *Talk About Touch: Alaska*, will be out in the spring of 2012.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Pamela Garcia:

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Morris Reyna:

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