

ABUSE PREVENTION TIPS FOR PARENTS

There are some important steps we can take to protect our children from sexual abuse. Please read the following checklists.

A Checklist for Teaching Young Children Personal Safety Skills

- Teach children their full name, address and phone number.
- Teach children to tell if anyone asks them to keep a kiss, hug, or touch a secret. Explain that no one should ask them to do this and you will never be angry if they tell you. Ensure they know they must do this even if it feels good or if someone threatens them.
- Explain that it is alright to say NO. Practice with them. Shout NO loudly together. Also, allow them to choose to not hug or kiss Great Aunt Mary or Uncle Joe when he/she comes to visit if they so choose.
- Help them understand that their bodies are sacred and belong to them. Explain that this means their entire bodies, including their genitals. It is best if children know the correct names for all their body parts. However, if this makes you uncomfortable, you can say, “that includes the parts of your body covered by your bathing suit.”
- Explain that they do not always have to listen to and obey adults if they feel unsafe and that you will support them.
- Tell them they should run away from someone who frightens them.
- Tell them that hugs and kisses are nice, but they are never kept secret.

A Checklist for Teaching Older Children and Adolescents Personal Safety Skills

- Talk to them about trusting their intuition. If they have the feeling things are not right they should leave or get help.
- Help them to establish their own personal limits and give suggestions about getting out of situations or telling others what their limits are.
- Teach them to watch out for inappropriate behavior. If, for example, a person makes sexual comments, sexual gestures, inappropriate physical contact, or is offensive to them in any way, leave the area and/or telephone a trusted person to pick them up and take them home.
- Help them establish a list of people they can go to for help. There are some issues that teens may not be comfortable discussing with their parents. Tell them that if they go to one of these adults for help, they will be believed and supported. Remember, children and even teens, very rarely lie about sexual abuse.
- Set rules for the Internet. Teach them that they must not meet in person anyone they meet on the Internet.

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