



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

www.state.tn.us/humanserv/
CITIZENS PLAZA BUILDING
400 DEADERICK STREET
NASHVILLE, TN 37248
Telephone 615-313-4700 TTY 1-800-270-1349
Fax 615-741-4165

PHIL BREDESEN
Governor

VIRGINIA T. LODGE
Commissioner

Preface to Keeping Kids Safe/Personal Safety Curriculum

The law requiring that children be taught a personal safety/child abuse prevention curriculum every year has been in place in Tennessee since 1985 in recognition of the fact that, for children younger than school age, the most critical safety net for preventing and stopping child abuse lies with child care providers. While the Department of Human Services (DHS) rules require that a personal safety curriculum be presented each year, it does not require the use of the Keeping Kids Safe curriculum. Instead, the rules state that an alternative curriculum may be used as long as it is approved by DHS.

Keeping Kids Safe, developed by Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee, is an updated version of the Growing Up Safe and Strong curriculum that has been in use since 1991 and was developed by DHS in conjunction with the Tennessee Child Sexual Abuse Task Force. Keeping Kids Safe does not require that providers teach children the correct anatomical names for their body parts. Instead, it uses the general term "private body parts", and provides the correct anatomical names in parentheses in case the provider, in conjunction with parental input, wishes to use them. The curriculum repeatedly emphasizes that the decision of whether or not to use correct body part names must be a joint decision between parents and the provider. In addition, the curriculum requires that the provider meet with the parents prior to the curriculum being taught. In fact, it contains 2 chapters, "Partnering with Parents" and "Parent Meeting Guide", which are specifically devoted to these subjects. The curriculum also contains sample informational letters and resource activities to send to parents.

Every known national child protection expert has found that child protection is improved when children can correctly identify all parts of their body - thus the curriculum recommends that the correct names be used - but it does not require it and instead provides both parents and providers with the information they need to make their own informed choice about what is best for their children.

We invite you to read this curriculum for yourself. It is an important resource for improving the protection of children.