

**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



Dedication

For Ted, Ally, Becca, and Emma, the loves of my life. And for T.T., whose courage beyond her years became my inspiration.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Robert T. Johnson, Bronx County District Attorney, who has given me the opportunity to do the job I love, and to Elisa Koenderman and Joseph Muroff, former and current chiefs of the Bronx County District Attorney's Child Abuse and Sex Crimes Bureau, respectively, whose guidance and support have been instrumental in my development as a prosecutor.

Thanks also to Pamela Pine from *Stop the Silence*, for her wealth of information about child sexual abuse. And of course, thanks to my family for their feedback and constant support, and to my husband and biggest fan, Ted, who is my collaborator and partner in all ways, and is forever helping me multitask.

Dedicatoria

Para Ted, Ally, Becca y Emma quienes son los amores de mi vida. Y para T.T. cuya valentía que sobrepasa su edad se convirtió en mi inspiración.

Agradecimientos

Quiero dar especialmente las gracias a Robert T. Johnson, Fiscal de Distrito del Condado de Bronx, quien me ha dado la oportunidad de realizar el trabajo que me apasiona y a Elisa Koenderman y Joseph Muroff, la directora anterior y el director actual respectivamente de *Bronx County District Attorney's Child Abuse and Sex Crimes Bureau* (Oficina de abuso infantil y delitos sexuales de la fiscalía de distrito del condado de Bronx), cuya guía y apoyo ha sido de gran valor en mi desarrollo como fiscal.

También agradezco a Pamela Pine, de la organización *Stop the Silence*, por su invaluable información sobre el abuso sexual infantil. Y, por supuesto, gracias a mi familia por las recomendaciones y el constante apoyo. A Ted, mi esposo y más grande admirador, mi colaborador y compañero en todo y siempre me ayuda en mis tareas.

Text copyright © 2014 by Jill Starishevsky
Illustrations copyright © 2014 by Angela Padrón
Translation copyright © 2020 by Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Unless otherwise noted, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without express written permission from the publisher, except for brief quotations and critical reviews. For more information, go to freespirit.com/permissions.

Free Spirit, Free Spirit Publishing, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Free Spirit Publishing Inc. A complete listing of our logos and trademarks is available at freespirit.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

This book has been filed with the Library of Congress.

LCCN: 2019035445

ISBN-13: 978-1-63198-476-1

Free Spirit Publishing does not have control over or assume responsibility for author or third-party websites and their content. At the time of this book's publication, all telephone numbers and website URLs are accurate and active and all have been verified as of September 2019. If you find an error or believe that a resource listed here is not as described, please contact Free Spirit Publishing.

Reading Level Grade 1; Interest Level Ages 3–8

Fountas & Pinnell Guided Reading Level J

Edited by Alison Behnke

Translated by Edgar Rojas, EDITARO

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America

B10951119

Free Spirit Publishing Inc.

6325 Sandburg Road, Suite 100

Minneapolis, MN 55427-3674

(612) 338-2068

help4kids@freespirit.com

freespirit.com

Free Spirit offers competitive pricing.

Contact edsales@freespirit.com for pricing information on multiple quantity purchases.

A Letter to Grown-Ups

Among the first things we teach children is to name the various parts of their bodies. As they grow older, this conversation should go a step further: some parts of their bodies are private and belong just to them.

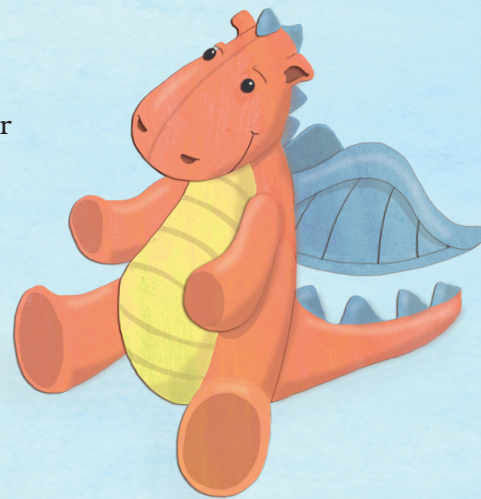
Just as we teach young people what to do in case of fire, we must teach them what to do if someone touches them inappropriately—or forces them to touch others inappropriately. The central message of *My Body Belongs to Me* is this: if someone touches you, *tell*.

Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of sexually abused children *don't* immediately disclose the abuse. As a result, the abuse can often grow more serious. There are many reasons for a child's silence. Perhaps the abuser says it's a secret. Maybe the child believes that they are at fault. Without being taught that their body has boundaries, a child may be too young to understand that the behavior is wrong.

Any child, regardless of gender, age, or background, may become a victim of abuse. Yet adults often don't know how or when to approach this topic with young children. Written for 3- to 8-year-olds, *My Body Belongs to Me* can help you start this difficult discussion and talk about body boundaries and safety with children in a straightforward, sensitive way.

Jill

P.S. On pages 24–26, you'll find suggestions for sharing this book with children. And on pages 26–27, you'll see a list of other sources of help and information.



Mensaje para los adultos

Una de las primeras cosas que les enseñamos a los niños es aprender a reconocer las distintas partes de sus cuerpos. A medida que crecen esta enseñanza debe ampliarse un poco más: que ciertas partes de sus cuerpos son privadas y solo les pertenece a ellos.

Al igual que enseñamos a los pequeños qué hacer en caso de incendio, debemos enseñarles qué hacer si alguien los toca de manera inapropiada, o son obligados a tocar a alguien también de manera inapropiada. Este es el principal mensaje de *Mi cuerpo me pertenece*: si alguien te toca de manera inapropiada, debes *comunicarlo*.

Desafortunadamente la gran mayoría de los niños que son abusados sexualmente *no* comunican el abuso de inmediato y como resultado a menudo el abuso se convierte en un problema más serio. Hay muchas razones por las cuales un niño permanece en silencio. Tal vez el abusador dice que lo ocurrido es un secreto o quizás el niño se siente culpable. Si a un niño no se le enseña que hay partes de su cuerpo que son privadas, puede que sea muy pequeño para comprender que este comportamiento es incorrecto.

Cualquier niño, sin importar su sexo, la edad o su lugar de origen, puede ser víctima de abuso y sin embargo con frecuencia los adultos no saben cómo o cuándo abordar este tema con los niños. Este libro ha sido creado para niños entre los 3 y 8 años de edad. *Mi cuerpo me pertenece* puede ayudarlo a iniciar esta difícil conversación con los niños de manera directa y sensible para tratar el tema sobre la privacidad del cuerpo y la seguridad.

Jill

Nota. En las páginas 28–31 encontrará sugerencias sobre cómo poner en práctica este libro con los niños. En las páginas 32–33 encontrará una lista de otras fuentes de ayuda e información.

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.

Sugerencias para compartir este libro con los niños

A continuación encontrará algunas sugerencias para poner en práctica con los niños *Mi cuerpo me pertenece*.

- 1. Utilice la historia como ayuda para iniciar una conversación.** Hable sobre el tema de vez en cuando para reafirmar el mensaje.
- 2. Enséñeles a los niños los nombres correctos de las partes de sus cuerpos.** Permítalos que utilicen el vocabulario que más se les facilita para que se sientan cómodos al hablar con usted.
- 3. Ayúdeles a los niños a entender que sus cuerpos tienen partes privadas** y que nadie más tiene el derecho a tocar esas partes. Pregunte: ¿Qué harías si alguien te toca en tu _____? ¿Qué pasa si alguien te hizo que tocaras su _____? ¿A quién le contarías? ¿Por qué es importante contarle? ¿Qué harías si esa persona te dijo que eso es un secreto? Aliente a los niños a que deberían hablarle a un adulto de confianza, ya sea a uno de sus padres, a un maestro o a otro adulto, y contarle lo sucedido de inmediato.

4. Hable sobre la importancia de la regla “no hay secretos”. Si está poniendo en práctica este libro con sus propios hijos o con los niños de su familia, ponga esta regla en práctica: si alguien, incluso uno de los abuelos, dice algo al niño como “te voy a comprar un helado más tarde pero va a ser nuestro secreto”, vamos a decir con firmeza y con cortesía: “En nuestra familia no tenemos secretos”. Luego diríjase al niño y repita: “En nuestra familia no tenemos secretos. Aquí podemos contárnoslo todo”.

5. Tenga en cuenta las circunstancias y mantenga la mente abierta. Tenga presente, especialmente cuando esté leyendo este libro a un grupo de niños, que puede estar dirigiéndose a un niño que ya ha sido molestado sexualmente de alguna manera y lo está manteniendo en secreto. Comuníqueles que pueden contarle a alguien lo sucedido, incluso si han estado guardando el secreto por mucho tiempo.

6. Conozca las reglas generales.

Si está utilizando este libro en un entorno educativo o terapéutico, asegúrese de saber cómo responder si un niño reporta un hecho. Cada estado en los Estados Unidos aplica leyes obligatorias de notificación que requieren que los maestros, consejeros y otros profesionales reporten de inmediato cuando tienen conocimiento de situaciones de abuso. Varios estados han aprobado leyes que requieren que las escuelas enseñen a los niños sobre la prevención del abuso sexual.

7. Asegúrese de no responder con enojo a este tipo de declaraciones, ya sea que usted sea padre de familia, maestro, quien cuida a los niños u otro adulto que trabaja con niños. Con frecuencia los niños confundirán el enojo hacia el perpetrador con el enojo hacia ellos mismos y puede causarles temor la idea de contarles a los adultos sobre el abuso. Si un niño hace este tipo de declaración, es importante tomarla en serio y reportarla de inmediato a las autoridades correspondientes.

