

# Parents Can Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

Knowledge about sexual abuse helps protect children.  
Lack of knowledge leaves children vulnerable.<sup>1</sup>



**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.<sup>2</sup>

## How do you talk to children about sexual abuse?

- Start at an **EARLY AGE**.<sup>3</sup>
- Keep discussions **DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE**, with an awareness of normal behaviors.
- **REPEAT** the message.<sup>4</sup>
- Promote **HEALTHY SEXUALITY** by teaching respect and value of body and gender.<sup>4</sup>
- Teach **CORRECT NAMES FOR BODY PARTS**, to reduce children's vulnerability.<sup>5</sup>
- Establish **TOUCHING BOUNDARIES** so children understand they can say "no" to unwanted touch.<sup>5</sup>
- 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.<sup>6</sup>
- 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.<sup>6</sup>
- 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** them 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.**

## References

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5. American Academy of Pediatrics. (2011). *Parent tips for preventing and identifying child sexual abuse*.
6. Stop It Now!. (2024). *Prevention tools*. <https://www.stopitnow.org/help-guidance/prevention-tools>

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