

**my body
belongs to me**

**mi cuerpo
me pertenece**

**English-Spanish
Inglés-Español**

**For Ages 3–8
De 3 a 8 años**

Jill Starishevsky
Ilustrado por Angela Padrón



This is my body,
and it belongs just to me.

I have **knees** and **elbows**
and lots of parts you see.

Este es mi cuerpo
y solo me pertenece a mí.

Tengo **rodillas** y **codos**
y muchas partes que puedes ver aquí.



Other parts I have
are not in open view.

I call them my private parts.
Of course, you have them too.

Tengo otras partes
que no están a la vista.

Yo las llamo mis partes privadas.
Por supuesto, tú las tienes también.



Suggestions for Sharing This Book with Children

The following are some tips for using *My Body Belongs to Me* with children.

- 1. Use the story as a tool to begin a conversation.** Address the topic periodically to reinforce the message.
- 2. Teach children the correct terms for their body parts.** Enable them to use language that will make them comfortable talking to you.
- 3. Help children understand that their bodies have boundaries** and no one else has the right to cross those boundaries. Ask: What would you do if someone touched you on your _____? What if someone made you touch his or her _____? Who would you tell? Why is it important to tell? What would you do if the person said it was a secret? Encourage children to say that they should and would tell a trusted adult—whether that be a parent, a teacher, or another grown-up—right away.
- 4. Discuss the importance of the rule “no secrets.”** If you are using this book with your own children or with children in your family, put this rule into practice: if someone, even a grandparent, says something to the child like, “I’ll get you an ice cream

later, but it will be our secret,” firmly but politely say, “We don’t do secrets in our family.” Then turn to the child and repeat, “We don’t do secrets. We can tell each other everything.”

- 5. Be aware and open.** Keep in mind, especially when reading the book in a group setting, that you may be reading to a child who has already been touched in some way and is keeping it a secret. Convey that it is okay for children to tell someone even if the child has been keeping it a secret for a long time.
- 6. Know the guidelines.** If you are using the book in an educational or counseling setting, be sure you have an understanding of how to respond if a child makes a disclosure. Every state has mandatory reporting laws that require teachers, counselors, and other professionals to make an immediate report when they learn of abusive situations. Several states have passed laws requiring schools to teach kids about sexual abuse prevention.
- 7. Be sure not to respond to a disclosure with anger,** whether you are a parent, teacher, caregiver, or other adult working with children, Children

will often confuse anger toward the perpetrator with anger at them, which can then make them afraid to tell adults about abuse. If a child does make a disclosure, it is important to take it seriously and promptly report it to the appropriate authorities.

- 8. Help each child identify a “safety zone person.”** A safety zone person can be a teacher, a neighbor, a counselor, a family friend, a figure in the child’s faith community, or anyone the child trusts and feels comfortable confiding in. Teach children that if they feel unable, unwilling, or afraid to tell a parent about behavior that made them feel uncomfortable, they should tell their safety zone person. Children can also go to this person for help with other challenging issues, such as bullying. Ideally, the safety zone person should be advised that they have been chosen and should be instructed to discuss any red-flag situations with the child’s parents or caregivers in a timely manner.
- 9. Keep in mind that child predators often try to entice or intrigue children** they target by offering something inappropriate, such as letting them watch an adult movie, miss school, smoke a cigarette, or drink alcohol. Children will often be reluctant to tell about inappropriate touching for fear they will get in trouble for the

forbidden behavior. Explain to children that if someone touches them inappropriately, they should tell a parent or safety zone person, even if they did something that they were not allowed to do. Similarly, if you are sharing this book with children in your own family, teach them that they can come to you to discuss anything, even if they are worried about getting in trouble. Convey to them that you will listen with an open mind, even if they were doing something they should not have been doing.

- 10. Encourage children to tell you or other adults about things that happen to them** that make them feel scared, sad, or uncomfortable. If children have an open line of communication, they will be more inclined to alert you to something inappropriate early on.
- 11. Let children decide for themselves how they want to express affection.** Children should not be forced to hug or kiss if it makes them feel uncomfortable. Allowing children to set these boundaries regarding physical contact will empower them to say no to inappropriate touching.
- 12. Encourage children to trust their feelings.** If something doesn’t feel right, they should get away as soon as possible and tell someone about it.

JUVENILE NONFICTION/SEXUAL ABUSE/BILINGUAL
No ficción juvenil/abuso sexual/bilingüe

Praise for the previous edition

"In only 19 sentences, this simple book will empower children while promoting open communication."

—*School Library Journal*

Praise for the previous edition

"This sensitive, creative book about a very tough topic is a must-read for parents and their young children."

—Ann Pleshette Murphy, former parenting contributor to *Good Morning America*

my body belongs to me

A book about body safety

mi cuerpo me pertenece

Un libro sobre el cuidado contra el abuso sexual

Every child's body has boundaries. And understanding those boundaries—as well as knowing what to do if they are crossed—is important to every child's safety. In this friendly, gentle book, simple words and colorful illustrations help share this important message with young children and their parents, teachers, and other adults in their lives.

Hay partes del cuerpo de cada niño que son consideradas privadas. Comprender esos límites, además de saber qué hacer si esta privacidad es violada, es importante para la seguridad de todos ellos. En esta agradable y fácil lectura, las palabras simples y las ilustraciones coloridas ayudan a compartir este importante mensaje con los niños y sus padres, con los maestros y otros adultos que forman parte de sus pequeñas vidas.

Jill Starishevsky has been an assistant district attorney in New York City since 1997, where she has prosecuted thousands of sex offenders and dedicated her career to seeking justice for victims of child abuse and sex crimes. A mother of three, Jill has been featured on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and is also a prevention specialist who teaches how to recognize and prevent child sexual abuse.

Jill Starishevsky ha sido fiscal asistente del distrito en la ciudad de Nueva York desde 1997 donde ha procesado a miles de delincuentes sexuales y ha dedicado su carrera en busca de la justicia para las víctimas del abuso infantil y los delitos sexuales. Jill, madre de tres hijos, ha aparecido en el programa *The Oprah Winfrey Show* y también es una especialista en prevención que enseña cómo reconocer y prevenir el abuso sexual infantil.

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