Safe Touches: Personal Safety Training for Children (Safe Touches) is an evidence-based program focused teaching children (Grades K – 3) the difference between *safe* and *not-safe touches* as well as who to tell if they have experienced a not-safe touch. The workshop is a one-time 45 minute session delivered in the classroom by two trained clinicians (not the teacher).

A federally funded cluster randomized trial was conducted in New York City public elementary schools between 2012 and 2014 (Pulido et al., 2015). Nearly 500 second and third graders were randomized to participate in the intervention or a control group. The intervention group showed greater improvement in knowledge of inappropriate touch. Further, it was the second graders who demonstrated greater knowledge gains.

Second graders who participated in the Safe Touches workshop showed greater gains in discerning inappropriate touch compared to second graders who did not attend the workshop (intervention group: second grade, mean=2.50; SD=3.17; control group: second grade, mean=0.47; SD=2.94). In addition, they showed greater grains compared to all third graders (intervention group: third grade, mean=1.33; SD=3.40; control group: third grade, mean=0.01; SD=2.90). For this reason, the Prevention Pilot is targeting second grade classrooms only.

Videos of segments of the curriculum are available on the Safe Touches [website](http://www.nyspcc.org/our-work/safe-touches-personal-safety-training-children/). In the active workshop, children are asked to help puppets decide what they can do to keep their bodies safe. Children are provided a copy of “Keeping my Body Safe!” or “Your Body Belongs to You!” activity and coloring books so that they can bring home to share with their parents.

Not only has Safe Touches been demonstrated effective, the workshop is rated highly by teachers:

* 95% of teachers reported they were very likely to recommend the workshop to other teachers and
* 97% of teachers found the workshop to be very effective at explaining the difference between a “safe touch” and a “not-safe touch” in a way children could understand.

The “prevention pay-back” is considerable for schools. Not only is it an short and effective program, schools will be at the forefront of best practice in implementing a child sexual abuse prevention program. Another benefit is that teachers will have support and talking points after the workshop on how to discuss child sex abuse and it is prevention for the future; begins the conversation that they may have struggled with or not had with prior students.

**To review the evidence-based research of Safe Touches:**

Pulido, M. L., Dauber, S., Tully, B. A., Hamilton, P., Smith, M. J., & Freeman, K. (2015). Knowledge gains following a child sexual abuse prevention program among urban students: A cluster-randomized evaluation. *American Journal of Public Health*, *105*(7), 1344–1350.

**See reverse for details about Safe Touches implementation in the Prevention Pilot.**

As specified in the Funding Announcement, the threshold goal is to have Safe Touches delivered in 100% of all second-grade classrooms by the end of the prevention pilot (over the course of two academic years).

At the time of application, applicant counties are required to demonstrate the cooperation of at least 70% of school districts with the acknowledgement that they will work to devise a plan to include as many classrooms as possible, approaching 100%, by the end of the grant period. These letters of support should indicate the support of the administration to have a Safe Touches workshop delivered in all second grade classrooms during two academic years.

Implementation of Safe Touches will occur during specific months of the academic year:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| August – November 2018 | February – May 2019 |
| August – November 2019 | February – May 2020 |

The reason for the very specific months of delivery is related to the research of the Prevention Pilot. If delivered during these academic months, the 6- and 12-month follow-up assessments also occur within the school year. Parent permission to participate in the Safe Touches workshop will be solicited.

The research assessment is a 10-item survey developed and delivered by the Penn State Research Team. The questions are related to content learned in the workshop (e.g., “A pat on the back from a teacher you like after you have done a good job at school is a safe touch”). Children have the option to not answer questions. Parent permission will be obtained and children will verbally assent to participate in the survey. The survey takes approximately 6 minutes and is delivered immediately before the program (pre) and immediately after the program (post). Children will have the option of competing a one-year follow-up survey. The Penn State Research Team will work closely with the school district to design the best ways to: 1) obtain parent permission; 2) incentivize schools, classrooms, or children; and 3) conduct the follow-up survey.

Implementation will also include a 2-hour teacher workshop that will reinforce concepts taught to the children and to provide resources such that teachers know how to support children who may disclose situations of maltreatment following the Safe Touches workshop. This teacher workshop meets Act 80 criteria.

Safe Touches is disseminated by The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC) directed by Dr. Mary Pulido. Dr. Pulido and her team have partnered with the Child Maltreatment Solutions Network (CMSN) to oversee the implementation and fidelity of Safe Touches as part of the Prevention Pilot. Included in the implementation budget (developed after counties to receive the awards are selected) is video equipment and funds for fidelity monitoring by NYSPCC. The implementation budget also includes facilitator training and implementation effort that is commensurate with the county census (i.e, larger counties will need more facilitators and thus larger implementation budgets).

**See reverse for details about the evidence-base of Safe Touches.**