

Parents Can Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

Knowledge about sexual abuse helps protect children.

Lack of knowledge leaves children vulnerable.¹

Why are **PARENTS** the right people to teach their children about sexual abuse?

PARENTS:

- Influence children's **KNOWLEDGE** and **VALUES**.
- **TEACH** children the facts.
- Have more influence on children's decisions about sex than their friends.²



How do you talk to children about sexual abuse?

- Start at an **EARLY AGE**.³
- Keep discussions **DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE**, with an awareness of normal behaviors.
- **REPEAT** the message.⁴
- Promote **HEALTHY SEXUALITY** by teaching respect and value of body and gender.⁴
- Teach **CORRECT NAMES FOR BODY PARTS**, to reduce children's vulnerability.⁵
- Establish **TOUCHING BOUNDARIES** so children understand they can say "no" to unwanted touch.⁵
- Establish **PRIVACY RULES** in the home and away from home.
- Talk about **SECRETS/TRICKS/THREATS** that a perpetrator may use to keep children from telling.⁶
- Educate children on **VULNERABLE SITUATIONS**, including social media and online activities.
- Educate children **BEYOND "STRANGER DANGER"** because approximately 90% of sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows.⁶
- Give children **PERMISSION** to tell about anything happening to them.



What do you do if a child discloses sexual abuse?

- Stay **CALM** and **LISTEN** to the child.
- Tell the child you **BELIEVE** him/her and are glad they told you.
- Tell the child that what happened is **NOT THEIR FAULT**.
- **REPORT THE DISCLOSURE** to professionals for investigation and help.
- **DO NOT ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS. DO NOT CONDUCT YOUR OWN INVESTIGATION.**

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REFERENCES

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4. Wurtele, S. K. (2010). *Out of Harm's Way: A Parent's Guide to Protecting Young Children from Sexual Abuse*. Seattle, WA: Parenting Press.
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6. Stop It Now! (2015). Prevention Tools. <http://www.stopitnow.org/help-guidance/prevention-tools>