



SOME SIMPLE TIPS

TO HELP KEEP YOU CHILDREN SAFE FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

1. **Be present!**
 - Show up unexpectedly and at random times to places where your child is – sports games, music lessons, while with the sitter, etc. This lets those around your child know you are involved in your child's life and interested in all the people he/she interacts with.
2. **Have a secret-free home**
 - Offenders rely on children that can keep secrets. Know that there is a difference between a "surprise" (think birthday present), versus a "secret" which is not meant to be told and does not make people feel good or safe.
3. **Know the warning signs of abuse**
 - This may include: sleep disturbances, sexualized play, sexual knowledge or behavior that is not age-appropriate, regression, change in school performance, victimization of others, genital injury, excessive masturbation, at-risk behaviors.
4. **Teach body-safety rules**
 - Each person is in charge of their own body and no one is allowed to touch their body or make them touch another person's body.
5. **Teach the name of body parts: penis, vagina, butt and breasts**
 - This shows a potential offender that you communicate with your child about their body and that if a child needs to tell about something happening to a body part, there will be no confusion.
6. **Be a questioning parent**
 - Ask detailed questions about play dates, sleepovers (e.g., who will be present, will there be older siblings around, will the internet be used), summer camps (e.g., kinds of abuse prevention the staff has received), and day care providers (e.g., background and reference check, ask about bathrooming policies, discuss your own rules for the child).
7. **Teach on-line safety tips**
 - Don't allow children to give out their on-line address, have the computer safety-guarded, keep the computer in a common area, check up on the sites your child has visited, have rules regarding computer access and usage.
8. **Have a safety plan**
 - For playdates, sleepovers, teen-dates, etc.; let your child know that they can call you at any time to be picked up, no questions asked.
9. **Use Teachable Moments**
 - Use topics that come up naturally during the day to promote safety and the above topics.
10. **Listen**
 - Listen to your child with an open mind and open heart—truly hear what they are trying to tell you.