



# Public vs. Private

It is important for your child to learn the difference between public and private places, public and private behaviors, and know what body parts are private. Just because your child has a disability does not mean inappropriate behavior will not be punished or even referred to law enforcement. Things that may be cute when your child is a toddler (like taking off their clothes at the beach) are against the law when your child gets older. Knowing when and where activities are appropriate is critical!

## WHAT MY CHILD NEEDS TO KNOW

1. A private place is a place where you are alone and others can't see you.
2. The two places that are private places are a) your bedroom alone with the door closed and b) your bathroom alone with the door closed.
3. A public place is where there is more than one person, and you are likely to see other people. This includes places like Target, your kitchen at home, and the school bus.
4. Private behaviors are things you do when you are all by yourself in a private place.



## TIPS FOR TEACHING YOUR CHILD ABOUT PUBLIC VS PRIVATE

1. Talk early and often to your child about sensitive topics. This will make them feel more comfortable talking to you.
2. Be matter-of-fact when talking about things like masturbation. Be sure to convey that it is normal behavior as long as they are in their bathroom or bedroom alone with the door shut.
3. Give clear examples of public and private locations, body parts, and behaviors in a way your child can understand. This will be different based on their age.
4. Walk around your house or the community and label places as public or private places or find pictures and have your child sort them into public vs. private.



*What my child needs to know continued...*

5. Private body parts are the body parts that a swimsuit covers. Touching private body parts is a private behavior that should be done in a private place. If you do this in public, you could be in trouble with law enforcement.
6. Other private activities that need to be done in private spaces include using the toilet, getting dressed, showering, scratching an itch on a private body part, and using a tampon.
7. Engaging in sexual activities should be done in a private space and only with the full consent of both people. Both people have to say YES and know what they are saying YES to.

*Tips for teaching your child about public vs private continued...*

5. Use social stories with your child, especially if they are younger, to help them understand private vs. public (body parts, places, and behaviors) and why it matters.
6. Role-play various scenarios in which your child needs to decide if a place or an activity is public or private.
7. Use proper language for body parts and activities so your child is not confused.
8. Consider using videos, like this one from amaze.org, to help your child understand the concepts of private and public. <https://amaze.org/video/amazejr-kids-bodies-private/>

