



# Guidance for foster carers

We want to help you talk to the children you care for about staying safe from sexual abuse. That's why we're asking you to talk PANTS – it's an easy way to have that very important conversation.

From P through to S, each letter of PANTS stands for a simple but valuable lesson that can help keep a child safe: that their body belongs to them, they have a right to say no, and that they should tell an adult they trust if they're worried or upset.

Many foster carers have commented on how useful these rules are for having simple conversations at appropriate opportunities, without mentioning abuse or even sex.

However, we understand that abuse is a sensitive subject matter to bring up with the children you care for. So this guidance, developed in consultation with carers and staff from the fostering sector, has been created to offer you support.

## Delivering the Talk PANTS messages to children in foster care

### Using the Talk PANTS materials

- Although carers are referred to in the main Talk PANTS booklet, the information mentions parents more often. While the guidance remains the same, it may be useful to explain to the children in your care that they can come to you if they have any concerns, as their carer. This is particularly important if they still have contact with their parents or if you are a kinship foster carer. If you have any concerns about parental responsibility or about having these conversations with children in your care, talk to your supervising social worker or the child's social worker for guidance.
- Conversations about staying safe should not be had as a one-off. It's much better to have conversations little and often. Weave the simple messages into the daily routine. You can find lots of information about talking PANTS, as well as listening tips at [nspcc.org.uk/pants](https://nspcc.org.uk/pants)
- There are a number of different versions of the booklet that can be used with children with autism, learning disabilities, and in a range of languages.



The following Talk PANTS guides are available to download at [nspcc.org.uk/pants](https://nspcc.org.uk/pants):

- For [parents](#) – including a guide for [parents with learning disabilities](#)
- For [children](#) – including additional guides for children with [autism](#) or [learning disabilities](#) and a [video for deaf children](#)
- Guides in [Welsh](#), [Latvian](#), [Lithuanian](#), [Polish](#) and [Russian](#)

### What to do if a child says something that worries you

The Talk PANTS materials are a preventative measure and may not be appropriate for children who have already disclosed abuse.

If you have concerns about what to do when a disclosure is made, it may be useful to discuss this with your supervising social worker. This will ensure you understand the appropriate way to manage the situation. It is likely you will have discussed these issues as part of your “safer caring” training, but check with your social worker if you are at all unsure.

### Further information to help conversations with children in your care

- Since Talk PANTS was launched, carers have also told us that they find it challenging to help keep children safe online. You may wish to extend the message that children should keep their private parts private, including the online world as well. You can use the [NSPCC Share Aware campaign materials](#) to support you with this.
- We also provide [general advice](#) to help you talk to children about difficult topics.

**If you have any concerns about talking PANTS with a child you care for, or would like further advice or support, call the NSPCC free on **0808 800 5000** or send one of our counsellors a message at [nspcc.org.uk/help](https://nspcc.org.uk/help)**

**The  
Fostering  
Network**

This guidance has been developed in partnership with the Fostering Network, who undertook consultation with Foster and Kinship Foster carers and whose experience helped inform this guidance.

The Fostering Network is the UK's leading fostering charity. By working with foster families, and the services that support them, they help everyone who is fostered to achieve the very best they can. Contact them at [www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)

**NSPCC**

**EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR**