

Public and private places



It is important for children to know the difference between public and private places.

It will help them to:

- keep safe in the community
- know where they can do different behaviours
- know where they need to cover their private body parts



What is on this page?

This page is about how you can teach your child about public and private places.

It has information on:

- the differences between public and private places
- public and private places at home
- learning about private places at home
- public and private places in the community



Differences between public and private places

There are differences between public and private places.

In private places:

- private behaviours can happen if the door is closed.

For example, masturbating in the bedroom

- people must ask your permission to come in.

You can say yes or no

- private body parts can be uncovered.

For example going to the toilet or having a shower

In public places:

- you cannot do private behaviours like masturbating or going to the toilet
- space is shared with other people including strangers
- people can come in without asking you



- your private body parts must be covered

Private places are different at home and in the community.



What are the public and private places at home?

Private places in your home are:

- your own bedroom with the door closed
- the bathroom with the door closed
- the toilet with the door closed

These places are private because the door is closed and people cannot come in unless you say so.

Your child can do private behaviours like touching private parts in these places.



Public places in your home are:

- living room
- kitchen
- backyard
- other people's bedrooms
- any other place in your home that is not a private place

These places are public because people can be in those places without asking you if it is OK.

These people might be siblings, parents or other visitors.

Your child cannot do private behaviours in these places.



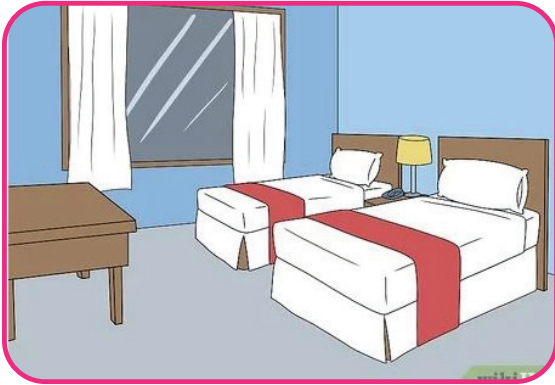
Some children might need help in private places.

They might need help going to the toilet or having a shower.

This is OK. You can support your child to have privacy by:

- making sure the doors are closed
- making sure that nobody can see your child while they are using the toilet or having a shower if you cannot close the door
- talking about consent with your child. Go to [Consent and personal care](#)





Some children might share their bedroom with their siblings.

This is OK.

You can support your child to have privacy by:

- making a sign for the door to let people know when they are being private in their private place
- making sure that your children have equal private time in their bedroom
- making sure that your child uses the bathroom or toilet for private behaviours if their shared

bedroom is being used
by someone else



How can I support my child to learn about private places at home?

It is important that your child can tell the difference between public and private places at home.

It is also important that your child learns how to respect other people's private places.

Here are some things to help support your child to learn about private places.

- make sure that the whole family follows the same rules about public and private.



This will help your child to learn from others.

This means making sure that family members are not naked in areas other than their bedroom or the bathroom

- organise private time for your child each day.

For example, your child could have 15 minutes in their bedroom with the door shut



- always knock on the door and ask permission before you enter your child's private place.

If you need to go into your child's room while they are having private time you can try saying "I need to

come in, I will count to 10 and then open the door”

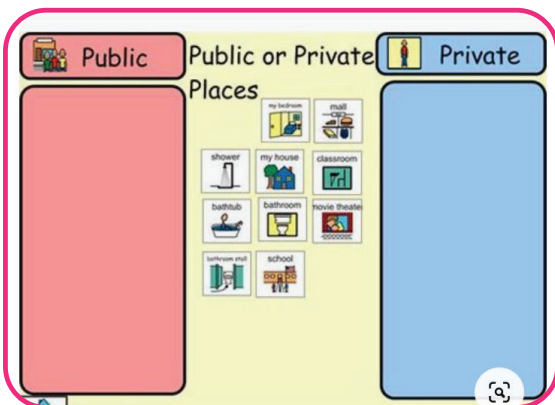
- make sure your child knocks on the door before entering other people’s private places.

You should also talk to your child about what to do if someone says “No”. [Consent](#)

- organise private time for yourself.

Show your child the importance of having private time by making sure that you can have time to yourself.

This is called modelling.



You can also try:

- asking your child to tell you why a place is public or private
- making a sign with your child to help them communicate about their private place
- using games to practice whether a place is public or private



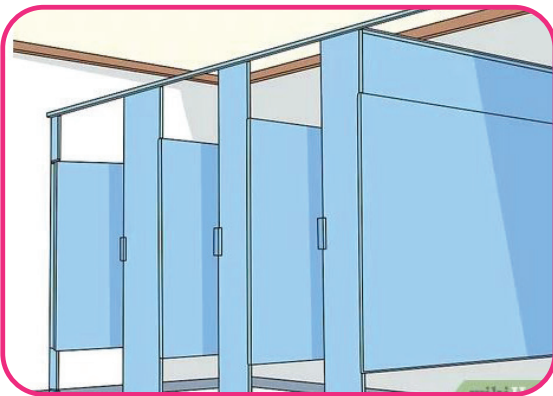
It might take a long time for your child to learn the difference between private and public places.

This is normal.

Your child will need to practice these skills.

It is important to keep teaching your child about public and private places at home to make sure that they can do things like:

- live out of home or with housemates
- go for sleepovers
- visit other people's houses



What are the public and private places in the community?

When you are out in the community, like at the shops or school, the only private places are:

- toilets and change rooms

Toilets and change rooms are private places, but they are different from private places at home.



When your child is in the community it is important to teach them that they can only do these private behaviours:

- go to the toilet
- have a shower
- change their clothes

It is important that your child does not use public toilets or change rooms to masturbate or explore their private body parts.

These behaviours can only happen in private places at home.

To learn more about this, go to <Link to Private Behaviours>.

Public places in the community are everywhere.



They can include:

- school
- shopping centres
- the movies
- the playground
- ay programs

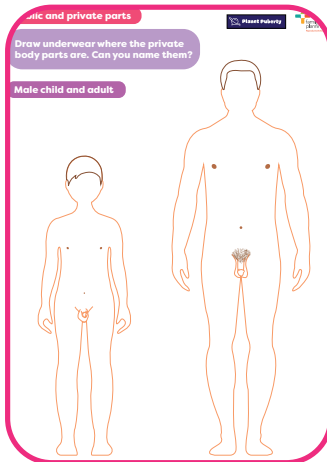
They are public places because anybody can use them.

They do not need to ask permission to be in these places.



Public places in the community might also have different laws or rules about who can use them and what you need to wear.

Private parts should always be covered in a public place.

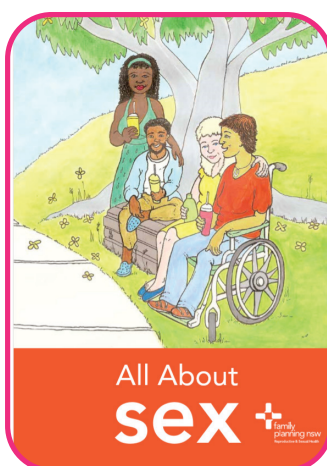


Resources for you to use

Planet Puberty body stencils

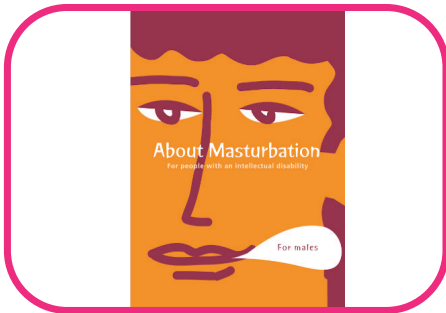


Planet Puberty door sign



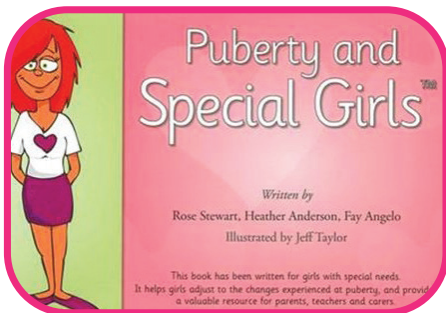
All About Sex: Public and Private factsheet

<https://www.fpnsw.org.au/factsheets/individuals/disability/all-about-sex>

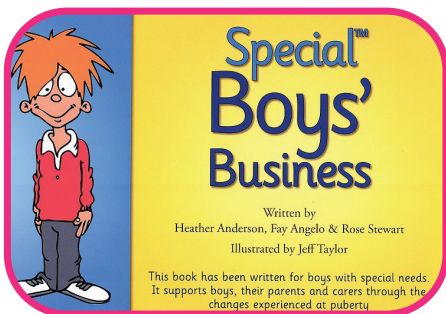


About Masturbation

[https://www.fpnsw.org.au/
aboutmasturbation](https://www.fpnsw.org.au/aboutmasturbation)



Special Girls' Business



Special Boys' Business



Sex Ed Rescue

[sexedrescue.com/free-printable-
paper-dolls/](https://sexedrescue.com/free-printable-paper-dolls/)



What to read next:

- [Public and Private Places](#)
- [Public and Private Behaviours](#)
- [Consent](#)

For more information go to the
Planet Puberty website

www.planetpuberty.org.au