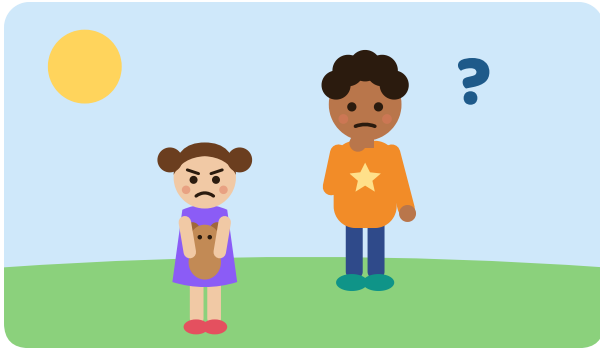




Is This Grooming?

Grooming is hard to see because it often looks like kindness at first. This guide shows you how it works, the warning signs, and how to talk with your child.

What grooming is

Grooming is when someone slowly builds trust with a child so they can abuse them and keep it secret. It happens step by step, over weeks or months. Most of it is not sexual at first, so it is easy to miss.

Groomers often win over the parents, too. They may help your family, give rides, or offer to babysit. They want you to trust them, so you won't question time alone with your child.

The 6 stages of grooming

Not every case follows every step, but knowing them helps you spot the pattern early.

1

Picking a child

Looks for a child who seems lonely or has less supervision.

2

Gaining trust

Becomes a friend to the child and the whole family.

3

Filling a need

Gives gifts, rides, praise, or special attention.

4

Getting the child alone

Creates one-on-one time, like private lessons or sleepovers.

5

Making touch seem normal

Starts with tickling or dirty jokes, then pushes further.

6

Keeping control

Uses secrets, guilt, or threats so the child won't tell.

Remember: the earlier you notice the pattern, the easier it is to stop.

5 red flags in an adult

One flag may mean nothing. Several together mean pay close attention.

1

Asks your child to keep secrets from you

2

Gives gifts or money for no clear reason

3

Treats your child as "special" and finds ways to be alone

4

Texts or messages your child privately, often late

5

Lets your child break your rules, or turns them against you

Signs you may see in your child

Kids often show it through changes instead of telling. These signs can have other causes, but they mean it's time to check in.



Pulls away from family, friends, or things they used to love



Doesn't want to be around a certain person



Has gifts, money, or a phone you didn't give



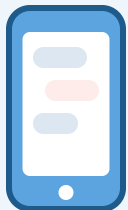
Hides their phone or has new accounts



Knows or says sexual things too young for their age



Has nightmares, or their grades suddenly drop



Grooming online

It can happen in games and apps, even at home. Watch for someone who moves the chat to another app, offers gift cards or game credits, or asks for pictures or secrets. **Teach your child:** adults pretend to be kids online, so tell a parent if anyone online makes you feel weird.

Family safety rules



No adult is alone with my child unless I know and say yes.



We don't keep secrets in our family. Surprises are okay because everyone finds out soon.



Your body belongs to you. You can say no to any touch.



If anyone makes you feel weird, tell me. You will never be in trouble for telling.

If you are worried

You do not need proof to reach out. Stay calm, listen, and write down what you saw and heard. Keep any texts or messages. Then call a trained helper. If a child is in danger right now, call 911.

WHO TO CALL	HOW TO REACH THEM
Childhelp Child Abuse Hotline, 24/7	Call 1-800-422-4453
RAINN Sexual Assault Hotline, 24/7	Call 1-800-656-4673 or text HOPE to 64673
FBI, if someone threatens to share photos	Call 1-800-CALL-FBI or visit tips.fbi.gov

Want to talk with someone about your family's options? A free, confidential call with the LS5 team is available at ls5survivorsalliance.com/resources or (800) 809-4949. Nothing moves forward unless you say so.

Family quiz: parent and child together

Read each question out loud. Decide together if it is true or false.

1. A safe grown-up might ask you to keep a secret from your parents. True · False
2. A birthday present is a surprise, because everyone finds out soon. True · False
3. If someone gives you lots of gifts, you have to do what they say. True · False
4. If someone online asks to chat on a secret app, tell a parent. True · False
5. If you tell, you will get in trouble. True · False

Answers: 1. False. 2. True. 3. False. 4. True. 5. False.



Our family promise

"I promise to teach what I learned today to my brother, sister, cousin, or friend. When I teach it, I remember it, and I help keep them safe too."

Child's name

Who I will teach

Parent's name

Date

This guide is for general information only. It is not legal or medical advice, and it does not create an attorney-client relationship. It may be considered attorney advertising. Hotline numbers were checked in October 2026. Sources: The Center for Child Protection (centerforchildprotection.org), Darkness to Light (d2l.org), Polly Klaas Foundation (pollyklaas.org), FBI. Pair it with the Read-Along Book for Set 2.