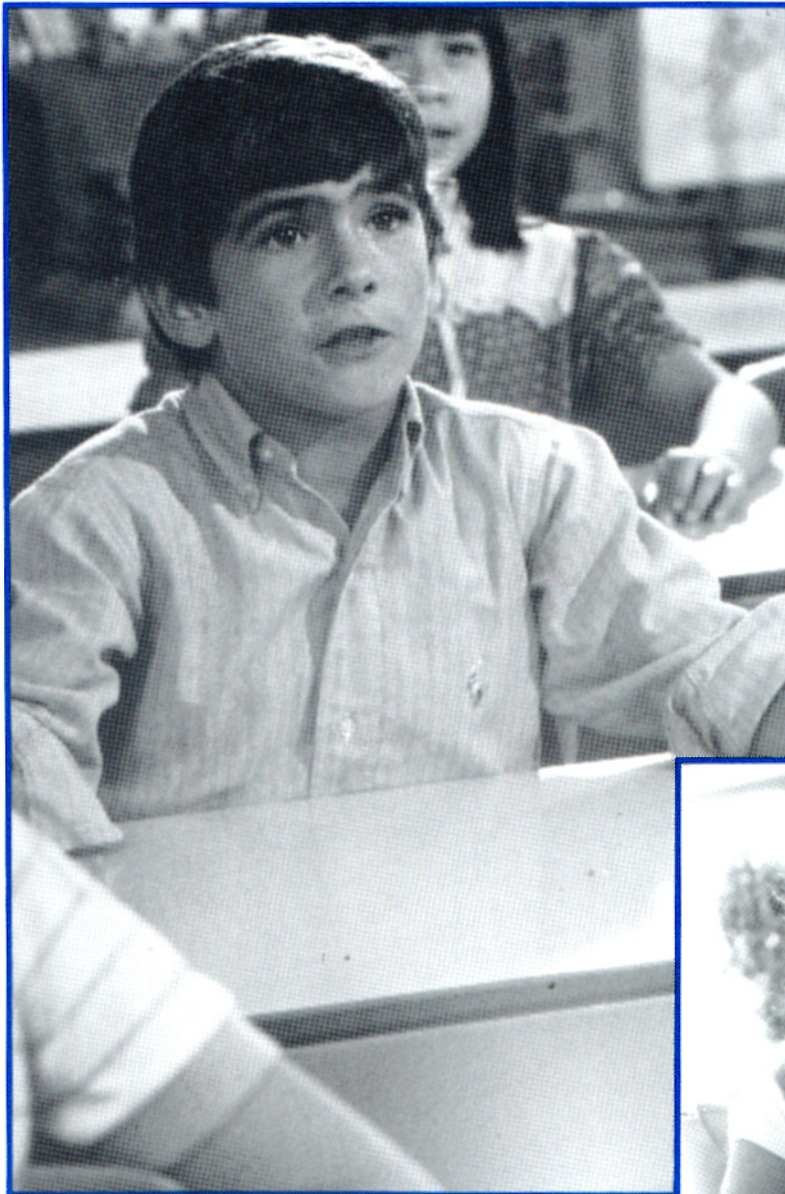


TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

NOW I CAN TELL YOU MY SECRET



This film is designed to make children, ages 5-10, aware of the problem of sexual abuse, and teaches them how to protect themselves if they are approached or abused.



Disney Educational Productions

800-295-5010
www.Edustation.com

NOW I CAN TELL YOU MY SECRET

Color 16mm Running Time: 15 minutes



INTRODUCTION

Recent statistics tell us that one out of three girls and one out of eight boys under the age of eighteen will be sexually abused or at least approached by a potential abuser. With these epidemic proportions, teachers, parents, and other concerned adults are becoming increasingly aware of their responsibility to educate children about sexual abuse. More importantly, children must be taught how to protect themselves from such abuse.

The film **NOW I CAN TELL YOU MY SECRET**, uses one boy's experience to help children recognize what sexual

abuse is and who the abuser could be. Advice like, "Don't take candy from strangers," passed down from generation to generation by well-meaning adults, while helpful in our crime-ridden society, does not arm children against sexual abuse. Along with Andrew, children learn how to more effectively protect themselves against abusers by saying, "no" and finding an adult who will believe them. The film not only opens up the subject of sexual abuse and provides children with concrete tools they can use to defend themselves, but also encourages, by example, discussions with peers and other concerned adults.

SUGGESTED AUDIENCE

- Kindergarten through third grade
- Suggested for youth groups, library media centers and other supervised groups of children

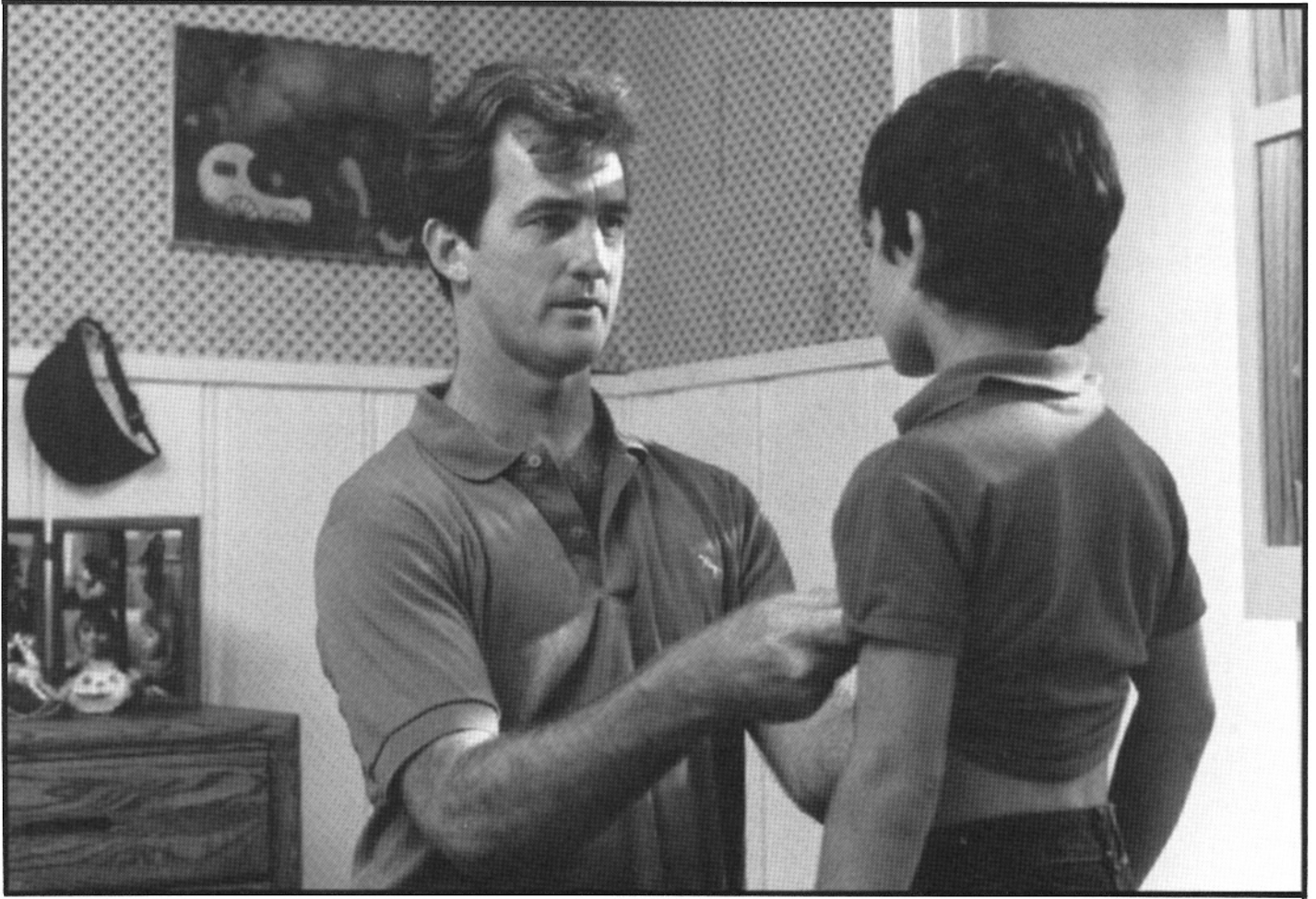
PURPOSES

- To warn children of sexual abuse
- To educate children about their need, ability and right to protect themselves from sexual abuse
- To provide a stimulus to open the topic of sexual abuse for discussion within the classroom and the home

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

NOW I CAN TELL YOU MY SECRET is designed to make children, ages 5-10, aware of the problem of sexual abuse. Through Andrew's story, the film illustrates the profile of a perpetrator, and how a child could be engaged in a sexually abusive situation. In addition to communicating to children that sexual abuse is *never* the child's fault, the film also teaches children how to protect themselves from abuse and what to do if they are approached or abused. Andrew's experience provides a model, demonstrating that it is better to discuss sexual abuse with teachers, parents and/or other trusted adults, than to keep it a secret.





PREPARING TO SHOW THE FILM IN YOUR SCHOOL

Dealing with a subject as sensitive as sexual child abuse will usually necessitate parental approval. Once the parents realize that this film is not meant to alarm their children, but provide them with useful information and the knowledge to protect themselves, parents will probably be more likely to join the school's efforts to prevent sexual abuse. It may be helpful to provide a pre-showing of the film for parents—perhaps at a PTA meeting, etc. Discussion of the subject of sexual child abuse should preface the showing of the film. Informational handouts would be helpful to further enlighten parents.

In addition, an expert, perhaps from the local Department of Social Services or Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, may also be on hand to answer any additional questions parents might have on the subject.

TEACHING STRATEGY

The concerned teacher will want to feel comfortable and informed about the subject prior to showing this film. Since one purpose of showing the film is to open up the topic of sexual abuse for discussion, it should be shown in small groups. A discussion with the class should both precede and follow the film. It is also suggested that the environment be familiar, and that the children be made comfortable. Unfamiliar conditions, such as additional people within the classroom, should be avoided.

The film may also encourage children to report abusive situations. A teacher may want to be familiar with the child abuse reporting procedures in the school and the agency within the community to whom child abuse should be reported.

SUGGESTED PREVIEWING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) What is your most important right as a child?
(Suggested answer: Growing up to be a healthy adult.)

- 2) What is an adult's responsibility where children are concerned?
(Answer: Guiding you, providing you with experiences that help you to become a healthy adult someday.)
- 3) What kinds of things do adults do to help you grow up to be healthy?
(Answer: Love you, teach you about your world, what can hurt you, how to get along with others, etc.)

• Explain and discuss:

"Most adults want to help you grow up to be healthy. Most adults try very hard to do this. But there are some adults who have their own problems and may let their problems get in the way of what's good for kids. Let's watch a film about Andrew, who learns how to take care of himself."

POST VIEWING QUESTIONS

Following the film, the children should be encouraged to discuss it openly, but be aware of your own values and feelings about sexual abuse. Try to be non-judgmental about any comments children might make and be very calm during the discussion. Ask open-ended questions of

the children, which require more than a yes or no answer. In many cases, it may be helpful to repeat what a child has said in the form of a question to encourage further discussion.

The following are suggested discussion questions:

- 1) What is meant by sexual child abuse?
(Answer: Being touched on your private parts; being touched and told to keep it a secret.)
- 2) Why do you think Andrew was afraid to tell anyone what had happened at Mr. Blaine's house?
(Answer: Afraid he would be blamed, afraid no one would believe him, afraid Mr. Blaine would get in trouble.)
- 3) Who sexually abuses children?
(Answer: Sometimes strangers, but usually people they know.)
- 4) Why might someone sexually abuse children?
(Answer: They have problems of their own.)
- 5) If someone touched you in a way that was confusing or felt uncomfortable, what would you do?
(Answer: Say no, run away, tell someone.)
- 6) What kinds of adults could help kids with problems?
(Answer: Parents, principal, teacher, policeman, etc.)
- 7) Who are the people you could tell if someone was hurting you?
(Answer: Specific people in child's life.)

CHILDREN'S REACTIONS

The teacher may find that, like Andrew, some students may feel able to report that they are being abused after the post viewing discussion. If this happens the teacher may want to follow these steps:

- Talk quietly with the child, allowing the child to supply details, but not probing to the point of the child's discomfort.
- Assure the child that he/she is believed. A child of this age, especially armed with graphic details, will not be lying.
- Assure the child that you would like to help him/her and to do that you will need to tell what happened to someone who can help. Be sure that the child realizes that in order for you to help him/her feel better and to help the abuser to stop, someone else will have to know. (You are a mandated reporter and must report the incident by law.) Be supportive and sensitive to the child, assuring him/her that it is not his/her fault.

- Immediately tell your principal or other school official (depending upon the policy of your particular school) and then report the case to the mandated social service agency. Do not do the reporting in front of the child, and make sure the child is comfortable and engaged, with supervision, in either the class or another activity.
- Before the child is allowed to return home, make sure that he/she will be "safe"; that there is an adult there who will believe and protect the child. If you cannot be sure of this, notify the social service department of this fact. They will then be obligated to ensure protection of the child.
- Continue to be open to all students who need to discuss sexual abuse or their feelings about the film in the weeks to come. Education about sexual abuse, like the experience itself, is not a solitary incident. It can permeate the child's thinking.

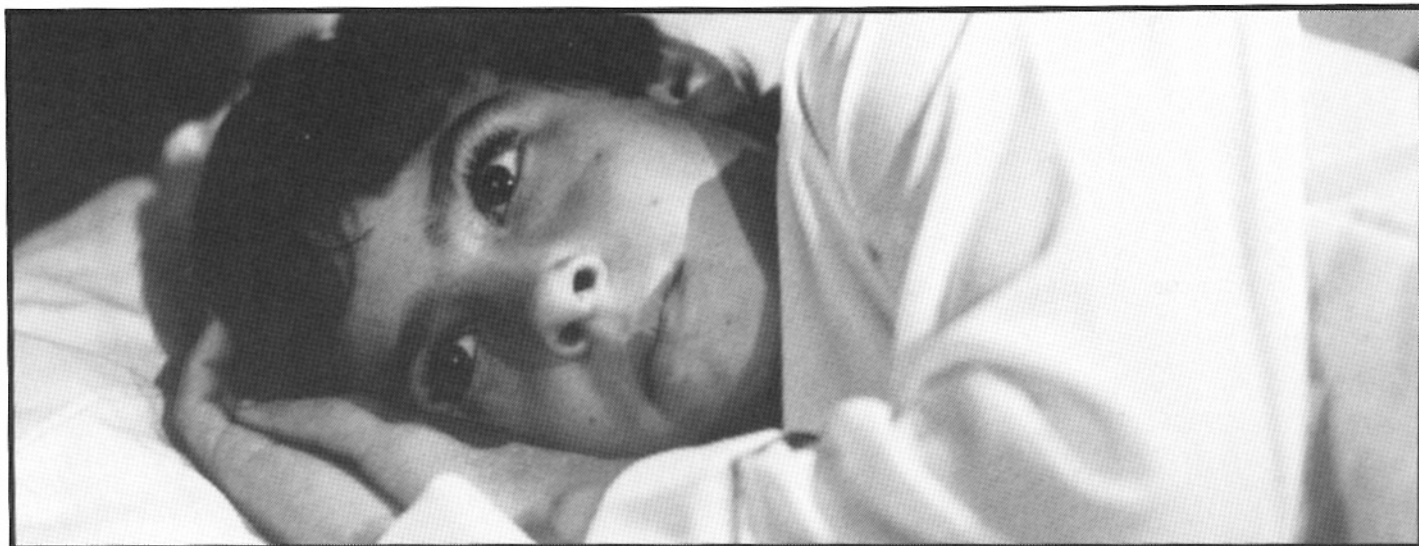
SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Break the children into small groups of three, four or five. Read aloud one or two of the following to all the groups; or give one vignette to several groups and another to several other groups. Give the groups a few minutes to answer the question, "What would you do?" Then bring back together for discussion.

VIGNETTES

- You and a friend are at the playground with your big sister. Your sister meets a friend and they go to the far end of the playground to talk. They say they will be right back. While you are playing, a man offers to push you on the swing. He grabs you to push you, but holds you extra long in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable. What do you do?
- A babysitter is watching you and your little sister. When you are having your bath, the babysitter washes your private





parts for a long time and does the same thing to your sister. It does not feel right to you. What do you do?

- You go to a friend's house for the day. Her father is home, but her mother is not. While you are playing up in your friend's room, she tells you that she and her daddy have a secret. She says that her daddy touches her private parts, tells her not to tell and gives her lots of presents so she will keep the secret. She's afraid to tell mommy because her daddy told her that her mommy might get angry. What do you do?

In all cases it is important that the children understand that when they are confused and uncomfortable, they should first say no, get out of the situation if possible, and tell someone right away.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The film addresses several specific issues which are important to children and to the prevention of sexual child abuse. The following activities have been arranged according to topics:

Touch and Feeling

A. Have the children volunteer to act out different emotions (e.g., what do you look like if you are feeling sad, happy, hurt, mixed up, angry, etc.). Encourage the other students to guess what feelings are being communicated. Then ask the children whom they talk to when they feel these ways.

B. On the board draw a smiling face on one end and a frowning face on the other end of a continuum. Use prepared cut-

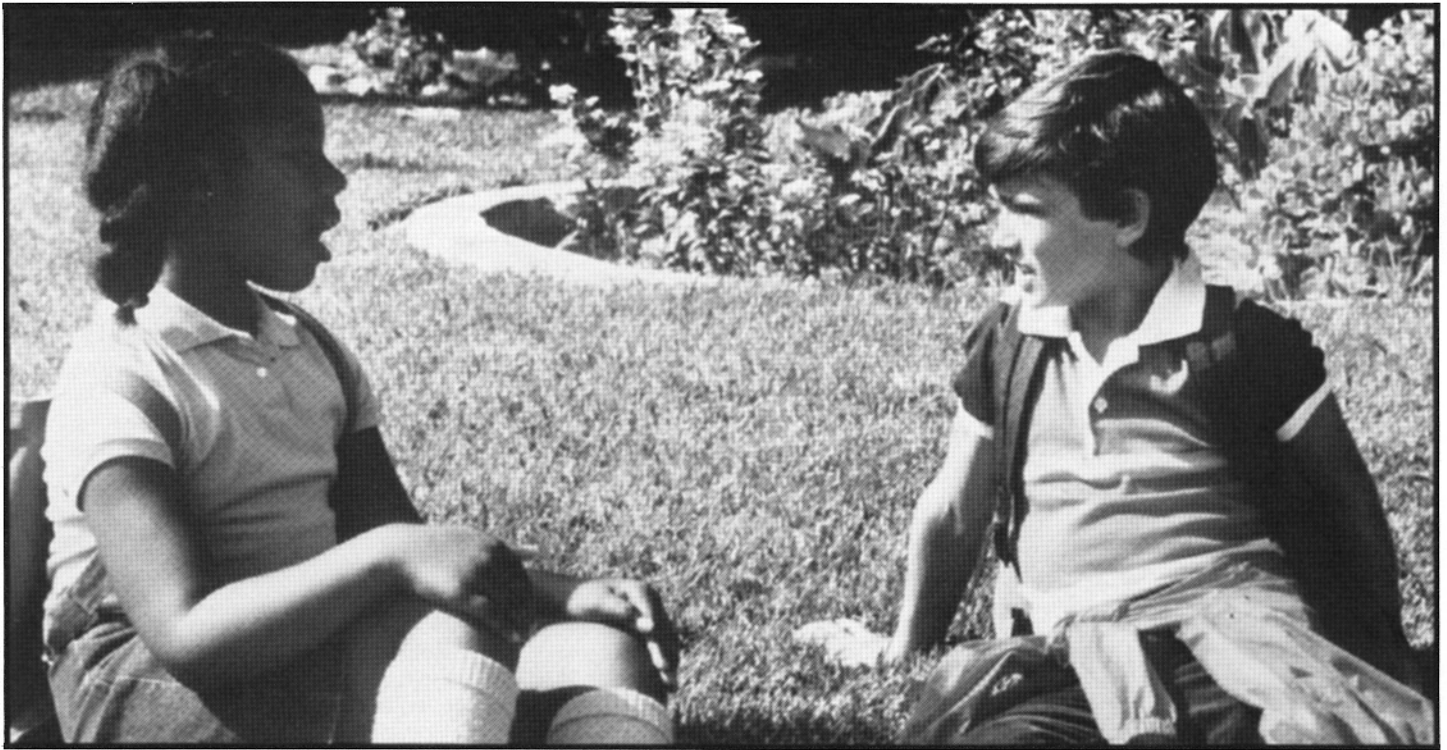
outs of people touching one another—especially adults and children (e.g., people stroking hair, holding hands, tickling, petting animals, fighting).

These pictures can be obtained from magazines, comic books, newspapers or weekly news magazines. Try to include pictures in which it is not clear whether the touching is good or bad. Ask where in the continuum each touch falls.

C. Ask the students to draw pictures of the people in their lives—whom they like to have touch them and those they do not like to touch them. Discuss their reasons.

D. With second and third graders, discuss who has the right to touch them; who gives these people that right? How do you control who touches you and who does not? The children should be helped to realize that an interpretation of good





and bad touch is based on feelings. Some touching does not give clear messages and is confusing.

Privacy

A. Using a tape recorder, ask one child to interview another one on what is privacy. What does privacy mean to you? How do you get privacy? What do you do if your privacy is interrupted? Play back the tape and discuss what was said.

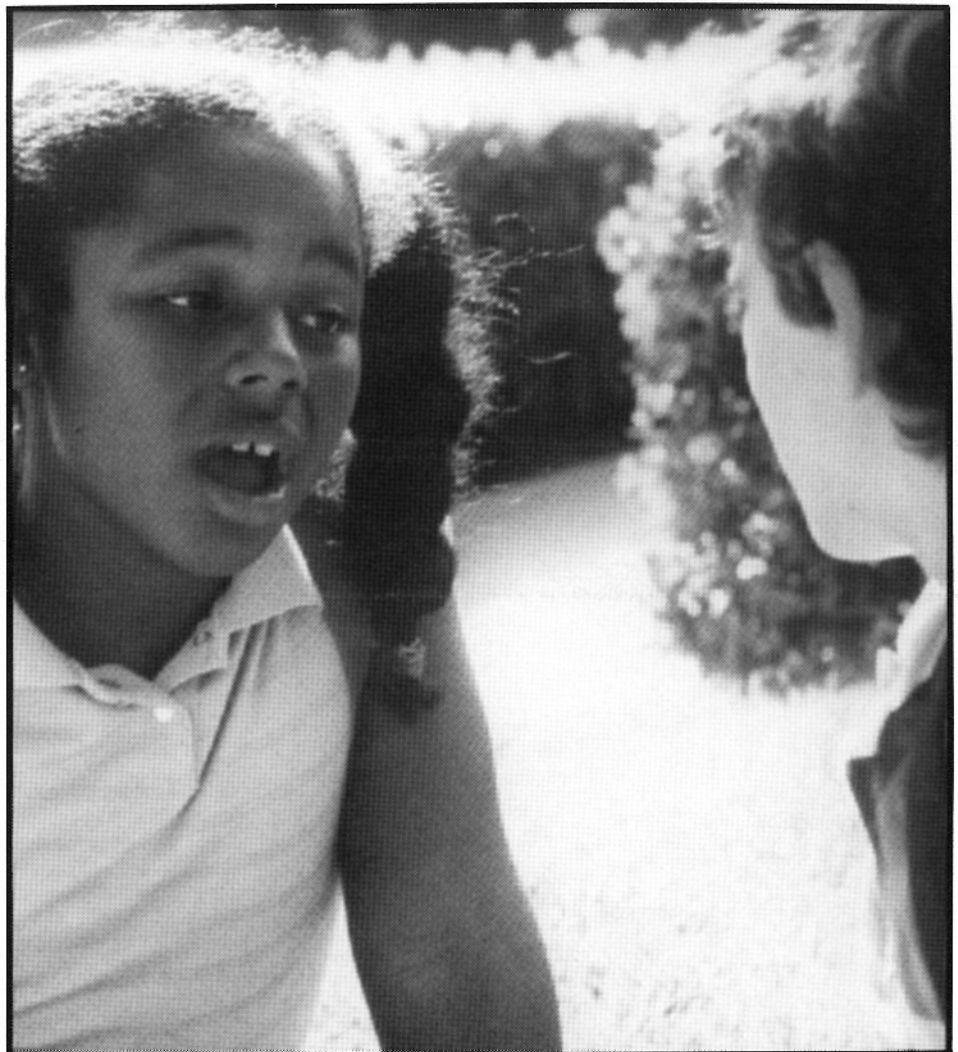
Saying No

A. Ask for a student volunteer. Prepare the student by telling him/her that you will demonstrate some type of negative or uncomfortable touching (e.g., bullying, pushing, etc.). Encourage the child to resist and tell you "no" in an assertive manner. When you return to the class—explain that you will demonstrate negative touch and you would like them to watch what their classmates do. Break the observers into groups—asking one group to watch the volunteer child's face and the other to watch his/her body language.

After the role play ask: How can you tell that he/she really meant "no"? (Point out signs such as a serious non-smiling face, a straight body, shoulders back, looking you right in the eye, etc.)

Getting Help/Telling Someone

A. Ask the children to draw people in the community (e.g., policeman, fireman, teacher, etc.) Have them identify whom they would tell in various instances (e.g., fire—fireman, being robbed—policeman, being followed by a stranger, etc.). Now ask the students to draw the members of their family, pointing out that not everyone has the same type of family. Encourage





them to identify whom they would go to or tell if they were hungry, tired, afraid a friend was being hurt, mixed up, scared, hurt, had a tummy ache, etc.

B. Role play a situation where a child tells an adult that the touching from another adult has made the child feel uncomfortable. In the first role play, the adult believes the child and is supportive of him/her. Do a second role play where the adult does not believe the child. Encourage the children to discuss how they might feel in this instance and what they might do. (Keep telling until someone believes and will help you.)

C. Talk with young children about how to use the telephone. Using a toy or real phone, have them practice calling. Would they know how to use the phone if someone was bothering them and they felt they needed to tell someone? Discuss public phones. Ask the children if they know where the public phones are in their neighborhood. If they are waiting for a parent to pick them up and are bothered by someone, do they know how to use the phone to call for help?

D. Help the students create little booklets with the names and numbers of people they could call in case they needed help. Include not only community people (police, fireman, etc.), but also relatives and friends they could call for help.

Follow-Up

The discussion of sexual abuse should not be relegated to a segment once in a school year. The concepts of a child's need for privacy and responsibility to say "no" when touched in a wrong or confusing way should be re-emphasized from time to time. The teacher may even want to hold a later discussion to discover how much the students remember about Andrew and what they learned through his experience. Above all, a teacher will want to remain open to any questions children might have as they further integrate the information provided by the film.



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