



# JESSICA'S STORY



As told to Ruby M. Johnston  
(a friend of Jessica's)



A HandsOff Publication



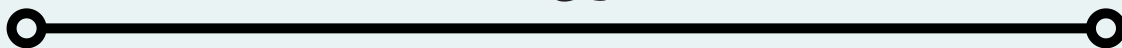
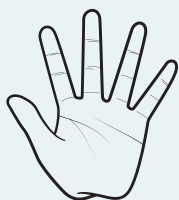


# JESSICA'S STORY

## A True Story

By Ruby M. Johnston, M.S., L.S.W.  
(a friend of Jessica's)

Edited by Sandra L. Aska



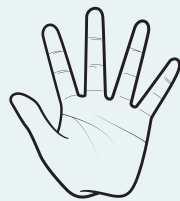


A

HandsOff Publication

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Ruby M. Johnston, M.S., L.S.W.



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# INTRODUCTION



Hello!

My name is Jessica, and I want to tell you about something that happened to me when I was just 10 years old.

Someone touched me where I did not want them to.

This really scared me and I wondered what I should do. Well, I told a teacher and she helped me.

Today, I feel safe, really safe, and I want you to feel safe too, so I am going to tell you my story in the next few pages. Will you read about me?

Thank you very much,  
your friend

Jessica



# GROWING UP



I really like to roller skate and ride my bicycle. When I lived with my mother and stepfather, I would play outside as much as I could. My mother would play with me, and sometimes my stepfather played too.

I had lots of friends on the street where I lived. My best friend was a girl named Molly. Molly and I would play dolls, roller skate together, play house and have lots of fun.





Molly and I would walk to school together.  
We were in the same class at school.

She would sometimes start laughing in class and I would do the same thing. This got us into trouble one time. Our teacher was Ms. Sanders. She was really nice, and I know she likes Molly and me.

Sometimes I was very sad at school and Ms. Sanders would ask me about my sadness, but I was afraid to tell her why I was sad.

I did tell Molly the reason, and she said that I should tell Ms. Sanders.



# The Little Secret



Sometimes, when my mom worked late, my stepfather did things to me. He would touch me where I felt it was private. He always said it was "*our little secret.*" I did not like the touches.

I would tell him, "no," but he just would not listen.

I would cry and he would say that I should act like a "*big girl.*"

When I said I was going to tell my mother, he said he would hit me if I did. I was scared of him.

One day he pulled down his pants and was showing me his penis. I did not want to look. He told me I should look, but I ran outside and over to Molly's house.

I stayed with Molly until my mother came home. I told Molly and she said I should tell my mother.

I did tell my mother when she got home, but she didn't believe me. She thought I was making things up and that I didn't like my stepfather. This made me feel very sad.

When I walked to school with Molly the next day, I talked it over with her. She said I should tell my teacher. I was really afraid to tell her. What if she did not believe me?

At the end of the school day I decided to be brave. I asked my teacher if I could tell her a secret. She said, "yes." So I told her about my stepfather and the things he was doing to me. She said she could help. I felt so happy and relieved because she believed me.



# My HELPER



The next part of my story is both happy and sad, and I want to tell you both parts.

The teacher called some people that know all about the things that happened to me.

She called them social workers. The social worker that came to talk to me was Ms. Sherry, and she was very nice.

I told Ms. Sherry all about the things that my stepfather did. I told her what he said and what I did; and she said that she could help me.

She took me to a special house, called a foster home, where I would be safe. She then went to talk to my mother and stepfather. I wasn't there when she talked to them, and I was really glad about that.

She said she would come back and talk to me after she talked to them.

When Ms. Sherry returned to the foster home she was sad. She said I would be safe if I stayed with my foster family, but I might not be safe if I went back home that same evening. I cried, but I felt like she was helping me.

Ms. Sherry said I would be staying at my foster home until she could work things out with my mother and stepfather. She also said the most important person in the world right now was me. That made me feel like she understood.

She wanted me to be safe, and I wanted to be safe too; but, I missed my mom and my friend Molly. I had many questions that did not have answers. Ms Sherry said that she would talk to me the next day, and we would begin to find answers to all of my questions. She said "*good bye*" and I stayed with my new foster parents in their home.

# My FOSTER FAMILY

**M**



My foster parents were Barb and Dave Moffat. They had one daughter who was 15 years old. I really liked her. She was very nice to me. She helped me find things.

My foster mom was very nice too. So was my foster dad, but I was a little afraid of him. He didn't make me talk to him or anything. I was glad about that.

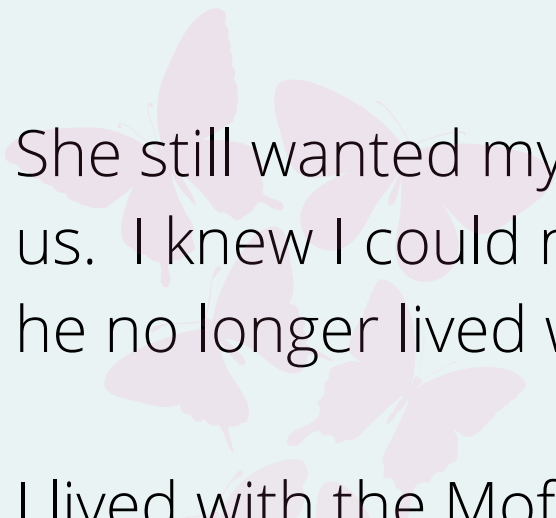
My foster sister's name was Kathy. Kathy showed me my room and helped me around the house. She really felt like a big sister.

Barb was real helpful when I began to cry. she told me it was okay to cry in her house, that she sometimes cried too. She brought me tissue.

I didn't want to talk to anyone about what had happened to me and nobody pushed me to talk. We talked about a lot of other things instead. I learned all about the things they liked, and I told them what I liked. They were very interested in my roller skating and my bike. They were happy I had a good friend like Molly.

Barb and Dave talked to my social worker the next day. Ms. Sherry said that she thought it would be good if I could talk to Molly, so they let me call her, and I felt so happy.

Ms. Sherry arranged visits with my mom very soon. I also saw Molly from time to time and we talked on the phone every day. Mom would tell me she was working with Ms. Sherry and I would be coming home soon. She still wanted all of us to be a happy family.




She still wanted my stepfather to live with us. I knew I could not go back home until he no longer lived with us.

I lived with the Moffat's for about six months. They were always so kind to me and to my mom. They helped me see that I did the right thing by telling my teacher.

They said you should always keep telling the truth until someone listens and believes you.

I also had to tell other people. I told a lawyer and a judge, and they believed me too. It felt good to tell the truth.

After six months, I am now getting ready to go home with my mother. My stepfather will not be coming back to our house. My mother and I will be living in our house together, and I will live next to Molly again.





# WHAT I LEARNED



**I**t was hard to tell the truth. It took a long time for someone to believe me. It has also been hard living away from my mom and my friend Molly.

I learned that I was brave, and that I should never be touched where I do not feel it is okay for someone to touch me. When I told my teacher what my stepfather did to me, I helped my stepfather too. He is a grown-up and he should not try to make children feel they are suppose to do those things. He will get help now so he doesn't do that again.

I will scream **NO!** if anyone tries to do that again!

I will also go for help because I know I did the right thing to tell my teacher!

# WHAT I WANT FOR YOU



**I** want you to know that your body belongs to you and only you. If anyone tries to touch you and you feel uncomfortable, you can do something about it.

First scream **NO!** as loud as you can.

Second, tell that person that you are going to tell somebody about this until they believe you. Then find an adult and tell them. Keep telling until you find someone that does believe you.

Third, remember that you are not bad. It is the grown-up that has done something wrong by touching you or making you touch them in uncomfortable places.

**NO!**

Last, when someone give you that feeling by touching your breasts, vagina, buttocks, or if you are a boy, your penis and scrotum, or makes you touch or look at these parts of their body, this is **WRONG.**

You do not have to let them do this!



# GOOD BYE!



Thank you for reading my story.

I was afraid to write my story, but now I feel better.

I hope my story will help keep you safe. If it does, then I am happy for you, too.

Love,

Jessica

P.s. Molly says, "  "

# NOTES TO ADULTS!



Jessica's story is meant to be read with an adult present in order to help the child understand just what happened to Jessica. Jessica is a true story.

Talking about sexual assault is not easy. This story is meant to open a child's mind to thinking about the subject and thinking about how he or she might respond if they were approached by someone. The adult is the guide throughout this process.

After the book has been read to the child or by the child, it is suggested that the adult help the child model the behaviors that Jessica teaches. Although the topic may be difficult to open, it remains the responsibility of every adult to do whatever they can to teach and protect the children in their care from sexual assault. This one difficult conversation and practice session might make the difference between what happened to Jessica and a child's ability to say "NO."

## **Practice with the child:**

**1..Have the child take a defiant stand with both feet planted on the floor and arms folded across their chest or stiff at their sides (this helps the child feel some power and control). Encourage the child to face you and stand "strong." Ask the child to say "NO" in their strongest and loudest voice. Have them repeat this and give them lots of praise. (Children are not used to saying "NO" to an adult; therefore, this practice might be difficult at first.)**

**2. Ask the child to tell you what they think sexual assault means. Be sure the child knows the body parts that are private. Ask the child to name them. Girls should be able to name breast, vagina (and know where it is) and**

**buttocks; and boys should name penis, scrotum and buttocks. Both sexes should know that the anus is also private.**

**3. Ask the child to explain what the "NO" feeling comes from. They should identify that the "NO" feeling comes from someone, such as an adult or an older youth, wanting to touch their private body parts, or by asking the child to touch their own private body parts or some else's. The "NO" feeling would also come if they were asked to look at someone else's body parts or pictures of body parts.**

**4. Go back to the NO stance and practice one more time.**

**5. Have the child hold up five fingers. Tell them to name one adult for each finger that they could tell if someone tried to sexually assault them. They might name a parent, teacher, neighbor, relative, etc. Encourage them to identify adults in their family and outside of their family.**

**6. Give the child lots of encouragement and praise for each performance of the NO stance, and a nice big hug when they are done!**



## About the Author

Ruby M. Johnston is an international consultant and trainer, having worked in over 30 different countries in the area of child protection. She and her husband are the co-founders of LAMB International. They have 6 children, 11 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

For more information email Ruby at:  
[lambinternational@gmail.com](mailto:lambinternational@gmail.com).

For a helpful video to use in teaching children how to say no, visit the following link:

<https://youtu.be/gZmZIDsZ4EI>