

# PARENT GUIDE



Navajo County Family Advocacy Center · 902 E. Deuce of Clubs Show Low, Arizona 85901

928.532.6047 · NCFAC.org · [FAC@navajocountyaz.gov](mailto:FAC@navajocountyaz.gov)

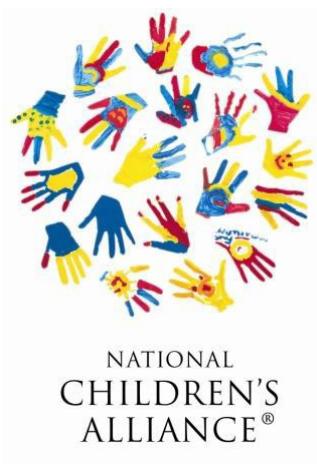
## Welcome to Navajo County Family Advocacy Center

Your child is here because of concerns about possible child abuse. Our goals are to:

- Do the best job possible in finding out what happened
- Work with the legal system to help your child
- Help you understand the child protective and legal systems
- Help make the process as comfortable as possible for you
- Help your children and family begin to heal

We hope this handbook will help you understand more about child abuse. We also hope it will help you understand the system we use to respond to a report of abuse.

Please contact us at (928) 532-6047 if you have questions.



## **THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:**

Pinal County Attorney's Family Advocacy Center, Parent Guide

The National Child Advocacy Center, Parent Guide

Lincoln, Nebraska Child Advocacy Center, Parent Guide

St. Luke's Hospital Child Protection Center, Prevention Guidelines and Safety Techniques

Champaign County Children's Advocacy Center, "A Parent's Guide to the CAC"

Project Harmony, "A Parent's Guide"



★ Notary Public, Mail & Admin Support  
★ Fax, Print, Copy, Scan & Email Services  
★ Co-working & Meeting Spaces  
★ Full-Time & Part-Time Office Space  
  
141 N 6th Street  
Show Low, AZ 85901  
928-532-2680  
NorthStarBusinessCenter.com



## Contents

<u>Common Feelings of Children after Reporting</u> .....	<u>9</u>
<u>Children's Reactions to Stress or Trauma</u> .....	<u>11</u>
<u>How to Act toward Your Child</u> .....	<u>13</u>
<u>What to Say to Others</u> .....	<u>14</u>
<u>After You Leave the Family Advocacy Center</u> .....	<u>15</u>
<u>Finding a Therapist for Your Family.</u> .....	<u>16</u>
<u>Impact of Child Abuse on the Family</u> .....	<u>16</u>
<u>Counseling for Parents and Children</u> .....	<u>16</u>
<u>Keeping Yourself Healthy</u> .....	<u>18</u>
<u>Let's Talk About Internet Safety</u> .....	<u>17</u>
Predators 101.....	17
The Online Predator.....	18
Grooming .....	18
Warning Signs.....	19
How to Talk to Your Kids about Internet Predators.....	20
<u>Sex Trafficking</u> .....	<u>21</u>
What is Teen Sex Trafficking?.....	21
What Does a Trafficker "Look Like?" .....	21
Who Do Traffickers Target?.....	22
Pornography and Sex Trafficking – Are they Related?.....	22
How to Talk About Human Trafficking .....	24
YOUNGER CHILDREN.....	24
OLDER CHILDREN.....	26
ADOLESCENTS/TEENS.....	27
<u>What is Pornography?</u> .....	<u>28</u>
Kids' Access to Pornography .....	28
My child has stumbled upon online pornography—now what?.....	31

Mobile Dangers.....	32
Protecting Kids on Mobile Devices.....	32
<b>When choosing a mobile device, helpful questions to ask your provider include:</b> <sup>33</sup>	
<b><u>Safety and Prevention.....</u></b>	<b><u>34</u></b>
Critical principles for all age groups include .....	34
<b>Age 2 – 4.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Age 5 – 7.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Age 8 – 10.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Age 11 – 13.....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Age 14 – 18.....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b><u>What is Sexual Abuse?</u> .....</b>	<b><u>40</u></b>
<b><u>How Offenders Target Children.....</u></b>	<b><u>41</u></b>
<b><u>Signs &amp; Symptoms of Sexual Abuse.....</u></b>	<b><u>42</u></b>
Physical Signs: .....	42
Emotional or Behavioral Signs .....	42
Sexual signs .....	43
<b><u>Normal and Concerning Sexual Behaviors .....</u></b>	<b><u>43</u></b>
<b><u>Children Under Age 12.....</u></b>	<b><u>43</u></b>
Normal .....	43
Yellow Flags .....	43
Red Flags .....	44
<b><u>Adolescents 13 Years and Older.....</u></b>	<b><u>44</u></b>
Normal .....	44
Yellow Flags .....	44
Red Flags .....	45
<b><u>Parenting Children with Sexual Behaviors .....</u></b>	<b><u>45</u></b>
<b><u>When Children Sexually Abuse a Sibling.....</u></b>	<b><u>48</u></b>
<b><u>What Children Should Know about Human Sexuality.....</u></b>	<b><u>49</u></b>
<b><u>Children Ages 6-9 Should.....</u></b>	<b><u>49</u></b>

<u>Children Ages 9-13 Should Be Informed About .....</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>14 to 18-year-olds Should Be Informed About.....</u>	<u>51</u>
<u>Body Ownership and Sexual Abuse Prevention Tips.....</u>	<u>52</u>
<u>Role-Playing Scenarios .....</u>	<u>54</u>
<u>Physical and Emotional Abuse and Neglect .....</u>	<u>56</u>
<u>Neglect .....</u>	<u>56</u>
<u>Physical Abuse.....</u>	<u>56</u>
<u>Emotional Abuse .....</u>	<u>56</u>
<u>What Is Domestic Abuse?.....</u>	<u>57</u>
<u>The Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children .....</u>	<u>60</u>
<u>The Legal System .....</u>	<u>61</u>
How the Legal System Responds to Abuse .....	61
Limits of the Legal System .....	62
How to Tell Your Child about the Legal Outcome.....	62
Important Phone Numbers Family Advocacy Center (928) 532-6047 .....	63



## A Note to Parents and Caregivers

Learning that your child has been abused can be a very shocking experience. Most people will go through periods of confusion, anger, guilt, fear, and worry over the following days, weeks, and possibly months. We think it may be helpful for you to know that your responses are very normal. After talking to many people whose children have experienced abuse, we have learned that most parents and caregivers go through some or all these feelings.

At first, you may feel a kind of numbness or disbelief: "This can't happen to us!" "Maybe they just made it up." "We'll be okay if we just forget about it." Your child may be too young or confused to tell you exactly what happened. They may even reverse the story and say they were lying. Children may see adults becoming upset and think it will be better for everyone if they retract their story. This happens often but does not mean the original report was false. This is very hard for a parent or caregiver—living with suspicion and doubt. It is tempting to repeatedly question your child to satisfy your own need to know. We have found that patience (holding off on the questions) and lots of support and reassurance will help your child accept and EVENTUALLY tell what happened.

Both you and your child will likely feel confused: "Who, if anyone, should I tell?" People often feel a lot of shame and guilt about abuse. These feelings make us want to hide what happened; keep it a secret.

You may be blaming yourself. You may think that you should have been more cautious, more alert; you should have somehow known to prevent the abuse. If you work (or have limited financial resources, if you are disabled, single parenting, or if you are in school, etc.) you may blame yourself for not being there to protect your child. You may be accusing yourself of disregarding warning signs or hints.



You need to be aware that your child is making the same self-accusations. They

also are likely to feel responsible and at fault. THE TRUTH IS, NEITHER OF YOU IS TO BLAME. You may have to remind yourself and your child of that, over and over.

Parents and caregivers also tell us about feelings of anger—a wish to hurt or get even with the abuser so that they will suffer like you and your child are. If you are not used to feeling intense anger, this may upset you even more. You may find yourself blaming or taking your anger out on your child, your spouse, or other family members. Even though you know it is unfair, you may give your child a sense that they are to blame: should have told, should have stopped it, etc.

Your marriage and relationships may be strained as you take out your feelings on the close, safe targets—each other. You may find yourself overly fearful, suspicious, and protective, not allowing your child their usual freedom. You may worry about the future and how your child's self-esteem and sexual feelings will be affected.

We want you to know that these—and many more—feelings are part of the response most children and parents have following abuse. There are some things to do that will help:

- The first is to TALK, TALK, TALK. Find a trusted friend, family member, or counselor who will keep things confidential. Let yourself express any feelings you have. Your child needs this too. If you are too upset to be a good listener right now, help your child find someone else you both trust. Listen, but do not question your child.
- Allow your child and yourself plenty of time to work through these feelings. As you slowly recover, try to be extra gentle and supportive to each other whenever you can.
- Keep reminding your child and yourself that YOU ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE. The abuser took advantage of someone younger and smaller when they knew better; they are responsible 100%.
- Be alert for signs that you or your child are not recovering and may need professional help: nightmares or trouble sleeping, unusual fearfulness, toileting accidents, any behavior change that persists (aggressiveness, arguing, lying, stealing), depression, and withdrawal from people, increased moodiness or irritability, or school problems.

# Common Feelings of Children after Reporting

## Confusion

Feelings do not fit together well. Everything is happening much too fast. Nothing makes any sense. When they become aware of one emotion, another thing happens, and it all changes abruptly. People are saying things your child is unable to understand fully.



## Panic

Your child may have second thoughts. Perhaps they think they should not have told. Do people think they are dirty, wrong; it was their fault? Who is being blamed? How will family and friends react? How will they be treated? What will happen to them? What will happen to the perpetrator? Your child may accept and believe the chaos is their fault.

## Fear

What will happen now? The perpetrator may have made some threats about what they would do if your child told. The threats may have been bodily harm to the child, a loved one, or oneself. Your child may fear going to court and facing the abuser. Your child may be afraid the perpetrator may go to jail. They may fear abandonment by you. Your child may be frightened their friends will not like them if they find out. They may fear separation from the family. They may fear the family's reaction (i.e., loss of love, anger, or blame). Your child most likely is frightened and intimidated by all the different people wanting information.

## Anger

Everything may seem to be out of control. Your child feels like they are on a rollercoaster ride that gets scarier than expected. Your child may think they made a wrong decision to tell and may try to back out.

They may try to change the account and deny the sexual abuse. The child may become very angry at the person who reported. This person may be a trusted friend, a teacher, school counselor, or therapist, and it comes as a real shock when a child suddenly turns their anger on this person. Your child may feel backed into a corner. Anger may be turned inward and show itself as destructive behavior towards themselves or people or things in the environment.

## **Revenge**

Your child wants to get back at the person who misused and hurt them.

## **Relief**

Your child has finally told, and now someone will take care of them

## **Doubts**

Your child begins to doubt their memory about the abuse. They feel that it wasn't that bad—other people have had worse things happen to them—or they were not hurt, and now it is all over.

## **Guilt**

Your child may feel as though telling was the wrong thing to do - that because the abuser was often very nice to them, they betrayed the perpetrator by telling. They may have been close friends, and your child may have liked it when the perpetrator hugged them and said they were special.

## **Regrets**

Your child may wish they had told someone sooner, and maybe then things would not have gone as far as they did.

## **Shame**

It seems that everyone knows what happened. Your child may feel ashamed about their experiences, and they often feel different from everyone else. They may be afraid that people will watch and think bad things about them.

## **Responsibility**

Your child may feel responsible for everyone else's pain and misery. Will the perpetrator go to jail? What will happen to their siblings? Will they suffer? Will people see them differently and wonder about them too?

## **Abandoned/Betrayed**

Sometimes, a victim's family rejects them when the abuse is reported. The abuser may call the child a liar. The victim's siblings may deny that anything ever happened to them, even though it may have. Your child may feel they do not have the support of the family.

## Alone/Suicidal

Dependency on trusted adults may increase dramatically. Your child may fear being left alone or abandoned and cling desperately to the significant adults in their life. Some children think about committing suicide.

## Children's Reactions to Stress or Trauma

People react very differently to stressful life events. Below are some reactions that children and teenagers very commonly report. It may be helpful to talk to your child about this list and learn if they are experiencing any of these problems. You may also notice how you have reacted to stressful events in your own life.

- **Nightmares or trouble sleeping:** After severe stress or trauma, people tend to keep thinking about what happened to “digest” it, just like the stomach must work to digest a big meal. Nightmares are one way of “digesting” what happened.
- **Thinking about it all the time:** This is another way to digest what happened. Just like nightmares, thinking about the trauma all the time can make the child feel upset.
- **It is natural to NOT think or talk about it** since it is upsetting to talk about the event. Avoiding it makes things easier, but only for a little while.
- **Avoiding places, people, or things that remind the child of the event:** Just like not thinking or talking about the trauma, avoiding reminders helps the child feel better briefly. However, this may interrupt everyday routines.
- **Feeling scared for no reason:** This can happen when your child’s body is so tense all the time that they begin feeling scared.
- **Feeling “crazy” or out of control:** Having so many complex emotions all at once can cause children to feel like they are out of control or “going crazy!” Don’t worry; this is very common.
- **Not being able to remember parts of what happened:** The trauma can be so complicated that your child may not be able to remember details of it. This is normal.



- **Trouble concentrating at home or school:** Feelings of anxiety or thinking of the traumatic event can make it difficult to focus on daily tasks.
- **Feeling that something terrible will happen:** Children sometimes worry that another bad thing will happen.
- **Being startled easily:** Children may become easily startled or afraid, and it is their body's way of preparing them for something bad to happen.
- **Feeling angry:** Your child may feel angry about what happened or even about things that have happened after the trauma. Or they might feel angry all the time, about everything and everybody.
- **Feeling shame:** Children may feel embarrassed or ashamed about what happened to them or how they acted.
- **Feeling guilt:** Children may blame themselves for the situation, even though it was out of their control. They may also feel guilty about upsetting other people.
- **Feeling sadness/grief/loss:** Your child may feel sadness or upset if they have lost someone close to them.
- **Feeling bad about themselves:** With all the stress and overwhelming emotion, children may feel like no one likes them or that they are a bad person.
- **Physical health problems or complaints:** Stress influences the body. People under a lot of stress tend to get sick more often and notice pain and discomfort more.

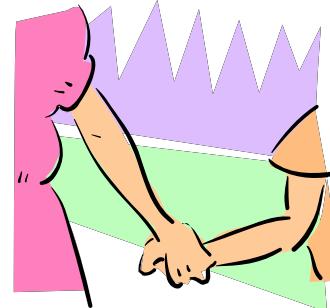
Remember, everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. You and your child may find that you are not experiencing any symptoms, which is okay, too!

## How to Act toward Your Child

Provide safety, love, and support. Let them know it is okay to cry or be mad. Make sure your child understands it is not their fault. Don't coach or pressure your child to talk.

### Some things you can say that will help your child:

- I believe you.
- I know it's not your fault.
- I'm glad I know about it.
- I'm sorry this happened to you.
- I will take care of you.
- I'm not sure what will happen next.
- Nothing about YOU made this happen. It has happened to other children, too.
- You don't need to take care of me.
- I am upset, but not with you.
- I'm angry at the person who did this.
- I'm sad. You may see me cry. That's all right. I will be able to take care of you. I'm not mad at you.
- I don't know why he did it. He has a problem.
- You can still love someone but hate what they did to you.



### Some things you can do:

- Return to a regular routine as soon as possible.
- See that your child receives therapy as soon as possible. Sweeping the problem under the rug usually causes more problems because it will not disappear.
- Find help for yourself. You don't have to do it all yourself. Contact the Family Advocacy Center for assistance.
- Teach your child the rules of personal safety. Tell your child what to do if someone tries to touch them in an uncomfortable way.
- Be careful not to question your child about the abuse. If you do, you can jeopardize the case in court against your child's abuser. Specially trained professionals at the Family Advocacy Center will interview your child to obtain the necessary information without harming the case or further traumatizing them. If your child wants to talk about it, listen supportively, but do not probe.
- Keep your child away from the person suspected of the abuse. This is to protect you, that person, and the child.
- Avoid discussing the case with other victims or their families.
- Never coach or advise your child on how to act or what to say to professionals or investigators. This could seriously damage the case.
- Your child may need an extra sense of physical security. Stay close and assure your child you will keep them safe.
- Remember to give attention to your other children.

## What to Say to Others

As your case progresses, you may be wondering what to tell other people. How much does your neighbor, sister, employer, or child's teacher need to know?

If your case ends up in the news, it can become even more challenging to know what to say. The media does a good job of not disclosing victims' names. But when a member of your family is arrested, you may need support to deal with the media. Please work closely with your family advocate on how to handle these issues. Remember, statements you make to the media may be used against you or your child when the case goes to court.

To help make your conversations with others easier, keep the following in mind:

- Protecting your child's privacy is vital to the extent that it is possible.
- You don't owe it to anyone to explain in detail what happened, except the investigator and your therapist.
- Depending on their age, your child has a right to know who you have told. They may even want to participate in the decision about who is informed. Think about discussing what has happened with your child's teacher so they can be sensitive to your child's emotional needs.
- You have the right to ask friends and relatives not to discuss with others what you tell them to protect your child's privacy.
- Very young children often talk about their abuse at inappropriate times or with inappropriate people.
- Keep in mind most people have very little factual knowledge about child abuse. Though they mean well, their comments are based on myths or misinformation. Being asked why you didn't know it was happening may push all the wrong buttons. It would be natural to react defensively, and you don't need to say anything.
- You don't owe anyone an explanation. Some responses you might have ready are:
  - "I'd rather not talk about it."
  - "It's been a challenging time for all of us."
  - "I appreciate your concern."
  - "Because legal proceedings are pending, I'm not at liberty to talk about it." This is an excellent response to questions from the media.

## After You Leave the Family Advocacy Center

1. Assure your child they are not to blame. Tell them the grown-up is always at fault.
2. Now that your child has been interviewed do not question the child. If they want to talk, listen and avoid lengthy interrogations. Avoid putting words in your child's mouth.
3. Do not express extreme reactions. Child abuse is often more traumatic for the parents than for the child. Do not threaten to harm the perpetrator. Your child needs a calm protector.
4. Do not overdo the amount of attention paid to the abuse. Do not repeatedly say how terrible the abuse has been. The child may begin to believe it is impossible to recover.
5. Return to your regular daily routine. Provide your child with a physically, mentally, and emotionally safe environment to recover.
6. Be cautious about whom you discuss your child's abuse. This can be upsetting for the child to have personal information about them disclosed. Also, this may hinder the investigation.
7. If you have questions regarding the investigation, contact the law enforcement officer. If you have questions regarding services, the Family Advocacy Center has Family Advocates who can assist. Please contact us at 928-532-6047.
8. Follow through with any treatment recommendations. Individual counseling is frequently recommended for the child to help them learn to cope. Often, family counseling is recommended because child abuse affects the entire family.



## Finding a Therapist for Your Family

Responding to the needs of a child who has been abused may involve the whole family and will likely impact all family relationships. Mental health professionals (social workers, counselors, or therapists) can help you and your family cope with reactions, thoughts, and feelings about the abuse.

## Impact of Child Abuse on the Family

Parenting a child who has been abused can be stressful to marriages and relationships. If your child was sexually abused, parenting in these situations might require you to be more open with each other and your children about sexuality than in the past. If one parent is more involved in addressing the issue than another, the imbalance can create difficulties in the parental relationship. Your sexual relationship can also be affected if sex begins to feel like a troubled area of the family's life. When these problems emerge, it is often helpful to get professional advice.

Your child's siblings (birth, foster, or adoptive) may be exposed to new or focused attention on sexuality that can be challenging for them. If one child is acting out

sexually, you may need to talk with siblings about what they see, think and feel, and how to respond. Your children may need help deciding what (and how much) to say about their sibling's problems to their friends. If your children see that you are actively managing the problem, they will feel more secure and worry less.

When one child has been abused, parents often become very protective of their other children. It is essential to find a balance between reasonable worry and over-protectiveness. Valuable strategies to prevent further abuse may include teaching children to stand up for themselves, talking about them being in charge of their bodies, and fostering open communication.



## Counseling for Parents and Children

Talking with a mental health professional specializing in child abuse as soon as problems arise can help you determine if your child's behavior is cause for concern. Specialists can also provide you with guidance in responding to your child's difficulties and offer suggestions for talking with your child. A mental health professional may suggest particular areas of attention in family life and provide specific recommendations for creating structured, safe, and nurturing environments.

To help a child who has been abused, many mental health professionals will begin with a thorough assessment to explore how the child functions in all areas of life. The specialist will want to know about:

- Past stressors (e.g., history of abuse, frequent moves, and other losses)
- Current stressors (e.g., a medical problem or learning disability)
- Emotional state (e.g., Is the child usually happy or anxious?)
- Coping strategies (e.g., Does the child withdraw or act out when angry or sad?)
- The child's friendships
- The child's strengths (e.g., creative, athletic, organized?)
- The child's communication skills
- The child's attachments to adults in their life

After a thorough assessment, the mental health professional will decide if the child and family could benefit from therapy. Not all abused children require therapy, and for those who do, the mental health professional will develop a plan tailored to the child and family's strengths and needs.

This plan may include one or more of the following types of therapy:

- **Individual therapy.** The frequency and duration of therapy can vary tremendously. The style of therapy will depend on the child's age and the therapist's training. Some therapists use creative techniques (for example, art therapy, play therapy, and music therapy) to help children who are uncomfortable talking about their experiences or who are very young and may not be able to verbalize their thoughts and emotions. Other therapists use traditional talk therapy or a combination of approaches.
- **Group therapy.** Meeting in groups with other children who have been abused can help children understand themselves, feel less alone, and learn new skills through role-plays, discussion, games, and play.
- **Family therapy.** Many therapists will see children and parents together to support positive parent-child communication and guide parents in learning new skills that will help their children feel better and behave appropriately.

Whether or not family therapy is advised, parents need to stay involved in their child's therapy or other kinds of treatment. Skilled mental health professionals should involve the parents by asking for and sharing information.

*Victim Advocates at the Family Advocacy Center can provide you with a list of mental health professionals in your area.*

## Keeping Yourself Healthy

Just as each child responds differently, each parent will react to the abuse. Feelings range from numbness to rage. That's normal and to be expected. Some common reactions include:

- Shock
- Anger
- Betrayal
- Confusion
- Denial
- Helplessness
- Financial fear
- Guilt/Self-blame

**You may be experiencing the same trauma as your child.** Remember, you need to take care of yourself for your child to recover. We encourage you to seek professional help during this difficult time.

- Identify a support system and use it – a good friend, a support group, a counselor, your church
- Identify things that will help you relax and take the time to do them – a hot bath, a long walk, quiet time.
- Identify respite care resources in the community. Sometimes you just need a break from all the demands.
- Refrain from using drugs or alcohol to cope. This isn't going to help.



There is a strong likelihood that your child will do as well as you do coping with the abuse.

### ***A Special Note to Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse...***

If you were a victim of abuse as a child, learning about your child's abuse may create overwhelming emotions for you. Your own memories of abuse will likely begin to emerge again. This often leads to depression and anxiety and may make it difficult for you and your family to heal. You may find that you need individual therapy to help you navigate through this difficult time. ***We can help in finding a system of support for you. Don't be afraid to ask.***

Children often absorb all the stress, fear, and confusion you may be feeling. You must seek help to deal with all the feelings you are having.

# Let's Talk About Internet Safety

## What is Internet Safety?

Trying to be safe on the internet and is the act of maximizing a user's awareness of personal safety and security risks to private information and property associated with using the internet, and the self-protection from computer crime.



As the number of internet users continues to grow worldwide,<sup>[1]</sup> internets, governments and organizations have expressed concerns about the safety of children and teenagers using the Internet. Over 45% have announced they have endured some sort of cyber-harassment.

## Predators 101:

When children go online, they have direct and immediate access to friends, family, and strangers, putting unsuspecting children at significant risk. Children who meet and communicate with strangers online are easy prey for Internet predators. Predators have easy and anonymous access to children online where they can conceal their identity and roam without limit. Often, we have an image of sexual predators lurking around school playgrounds or hiding behind bushes scoping out their potential victims. Still, the reality is that today's sexual predators search for victims while hiding behind a computer screen, taking advantage of the anonymity the Internet offers.

*"People who do not believe that their children could ever become victimized online are living in an unrealistic world. Regardless of if your child makes 'As' or not, that child has the potential to become victimized through online technologies. I think it is very important for parents of all socioeconomic status and with all different roles in society to take this problem very seriously."*

—Melissa Morrow, Supervisory Special Agent, Child Exploitation Squad, FBI

## The Online Predator:

- Blends into society
- Is typically clean-cut and outwardly law-abiding
- Is usually white, middle-aged or younger, and male
- Uses position in the community to throw off suspicion
- Can rise to be a pillar of society while actively pursuing children
- Often engages in activities involving children
- Appears trusting to both parents and child

## Grooming:

Online grooming is a process that can take place in a short time or over an extended period. Initial conversations online can appear innocent but often involve some level of deception. The predator (usually an adult) attempts to establish a relationship to gain a child's trust. Even after forming an established online connection, he may initially lie about his age or never reveal his actual age to the child. The groomer will often know famous music artists, clothing trends, sports team information, or another activity or hobby the child may be interested in and relate to.

These tactics lead children to believe that no one else can understand them or their situation like the groomer. After the child's trust develops, the groomer may use sexually explicit conversations to test boundaries and exploit a child's natural curiosity about sex. Predators often use pornography and child pornography to lower a child's inhibitions and use their adult status to influence and control their behavior.

They also flatter and compliment the child excessively and manipulate their trust by relating to emotions and insecurities and affirming their feelings and choices.

## Predators will:

- Prey on teen's desire for romance, adventure, and sexual information
- Develop trust and secrecy: manipulate child by listening to and sympathizing with child's problems and insecurities

- Affirm feelings and choices of child
- Exploit natural sexual curiosities of the child
- Ease inhibitions by gradually introducing sex into conversations or exposing them to pornography
- Flatter and compliment the child excessively, send gifts, and invest time, money, and energy to groom the child
- Develop an online relationship that is romantic, controlling, and upon which the child becomes dependent
- Drive a wedge between the child and their parents and friends
- Make promises of an exciting, stress-free life tailored to the youth's desire
- Make threats, and often will use child pornography featuring their victims to blackmail them into silence



*Remember: The ultimate goal of the “groomer” is to arrange an in-person meeting to engage in sexual relations with the child or teen!*

#### Warning Signs

Your child may be in contact with an online predator if they:

- Becomes secretive about online activities
- Becomes obsessive about being online
- Gets angry when they can't get online
- Receives phone calls from people you do not know or makes calls to numbers that you do not recognize
- Receives gifts, mail, or packages from someone you do not know
- Withdraws from family and friends
- Changes screens or turns off computer when an adult enters a room
- Begins downloading pornography online

## How to Talk to Your Kids about Internet Predators

Communication is vital in protecting children from online exploitation. One way to keep children safer is to supervise their online activities or limit their access to sites that can facilitate online interaction with people they don't know and trust in real life. If you allow your children access to these sites, you should discuss Internet safety often. Monitor children's Internet use: ask them what sites they visit and to show you any profiles they may have posted online.

Pay attention to what your kids are doing online and ask your child non-threatening questions. Avoid over-reacting if your kids have been talking to people they don't know online or if they admit that they've come across a dangerous or tricky situation online.

Ask, "Has an online stranger..."

- Tried to befriend you? If so, how do you know this person?"
- Talked to you about sex?"
- Asked you for personal information?"
- Asked you for pictures? Sent you pictures?"
- Said anything to make you feel uncomfortable?"
- Offered to send you gifts?"

Statistics:

- In 1998, there were over 3,000 reports of child sexual abuse imagery.
- Just over a decade later, yearly reports soared past 100,000.
- In 2014, that number surpassed 1 million for the first time.
- Last year, 18.4 million, more than one-third of the total ever reported.
- Despite landmark legislation passed in 2008 to reign in the scourge (mainly underfunded), the explosion in detected content kept growing — exponentially. (*New York Times, Sept. 30, 2019*)

## Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking occurs when someone uses force, fraud, or coercion to cause a commercial sex act with an adult or induces a minor to commit a commercial sex act.

Traffickers use the Internet to target unsuspecting and vulnerable youth for their financial gain as targets are seen as none other than a dollar sign. Sex trafficking is a form of modern slavery throughout the United States and globally. According to the F.B.I., sex trafficking is the 2nd fastest growing criminal industry -- just behind drug trafficking. It is a manageable, low risk (many traffickers still believe the high profit margin to be worth the risk of detection) and profitable industry because of huge consumer demand.

Much like the **grooming tactics** employed by sexual predators, sex traffickers lure their target into an online relationship with the ultimate goal of meeting in person. Traffickers use a deliberate process to identify and recruit their victims. It happens in three main phases: scouting, manipulating, and trapping. Victims are often showered with love, romance, and promises of a better life. Others are lured in with false promises of a job or given expensive gifts. However, the end game of the trafficker (or pimp) is to force or manipulate their target into prostitution.

If left unchecked, human trafficking will flourish in environments where traffickers can reap substantial monetary gains with a relatively low risk of getting caught or losing profits. Despite growing awareness about this crime, it continues to go underreported due to its covert nature, misconceptions about its definition, and a lack of understanding of its indicators.

### What is Teen Sex Trafficking?

Sex trafficking: the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for a commercial sex act, in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age. (*Note: It is not necessary to demonstrate force, fraud, or coercion in sex trafficking cases involving children under 18.*)

### What Does a Trafficker "Look Like?"

A trafficker can be anyone -- a classmate, employer, family friend, acquaintance, a

boyfriend/girlfriend, or someone you met *online*.

- Traffickers often pretend to be someone they are not by setting up fake accounts online to "friend" a teen and then groom them using various techniques to gain their trust.

### Who Do Traffickers Target?

- Teens (both boys and girls) between the ages of 12-19 are victims, but some have been as young as 9.
- Teens from all different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds are targets
- Traffickers often seek out children online who appear vulnerable, depressed, emotionally isolated from family and friends, have low-esteem, or seem to have a lot of unsupervised time.
- Runaway and homeless youth and victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, war or conflict, or social discrimination are frequently targeted by traffickers.

### Pornography and Sex Trafficking – Are they Related?

- Some types of pornography are sex trafficking, specifically as the production of pornography often involves force, fraud, or coercion to prompt the performance of those shown in the pornography.
- Traffickers often exploit their victims by recording the acts they perform. These videos are often used as training.
- Supply and Demand: The supply is the victim, and the distribution is the trafficker or the online material. The demand is the "John," the purchaser of the sex act.



### How Can I Protect My Teen?

- Look for at-risk warning signs (staying out later than usual, change in friends, withdrawing from activities, spending time with suspicious individuals, unexplained possessions/access to money)
- To report a tip or get help, contact the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** at 1-888-373-7888. **In the event of an emergency, call 911.**

Sex trafficking is not the only kind of human trafficking.

Children may not be aware that multiple forms of trafficking exist:

- Sex trafficking
- Forced labor
- Bonded labor
- Involuntary domestic servitude
- Child soldiers

They may also not understand how the need for money factors heavily into why people are trafficked. By making children aware of the different forms of trafficking and the economics of each, adults better prepare them to recognize and avoid potentially dangerous scenarios.

Human trafficking happens in industries that we interact with on a weekly, if not daily, basis.

According to data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline, these venues, and industries are where trafficking most frequently occurred in 2017:

- Illicit massage and spa businesses
- Residence-based commercial sex
- Hotel- and motel-based sex
- Pornography
- Domestic work
- Traveling sales crews
- Agriculture
- Restaurant and food services

However, labor trafficking also occurs in places we might not expect:

- Summer camps
- Community swimming pools
- Nursing homes
- Farms
- Construction sites of private homes
- Dance troupes
- Lumberyards and sawmills
- Commercial cleaning businesses <sup>3</sup>

Human trafficking happens domestically, not just abroad or across borders.

Human trafficking can happen with little or no movement at all. People can be trafficked within

their hometowns and children can be trafficked while living under their parents' roofs. People may picture third-world countries when they think of human trafficking, but it happens in developed nations. Since December 2007, the National Human Trafficking Hotline has documented more than 40,000 human trafficking cases in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Texas alone saw 455 cases reported in 2018.<sup>5</sup>

## How to Talk About Human Trafficking

Opportunities to Talk About Human Trafficking with Children and Adolescents

Teachers may struggle to find a curriculum that explores human trafficking and meets district, state, and common core educational standards.

For this reason, Baylor University's [online doctorate of education](#) program asked Dr. Scott for advice on how educators and parents can weave the topics into daily discussions and lesson plans—and keep the dialogue transparent and open.

Below, you'll find recommendations for beginning these conversations with children, adolescents, and teenagers at every stage.

### YOUNGER CHILDREN

(Ages 2-6)

Children between ages 2 and 6 are probably not ready for explicit conversations about human trafficking. But educators and parents can begin helping children understand their inherent worth and the value of every human life.



Respect and care for our bodies

Children at this stage begin learning to care for themselves. They start brushing their teeth, dressing, and using the bathroom independently. Use this time as an opportunity to help

Children understand that we should care for our bodies and treat them with respect. Other people's bodies deserve our respect, too.

Explain that our bodies should never be used to get something we want—even if someone offers a prize, candy, or a toy.

### Our right to personal space

Make sure children know they always have the right to ask for personal space. They should respect other people's personal space as well. If another child or adult makes them feel uncomfortable, then they should tell an adult they trust as soon as possible.

### Fairness and equity

When a child witnesses something unfair happening at school, talk about what happened and address their feelings. Reiterate that fairness is one of our core values and should never be compromised.

You might say, “It’s not fair that John took Miguel’s toy truck without asking. And it’s okay for you to feel mad or sad about it.”

Gently help children understand that sometimes life is unfair, but this does not make cruelty and unkindness okay.

### Gender roles and stereotype threat

As children begin to socialize outside their families, they will pick up on the different expectations of girls and boys and women and men. Help children recognize stereotypes and understand how they affect our relationships and social behaviors. Opening this conversation can help prepare young children to consider more serious questions about gender identity later on. Try saying:

“Mommy likes to cook, but that doesn’t mean she has to cook.”

“Daddy works hard to make sure our family is comfortable and safe. But even if he loses his job, he is still a good dad.”

“If Susan doesn’t want to give James a hug, she does not have to just because she’s a girl.”

## **OLDER CHILDREN**

(Ages 7-12)

Children between ages 7 and 12 have more world experience, abstract thinking skills, and abilities to express themselves than younger children better. They are also more likely to be exposed to upsetting news and online content that is violent or inappropriate. Provide a safe place for kids in this age group to discuss these things and affirm them for coming to you with questions.



### Notions of work

Between ages 7 and 12, children begin to understand work as something adults do during the week in exchange for money, which helps them pay for things their families need: food, school supplies, clothes, and their homes.

When children come to visit you at work or when they ask about your job, consider introducing the concept of forced labor. Explain that many people don't get to choose their jobs. They are often forced to work without being paid fairly, and they may even work in unsafe conditions.

### Military and branch services

Older children may begin noticing members of the armed services in their communities. At school, they will start learning about the military in history classes. As these topics come up in conversation, introduce the practice of child soldiering.

Explain that some nations have unfair leaders who force children to serve in the military. These children don't get to go to school, play, read books, or rest.

### Allowance

If the children you parent or teach receive an allowance, start teaching them about fair compensation. You could open the conversation with, "You're a kid, and you get 5 dollars each

week. But do you think it's fair for an adult to earn 5 dollars per week?"

Explain that some people work for very little money. Highlight the importance of being diligent and researching the clothes and food we consume to ensure the people behind them are being treated fairly.

## **ADOLESCENTS/TEENS**

(Ages 13-18)

Adolescents are better prepared to discuss complex issues but may be less willing to open up to educator or parent-sensitive topics. Broach the subject, anyway, knowing that the information you share may keep your children safe and make them advocates for fair labor practices and healthy relationships.



### Sexual education

As they begin dating, adolescents need to know that their bodies are not commodities for others to use for pleasure or money. Emphasize that sexual relationships should always be explicitly consensual, and we should never have to exchange sexual acts for safety.

### Labor and demand

Adolescents may not comprehend the economic side of trafficking, mainly if their only understanding of human trafficking is sex trafficking. Educators and parents can open discussions about bonded labor and involuntary domestic servitude as they learn about economics and international trade.

### Financial literacy and practices

Adolescents may begin working or have friends who hold jobs while going to school. As they start managing money, teach them how to control their finances, including reading a paycheck, creating a weekly budget, and saving and giving money. Good habits with cash can help adolescents

avoid desperate and potentially dangerous financial situations in the future.

#### Remember: Be Honest About What You Don't Know

When your children ask questions that you don't know how to address, offer to research the answer online with them or find an organization that can provide accurate information.

**If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline now at 1-888-373-7888.**

## What is Pornography?

Pornography has become increasingly acceptable, accessible, and freely available, and it is one of the biggest threats to our children's online safety. Today, any child with unrestricted Internet access is just a mouse click away from viewing, either intentionally or accidentally, sexually explicit material online, from adult pornography (the kind of images that appear in Playboy) to prosecutable material depicting graphic sex acts, live sex shows, orgies, bestiality, and violence. Even material depicting the actual sexual abuse of a child (child pornography)—once only found on the black market—is instantly available and accessible on the Internet. Much of this aberrant material has entered the mainstream through the Internet, directly impacting our children's healthy sexual development.

### Kids' Access to Pornography

The pornography industry often uses many different marketing tactics to attract viewers and lure kids, and their marketing models create no incentive to distinguish between child and adult traffic. Most pornography sites do not request age verification of their visitors and even offer free samples of pornographic images. Some of the “responsible” pornography sites include an entry page that warns viewers to only enter if they are over 18. Still, in reality, anyone can gain access by simply clicking on a link that reads, for example, “I am 18 years or older.”

## How do Pornographers Target Kids? Free Teaser Images

Pictures and streaming videos posted on the home page of a pornographic site to entice users, including:

- Sexual activity of every form (i.e., sexual intercourse, masturbation, bisexual interactions, group sex, oral sex, fetishes)
- Cybersex and cyberchats with “live” feeds (i.e., user can view or interact in real-time with a porn star)
- Site “tours” (i.e., walks the user through a virtual table of contents of pictures, videos, and pornographic experiences available)

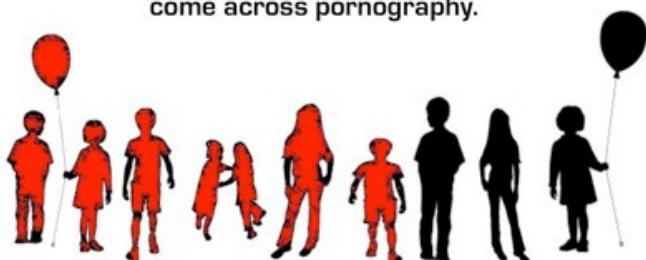
## Innocent Word Searches

Pornographic website operators use popular terms or innocent words that may have little or nothing to do with the content they display to increase traffic to pornographic sites.

## Misspelled Words and Stealth Sites

Online pornographers often purchase “Stealth URLs.” These are sites with web addresses close in name to the “legitimate” site.

### ACCIDENTAL ACCESS 7 out of 10 youth have accidentally come across pornography.



Generation M: Media in the lives of 8-18 Year-olds. Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006.

## Cartoon Characters and Child Icons

Many popular sites and social networking spaces have advertising/banner space for purchase. Pornographers often purchase this space to draw young users to their sites.

## Pop-ups & Ad Banners

Many popular sites and social networking spaces have advertising/banner space for purchase. Pornographers often purchase this space to draw young users to their sites.

## Free Flash Games

A simple, interactive game usually integrated into a website of similar games that can be played quickly, with a bit of a learning curve and no need to save the game's progress. Popular genres include puzzle games, word games, card games, and uncomplicated animated games.

## E-mail Spam (“junk e-mail”)

### Mousetrapping

This crafty tech trick prevents the user from escaping a pornographic site.

### Looping

A seemingly never-ending stream of pornographic pop-ups to the computer screen. The only way to stop the pop-ups is to shut down the computer.

### Porn-Napping

Pornographers purchase expired domain names, so what was once a legitimate web address for a benign company or site now takes users to a pornographic site (see Stealth Sites).

## Exposure to Pornography May Incite Children to Act Out Sexually Against Other Children

Children often imitate what they've seen, read, or heard. When children watch cowboys and Indians, they want to play cowboys and Indians. When children watch Superman, they pretend to be action heroes. When kids watch sex, it's no surprise they want to act out sexually. Some studies suggest that exposure to pornography can prompt kids to act out sexually against younger, more minor, and more vulnerable children.

Clinicians, psychologists, and law enforcement officials have noted an increase in the number of children seeking clinical help for issues relating to sexual exploitation; an increase in the number of children “acting out” sexually and a jump in the incidences of child-on-child sex attacks; and increased incidences of child-produced pornography.

## Warning Signs That a Child May Be Viewing Pornography

Experts in childhood sexual abuse report that premature sexual activity in children always suggests two possible stimulants: experience and exposure.

Your child may be viewing pornography if you discover the following:

- An unusual curiosity about sexuality for their age
- Signs of premature sexual activity
- Unusual or unexplained credit card charges
- Increased pop-ups or inappropriate e-mails on your computer
- The computer screen changes quickly when you walk into a room
- Noticeable changes in behavior, including increased secretiveness or defensiveness

## My child has stumbled upon online pornography—now what?

First, try to:

- Understand that children are naturally curious about sex
- Realize that kids need and want adult guidance
- Educate your child about healthy sexuality, respect for themselves and the opposite sex
- Help your child to replace counterfeit messages with messages of wholesome sexual values
- Keep the lines of communication open by listening to what your kids say and what they don't say.

Ask your children:

- Have you ever seen something online that made you uncomfortable or curious?
- Have you accidentally seen sexual pictures online?
- How did that happen? What did you do? How did it make you feel?
- Have any of your friends ever accessed pornography? Accidentally or intentionally?

## Mobile Dangers

The development of new technologies, including portable music devices, gaming devices, mobile phones, and PDAs, has increased children's benefits and threats. These threats include:

- Easy access to pornography, violent content, and other inappropriate sites
- Cyberbullying and harassment
- Contact by a sexual predator
- Picture and video uploads (youth use a camera and video functions on their cell phones to take and post inappropriate and sexual content)
- Direct access to social networking sites
- Texting while driving/distracted driving
- Addictions
- Sexting
- Difficulty for parents to monitor content and contacts accessed
- Phone scams are designed to steal personal details or money, often via text. You might not know you or your children have been scammed, so it's vital to check invoices or online statements carefully for any unusual charges

### Protecting Kids on Mobile Devices:

- Set clear rules with your children regarding when they can talk, text, and surf the Internet via mobile devices.
- Your child should only communicate with parent-approved contacts.
- Talk to your children about respecting others online. Your child should never text someone else that they would not say to them in real life. Communication should always be truthful, encouraging, and helpful.
- If your child receives a threatening, mean, or sexual message from someone, they should come to you immediately.
- Advise your child never to share personal information through their mobile device, including date of birth, address, full name, etc.

- Talk to your children about never using vulgar or sexually explicit language through their mobile devices; if anyone begins using offensive or sexually explicit language, that should talk to you and block further communication.
- Talk to your children about privacy. Discuss with them how there is no such thing as privacy through their mobile device--and there are no "take-backs" with what they post, text, upload, or send. Content, your kids send through the Internet or their mobile device can be distributed worldwide without their permission or knowledge.
- Decide whether your children can post content to their social networking sites and other websites through their mobile devices. Content posted should be parent-approved.
- If your child receives a text message from an unknown source, they should not reply.
- Your child should never let someone they don't know to use their phone.
- Don't text while walking or driving.

**When choosing a mobile device, helpful questions to ask your provider include:**

- Does this device connect with the Internet, and if so, how can Internet access be turned off or blocked?
- Can I limit my child from visiting specific sites through this mobile device?
- Do you provide filtering and monitoring solutions? If so, how can they be installed? How will I receive reports regarding what my child has accessed?
- Does this device send and receive texts, emails, photos, and video messages? If so, how can these features be turned off or monitored?
- Does this device include time-limiting software to limit the length of calls and times of day calls are made and received?
- Can I limit the phone's address/contact list to a parent-approved list?
- Can this phone block the individual from sending content and texts to my child?

## Safety and Prevention

Preventing the Internet-enabled exploitation of children can seem like an overwhelming task, as kids are at risk of encountering inappropriate content, dangerous people, and engaging in risky behavior across multiple Internet platforms. The good news is that you don't need a Ph.D. in Internet technology to be a great cyber-parent. However, it would help if you committed to becoming familiar with your children's technology and staying current with Internet safety issues.

While the content and the capabilities of the Internet have evolved over the years, the basics you need to know to keep kids safe in this ever-evolving digital world continue to hold.

Critical principles for all age groups include:

- Keep lines of communication open
- Create a list of Internet rules with your kids
- Set parental controls at the age-appropriate levels and use filtering and monitoring tools as a compliment--not a replacement--for parental supervision.
- Supervise all Internet-enabled devices and keep computers in a public area of the home.
- Talk to your kids about healthy sexuality if they encounter sexually explicit online pornography at home, school, a friend's house, the library, or mobile devices.
- Encourage your kids to come to you if they encounter anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened. (Stay calm and don't blame your child; otherwise, they won't turn to you in the future for help when they need it.)
- Teach them not to interact with people they don't know offline because an online predator or cyberbully can disguise themselves.
- Check the history file on your computer to see which sites your child has accessed.
- Teach your child the golden rule: do unto others as they would have done unto themselves

## **Age 2 – 4**

Kids at this age:

- Will accept media content at face value
- I don't have the critical thinking skills to be online alone
- May be frightened by media images, both real and fiction
- Risk moving from appropriate to inappropriate sites through hyperlinks

Guidelines:

- Always sit with your child at the computer (recommended children at this age should not be exposed to the internet)
- Parents can begin teaching basic computer skills by introducing age-appropriate games and educational programs

## **Age 5 – 7**

Kids at this age:

- Are very capable of using computers and cell phones (i.e., using the mouse, following commands, and playing computer games)
- Will accept media content at face value
- Don't have the critical thinking skills to be online or text alone
- May be frightened by media images, both real and fiction
- May be unintentionally exposed to inappropriate websites
- Are vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests, and registration forms (think how easily and willing you are as an adult to give this information out)
- Risk moving from appropriate to inappropriate sites through hyperlinks

Guidelines:

- Always sit with your child at the computer (recommended children at this age should not be exposed to the internet)
  1. Use kid-friendly search engines or “walled gardens” with parental controls.
  2. Set age-appropriate filtering at the most restrictive level.
  3. Create a personalized online environment by limiting your kids to their list of favorite or “bookmarked” sites.
  4. Keep Internet-connected computers in an open area where you can easily monitor your

- Kids' activities.
5. Start teaching kids about privacy. Tell them never to give out information about themselves or their family online.
  6. Have your kids use an online nickname if a site encourages them to submit their names to "personalize" the web content.
  7. Block or disallow the use of instant messaging (IM), e-mail, chat rooms, mobile Internet, text, picture and video messaging, and access to or message boards at this age.
  8. NOTE: Services such as The Children's Internet offer children safe, age-appropriate Internet experience available for a monthly fee. If you do allow your child to use a mobile device, use a kid-friendly mobile device

## Age 8 – 10

Kids at this age:

- They are interested in the activities of older kids in their lives, are starting to develop a sense of their own identity, and tend to be trusting, and do not often question authority
- Enjoy surfing online and using mobile devices for fun, and playing interactive games
- May be using e-mail and may also experiment with instant messaging (IM), chat rooms, and message boards (online forums), social networking and other interactive sites, and mobile devices, although the use of these programs is strongly discouraged at this age
- Are interested in discovering new information Lack the critical thinking skills to be online alone Are vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests, and registration forms
- May be frightened by realistic portrayals of violence, threats, or dangers
- May begin to communicate with online acquaintances they may not know in real life
- They may be influenced by media images and personalities, especially those that appear "cool" or desirable
- May be exposed to search results with links to inappropriate websites
- Are vulnerable to online predators if they use chat rooms, message boards, social networking, text messaging, or instant messaging (IM)

Guidelines:

- Sit with your kids when they are online, or make sure they only visit sites you have approved.

- Keep any Internet-connected computer in an open area where you can closely monitor your child's online use.
- Set parental controls at the age-appropriate levels and use filtering and monitoring tools as a compliment—not a replacement—for parental supervision.
- Use kid-friendly search engines or search engines with parental controls.
- Do not allow instant messaging, chat rooms, or social networking sites intended for older audiences at this age.
- You and your child should have the same e-mail address. Establish a shared family e-mail account with your Internet service provider rather than letting your kids have their accounts.
- Get to know your child's online activities and friends. Talk to your kids about their online friends and activities just as you would about their other activities.
- Teach your kids to always come to you before giving out information through e-mail, message boards, registration forms, personal profiles, and online contests.

## **Age 11 – 13**

Kids at this age:

- Can be highly influenced by what their friends are doing online and crave more independence
- Tend to use the Internet to help with schoolwork, to download music, e-mail others, play online games, and go to sites of interest
- Enjoy communicating with friends by instant messaging (IM) and chat features, and text messaging on their cell phones
- Lack the critical thinking skills to judge the accuracy of online information
- Feel in control when it comes to technology
- Are vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests, and registration forms
- Are at a sensitive time in their sexual development—particularly boys—and may look for pornographic sites.
- Girls may try to imitate provocative media images and behaviors.
- Are interested in building relationships (especially girls) with online acquaintances and are susceptible to crushes on older teens or young adults

- Are at the most vulnerable age range to become victims of sexual predators
- May be bullied or may be bullying others online

Guidelines:

- Keep Internet-connected computers in an open area and out of your children's bedrooms.
- Set parental controls at the age-appropriate levels and use filtering and monitoring tools as a compliment—not a replacement—for parental supervision.
- Use parental controls on all Internet-enabled devices such as cell phones, gaming devices, iPods, and PDAs.
- Talk with your kids about their online friends and activities just as you would about their online activities.
- Instruct your child to avoid face-to-face meetings with anyone they only know online. "Online friends" may not be who they claim to be.
- Teach your kids never to give out personal information without your permission when participating in online activities (e-mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, filling out registration forms and personal profiles, and entering online contests).
- Insist on access and passwords to your kids' e-mail and instant messaging accounts to make sure that they're not talking to strangers.
- Limit instant messaging to a parent-approved buddy list.
- Talk to your kids about ethical online behavior. They should not be using the Internet to spread gossip, bully, or make threats against others.
- Disallow chat rooms.
- Do periodic spot checks (like checking browser history files) to monitor your kids' online behaviors.
- Limit time online.
- Do not allow your children to have online profiles or pages on social networking sites with a minimum age requirement, such as MySpace (thirteen years old) and Facebook (thirteen years old). (Kids can lie about their ages and gain access to these sites.)
- Only allow your children to access YouTube with caution.
- Sites such as Imbee, ClubPenguin, and TweenLand are more appropriate for users under fourteen years of age.

- Your children should not post pictures or videos unless under close parental supervision.

## **Age 14 – 18**

Kids at this age:

- Crave both group identity and independence
- Tend to download music, use instant messaging (IM), e-mail, social networking sites, and play online games; most of them have visited chat rooms, and many have participated in adult or private chat
- May push the boundaries of safe online behavior by looking for gross humor, gore, gambling, or explicit adult sites
- Are more critical and selective in their media interests, and activities. Are more likely to receive unwanted sexual comments online
- Receive the highest percentage of pornographic spam
- Are interested in building relationships with online acquaintances (especially true of girls). Are more likely to be asked for a real-life meeting by an online acquaintance and more apt to accept
- Are still vulnerable to online marketers who encourage them to give out personal information through surveys, contests, and registration forms
- May be bullied or be bullying others online
- Are more likely to use credit cards online
- May be experimenting with online gambling
- REMEMBER: A teen's prefrontal cortex (decision-making part of the brain) is not fully developed at this age; teens still need your guidance!

Guidelines:

- Create a list of Internet house rules with your teens. You should include the kinds of sites that are off-limit.
- Set parental controls at the age-appropriate levels and use filtering and monitoring tools as a compliment—not a replacement—for parental supervision.
- Use parental controls on all Internet-enabled devices such as cell phones, gaming devices, iPods, and PDAs.
- Keep Internet-connected computers in an open area and out of your teens' bedrooms.
- Talk to them about their online friends and activities just as you would about their online

activities.

- Talk to your teens about their IM list and make sure they're not talking to strangers.
- Your teens should only use parent-approved buddy lists, and you should check their lists regularly to make sure your teens do not alter them.
- Insist that your teens tell you first if they want to meet an "online friend." Then check out the online friend, and if you feel the online friend is safe, accompany your child to the meeting.
- Teach your teens to protect personal information. Help protect them from spam. Tell your teens not to give out their e-mail address online or respond to junk mail and use e-mail filters.
- Teach your teens responsible online behavior. File-sharing and taking text, images, or artwork from the web may infringe copyright laws.
- Talk to them about ethical behavior. They should not use the Internet to spread gossip, bully, or threaten others.
- Oversee financial transactions online, including ordering, buying, or selling items.
- Discuss gambling and its potential risks and remind your teens that it is illegal for them to gamble online.
- Do periodic spot checks (like checking browser history files) to monitor your kids' online behaviors.
- REMEMBER: Kids are safest if not on social networking sites.

## What is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse occurs when a person forces a child to have any form of sexual contact or makes a child perform sexual acts. Sexual abuse may involve:

- touching private parts (clothed or unclothed),
- penetration using an object,
- forced sexual acts between children, or
- making the child view, read, or participate in pornography.

Even when offenders say they were gentle and did not hurt the child, these acts are abuse.

Sexual abuse is also known as molestation and exploitation. Sexual molestation does not always mean sexual intercourse, and sometimes older children molest younger or smaller children.

Sexual acts between children become molestation when one child uses coercion, force, or violence to get the other child to do the acts. Youth who sexually act out on other youth should be reported to social service agencies to receive help.

Sexual molestation is overwhelming to children, especially when an adult is involved. Most children are taught to trust adults, and they tend to believe what adults tell them is true rather than rely on their own feelings. This works against them in two ways. If the molester tells them that what is being done is okay, they may doubt their feelings that it is not. If a parent's initial reaction when they hear the child's molestation report is, "This can't be true!" the child may wonder if their feelings are mistaken. Children seldom tell about abuse "to create problems." More often, they fear that telling will make people angry at them. It is challenging for children to report abuse.

## How Offenders Target Children

People who abuse children come from all economic and ethnic groups and various social and educational backgrounds. **According to research, approximately 90% of all sexual abuse of children is perpetrated by someone the child knows.** Many abusers are trusted and loved by the child, such as a relative, friend, or neighbor. You cannot recognize abusers by their appearance, and they do not fit any stereotypes such as dirty older men, perverts, or loners. Abusers may be married and have children, and they may have criminal records, or they may be outstanding citizens.

Although it is difficult for adults to believe, children are sometimes sexually abused by other children. Sometimes, sexual contact between children is curiosity. But if one child is much older or more significant than the other, the behavior may be abusive. Pay attention to sexual behavior between children; intervene if it seems unusual or abusive.

Offenders use many tactics to gain access to children. Often, they befriend a family or parent who may welcome help with their children. They also:

- Seek out an approachable child who is easy to get to, such as a relative, neighbor, or friend.
- Establish a relationship with the child by playing with them, volunteering to babysit, becoming their buddy, or buying them games or presents.

- Break down the child's resistance to touch by playing games that involve touching, such as wrestling and tickling. As a result, children are often confused when the touch becomes sexual.
- Find ways to be alone with the child, such as babysitting, inviting them to sleep over, or taking them camping.
- Blame the child and coerce them to keep the secret by making them feel responsible so they won't tell. They say things like:

- *"You know you like the way I touch you."*
- *"If you tell, people will think you're bad."*
- *"If you tell, I will go to jail."*
- *"If you tell your mother, she won't love you anymore."*

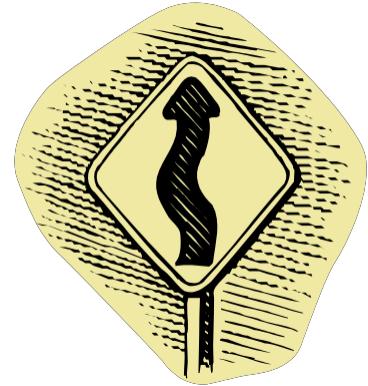


### **Warning Signs of an Offender:**

- Makes child feel uncomfortable by lack of respect for boundaries
- Engages in excessive physical contact with children
- Spends more time with children than adults their age
- Is unusually aware of kid trends, terminology, computer games, music, etc.
- Is overly interested in the sexuality of developing body of pre-teens and teens
- Arranges to spend uninterrupted time with kids
- Showers kids with gifts, treats, or special outings

### **Signs & Symptoms of Sexual Abuse**

Every child reacts differently to sexual abuse. Their age, the frequency and extent of the abuse, their relationship with the abuser, and the reaction of family members and friends all play a role in how well the child responds. However, there are some common signs and symptoms that many children display after being sexually abused. Your child may have some of these symptoms or none of these symptoms.



### **Physical Signs:**

- Evidence of physical trauma to the genital or anal area
- Complaints of pain during urination or bowel movements
- Exhibiting symptoms of genital or urinary tract infections or STDs/STIs, such as offensive odor, redness, rashes, or burning
- Self-mutilation (cutting, burning skin, etc.)
- Health issues associated with anxiety such as chronic stomach pain or headaches

### **Emotional or Behavioral Signs:**

- Aggressive behavior toward family or friends
- Withdrawal from friends, family, or social activities they previously engaged in

- Anxiety or panic attacks
- Fear of certain people, places, or activities
- Excessive sadness or depression
- Decreased school performance
- Eating disorders, loss of appetite, gagging
- Sleep problems, nightmares, screaming, or night sweats
- Regression in behaviors (bedwetting after being toilet trained, separation anxiety)

### **Sexual signs:**

- Increased questions about sex
- Excessive masturbation
- Increased sexual play with friends, pets, or toys
- Talking about or acting out adult sexual acts
- Increased choice of sexually revealing clothing
- Signs of promiscuity

## **Normal and Concerning Sexual Behaviors**

### **Children Under Age 12**

#### **Normal**

- Genital or reproduction conversation with peers or similar age siblings
- “Show me yours/I’ll show you mine” with peers; playing “doctor.”
- Occasional masturbation without penetration
- Imitation seduction (i.e., kissing, flirting)
- Dirty words or jokes within cultural or peer group norm

#### **Yellow Flags**

- Preoccupation with sexual themes (especially sexually aggressive)
- Attempting to expose other’s genitals (i.e., pulling another’s skirt up or pants down)
- Sexually explicit conversation with peers
- Sexual graffiti (impacting individuals, i.e., naming someone in threats or humiliation)
- Precocious sexual knowledge
- Sexual innuendo/teasing/embarrassment of others
- Single occurrences of peeping/exposing/obscenities/pornographic interest
- Preoccupation with masturbation or mutual masturbation or group masturbation
- Simulation foreplay with dolls or peers with clothing on

## Red Flags

- Sexually explicit conversations with someone of significant age difference
- Touching genitals of others
- Degradation/humiliation of self or others with “sexual themes.”
- Forced exposure of others’ genitals
- Inducing fear/threats of force
- Sexually explicit proposals/threats—including written notes
- Repeated or chronic peeping/exposing/obscenities/pornographic interest
- Compulsive masturbation/task interruption to masturbate
- Vaginal penetration with an object during female masturbation
- Simulating intercourse with dolls, peers, animals
- Sexual games such as the choking game
- Oral, vaginal, anal penetration of dolls, children, animals
- Forced touching of genitals
- Simulating intercourse with peers with clothing off
- Any genital injury or bleeding not explained by accidental cause

## Adolescents 13 Years and Older

### Normal

- Sexually explicit conversations with peers
- Obscenities and jokes within the cultural norm
- Sexual innuendo, flirting, courtship
- Interest in erotica
- Solitary masturbation; mutual masturbation
- Hugging, kissing, holding hands
- Foreplay (petting, making out, fondling)
- Intercourse within a relationship (one partner)

### Yellow Flags

- Sexual preoccupation/anxiety
- Pornographic interest
- Intercourse with multiple partners (promiscuity)
- Sexually aggressive themes/obscenities
- Sexual graffiti (impacting individuals—i.e., naming persons in threats or humiliation)
- Embarrassment of others with sexual themes
- Violation of other’s body space
- Pulling skirts up/pants down
- Single occurrences of peeping, exposing

- Mooning and obscene gestures

### Red Flags

- Compulsive masturbation (especially chronic or public)
- Degradation/humiliation of self or others with sexual themes
- Attempting to expose others' genitals
- Chronic preoccupation with sexually aggressive pornography
- Sexually explicit conversation with significantly younger children
- Touching genitals without permission (grabbing, goosing)
- Sexually explicit threats (verbal or written)

### Black Flags (Illegal Behaviors Defined by Law)

- Obscene phone calls, voyeurism, exhibitionism
- Sexual contact with someone of a significant age difference (child sexual abuse)
- Forced sexual contact (sexual assault)
- Forced penetration (rape)
- Sexual contact with animals (bestiality)
- Genital injury to others

## Parenting Children with Sexual Behaviors

If your child has unsafe touching problems or any sexually acting out behaviors, you may need to take additional steps to help ensure safety for your child and their peers. Consider how these tips may apply to your situation:

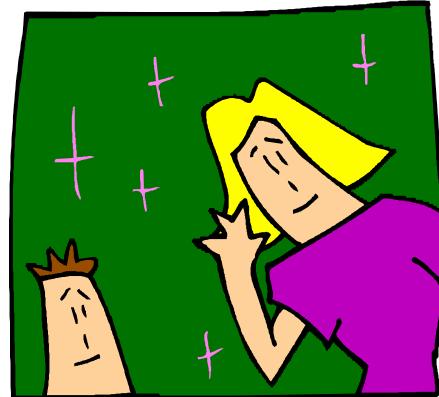
**With Friends:** If your child has issues touching other children, ensure supervision when playing with friends, whether at your home or theirs. Sleepovers are not a good idea when children have touching problems.

**At School:** You may wish to inform your child's school of any inappropriate sexual behavior to ensure an appropriate level of supervision. Often this information can be kept confidential by some school counselor or other personnel. *Please note: If you are a foster parent, ask your case manager before you share a child's private information with the school or anyone else.*

**In the Community:** Supervision becomes critical any time children with sexual behavior problems are with groups of children, for example, at day camp or after school programs.

Here are some suggestions to help you provide a safe environment for your child and any children in your care:

- **Personal Safety:** Children need to be taught the rules about personal safety to control what happens. Practice games (no, tell). Give books on personal safety.
- **Language:** Suggestive or obscene language is inappropriate. Use correct terms for body parts and sexuality and show respect for others. Avoid slang, street, locker room terms, or obscenities about sexuality or gender.
- **Parental Conversation:** Adults need to make sure no children are around when they are the topic of conversation, discussing adult matters such as relationships and discussing their struggles.  
Victimized children are overly sensitive to parental issues- their “radar” is up due to their concerns about safety
- **Secrets:** Children should be taught the difference between secrets and surprises. Secrets should not be kept in the family, but sometimes families will have a “private family business” that is not discussed with others.
- **Privacy:** Everyone has a right to privacy. Knock when a door is closed. Entries should be closed when someone is using the restroom. Only one person at a time uses the bathroom. School-aged children dress, bathe, and toilet themselves.
- **Supervision:** Children who have been sexually abused should not be left alone behind closed doors. They should not be allowed to play under blankets together. Check randomly on the child’s activities. Some children will need constant supervision, such as baby monitors or alarms on doors.
- **Bedrooms:** Opposite sex children out of infancy should not share bedrooms. All children need to have their beds. Sexually reactive children need to have their bedrooms.
- **Clothing:** No one in the family should be outside the bedroom or bathroom in underwear or pajamas without a bathrobe or scantily dressed. Set appropriate expectations on proper dress and clothing.
- **Touching:** No one touches another person without permission. No one touches another person’s private parts except for a medical exam or assistance in bathing or toileting.



Young children can be taught to take responsibility for cleaning themselves.

- **The right to say no:** Everyone in the family has a right to say “no” to hugging, kissing, touching, or any other form of interaction. This does not mean saying “no” to chores or other responsibilities.
- **Being alone with one other person:** Whenever possible, to protect all children, adults or children should not go off alone together in a twosome or stay alone together at home. Children may over-stimulate or exploit each other, and an adult could be vulnerable to abuse allegations if the child misinterpreted the adult’s actions. Think in terms of always having “witness.” If a high-risk child behaves seductively or aggressively to another adult or another child, be especially aware.
- **Wrestling/tickling:** These are normal childhood behaviors that take on sexual overtones. They are often painful, uncomfortable, or humiliating for the weaker person and should be limited.
- **Behaviors and feelings:** Children should be taught that there is a difference between behaviors and feelings. All feelings are okay. We are responsible for our behaviors, either appropriate or inappropriate for a situation. We never embarrass people about their feelings.
- **Listening and taking each person seriously** is a good rule for all communication, and it is essential in communicating with children who have been sexually abused. Each child in the family needs individual time with parents/caretakers, and setting this time aside is helpful to children.
- **Sex Education:** Children need to be taught the correct names for sexual body parts. Everyone in the family needs information about sexuality appropriate to their age and stage of development. Everyone should know that sexual feelings are normal, but we do not have to act on them.

Keep the lines of communication open, so children feel more comfortable turning to you with problems and talking with you about anything—not just sexual abuse. Remember, however, that sexual abuse is difficult for most children to disclose even to a trusted adult.



## When Children Sexually Abuse a Sibling

When a child sexually abuses a sibling, it is challenging for parents to understand what to do next. Many parents feel confused about how and why this happened. Sexual abuse of a sibling does not just impact those siblings; it affects the entire family. This is a difficult time for everyone, and it is essential to seek the assistance of experienced professionals to help guide you through the process of healing. Your Family Advocate can help you find a therapist specializing in sexual abuse treatment.

If your child has sexually abused a sibling or siblings, here are some things you can do to address what has happened:

- Have a “No Secrets” rule. All immediate family members should be aware of the incest in a general sense and know that help is being sought.
- Any children involved should know three things: that you will do everything in your power to protect the rights of both children, that the expertise of trained professionals is being sought, and that you as the parent(s) will follow their advice.
- The abused child should know that you believe them and that protection and support will be provided.
- The child who abused the sibling should know that they were wrong and that there may be legal consequences. This child should understand that they will also be supported.

- With a few exceptions, the siblings need to be separated and live in separate homes. If they are not separated, you will need clear guidance from a specially trained therapist to develop the safety plans required to prevent further trauma to either child.
- A trained therapist should assess if the children can remain in the home together.
- Other children in the family should be reassured that there will be no secrets. They should know that if they were aware of the abusive behavior, there will be help for them also.

Make sure all children know that you are committed to dealing with any dynamics in the family which were a contributing factor or any problems resulting from learning about incest.

## What Children Should Know about Human Sexuality

### By Age Five, Your Child Should

- Use correct terms for all sexual body parts, including the reproductive organs.
- Be able to understand and identify the concepts of “maleness” and “femaleness.”
- Understand that their bodies belong to themselves and that they have a right to say “no” to unwanted touch.
- Understand the concept that a woman does not have babies unless she wants to.
- Know where babies come from, how they “get in” and “get out.”
- Be able to talk about body parts without a sense of “naughtiness.”
- Know that “sex talk” is for private times at home.



### Children Ages 6-9 Should

- Begin a study of growth and reproduction in animals and plants, be aware of their needs and the responsibility of caring for them.
- Be aware that all creatures reproduce themselves.
- Have an awareness of the life cycle, including sexuality at all ages—parents and grandparents.
- Have and use an acceptable vocabulary for communication about body parts, their

- own and those of the opposite sex.
- Have a grasp of different types of caring homes.
  - Be able to identify family roles and responsibilities.
  - Begin to be aware of non-stereotyped gender roles and to operate within them.
  - Become familiar with the health care system to view it as non-frightening and supportive of their health and well-being.
  - Take an active role in managing their body's health and safety.
  - Be able to list how to develop and maintain friendships

## Children Ages 9-13 Should Be Informed About

### Human Reproduction

- An understanding of human sexuality as a natural part of life (by 12-13)
- The legitimacy and normalcy of sexual feelings
- Some idea that sex is pleasurable as well as the way to make a baby
- The realization that sexual acts can be separated from reproductive acts
- The biological components of the reproductive cycle, including how male and female bodies grow and differ

### Contraception

- Contraceptives exist (able to name them and how to obtain them)
- No one must become a parent
- It is possible to plan parenthood
- Having a child is a long-term responsibility
- Every child deserves mature, responsible, loving parents

### Human Development

- The changes they can expect to begin in their bodies before puberty (9-12)
- Range of times at which normal development begins, including normal differences in male and female timing of these events
- The general stages that bodies go through
- Menstruation and wet dreams
- Emotional changes are to be expected during this time
- Protection against potential sexual abuse and how to react to such danger. This should be a repetition and expansion of previous messages.
- Recognition of how behavior can be interpreted as sexual and how to deal with such interpretation (12-13).
- Recognition of male and female prostitution/human trafficking and its dangers.
- What are or should be appropriate roles for young men and women—an awareness

of the difference between biological sex and socially-assigned gender roles.

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)/ Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)/Teen Pregnancy/Teen Dating**

- How transmitted
- How treated
- Personal relationships
- How to be a good friend and end a relationship without anger.
- The purposes and considerations of dating – awareness of the potential for damage exploitative relationships.
- Knowledge of the relationships among family members and how families fit into society.

## **14 to 18-year-olds Should Be Informed About**

### **Human Sexuality**

- Recognize the impact of media presentations that push for sexual involvement
- Understand differences in sexuality, including homosexuality, celibacy, and marriage
- Have an articulated value system about interpersonal relations, including sexual behavior
- Know contraceptive alternatives and STD/STI causes/cures

### **Social Pressures**

- Have a demonstrated awareness of the potentially dangerous consequences of casual sexual relationships
- Understanding of the right not to have sexual relations

### **Personal Relationships**

- Be able to have and maintain friends in “real life/time,” not just through social networks
- Be able to identify expectations of marriage (i.e., emotional support, companionship, childrearing, etc.)
- Have information on changing relationships in families over time
- Be aware of the mixture of independence and responsibility needed at their age

### **Education for Parenthood**

- Be able to demonstrate knowledge of the stages of gestation
- Know the basics of childcare and child development, including sexual development
- Demonstrate an understanding of the responsibilities of parenthood
- Discuss how they believe children should be raised

## Body Ownership and Sexual Abuse Prevention Tips

Children need to be taught that their bodies are their own and that they have the right to say “no” when it comes to who touches them and who they touch. If children are ever touched in a way that is confusing or frightening to them, they need to tell someone about the touch. They need to SAY “NO,” GET AWAY and TELL SOMEONE.

The key to effective training is repetition and active rehearsal. Children need to practice saying no, getting away, and telling someone.

The following are additional tips that can help you teach effective personal safety to children:

### Teach children:

- To Say, “NO”
- Go and tell a grown-up
- Keep telling until an adult helps them
- Remember, it’s not their fault
- Proper names for body parts. (Family names for body parts may be confusing if the child goes to a non-family member for help).
- Their body belongs to them, and nobody has the right to give them a touch they do not want.
- Explain and distinguish between good, bad, and confusing touches
- To say, “NO.” They should know they need not blindly obey someone but have permission to say “No” to protect themselves.
- Talk openly about sexual abuse. Children do not understand what is said unless the subject is clearly explained.
- It is essential to explain that sometimes adults who children know, trust, or love or in authority (babysitter, teacher, etc.) may try to do something wrong with or to them.
- Not to keep secrets.
- They must ask their parents before accepting gifts from others.
- If anyone threatens them or their family, tell a grown-up immediately.



Identify five grown-ups your children can go to for help. Discuss how the child can contact them and develop a list together. Place the list in a place easily accessible to the child, e.g., a refrigerator.

List some of your ideas here:

---

---

---

---

---

- Play

- “what if” games with children. For example, ask them, “What if you are outside playing and a neighbor says, ‘come to my house for cookies.’ What would you do?” You can use the role-playing scenarios in this packet or create your own. If you are “role-playing” with your children, it is also important to develop “what if” situations pertinent to your own family. One of the purposes of “what if” games is to stress the importance of always getting mom or dad’s permission before going anywhere.

- Practice

- Make sexual abuse prevention rules part of your family rules. Practice how to be safe as often as you can. Remember the three “R’s.” Roleplay, Rehearse, Repeat.

- Keep the lines of communication open

- Above all else, listen to what children tell you and not discount what they say. Keeping children safe and healthy is everyone’s responsibility.

## Role-Playing Scenarios

The following scenarios present “OK” and “NOT OK” situations. Most of the scenarios depicted are “NOT OK” situations. You are encouraged to create additional “OK” scenarios when presenting the following “What If” and “What would you do?” situations.



1. You are outside the store waiting for your mom to finish shopping. A woman (stranger or known person) walks up and says, “Hi, I’m your neighbor. I can give you a ride home, so you don’t have to wait.” What would you do?
2. You are playing in your front yard when a person (stranger or friend) drives up and says, “Hi there, are you ready to go? Your dad sent me to pick you up and take you to his office, and your mom said it was OK.” What would you do?
3. You are riding your bike to a friend’s house. While you are waiting to cross the street, an older person (stranger or known person) comes up to you and says, “You look like a nice boy/girl. If you come to my house, I’ll give you a horn to put on your bike.” What would you do?
4. You are walking home from school, and a woman (stranger or known person) comes out of her door. She says she will give you hot chocolate and cookies if you come into her house. What would you do?
5. A man who could be a stranger or a friend is visiting your parents and keeps coming into the bathroom and looking at you while taking a bath. Since the lock on the door is broken, you can’t lock him out. What would you do?
6. You are walking to school when a man (stranger or known person) drives up in a car and says, “Your teacher told me to pick you up.” What would you do?
7. You are playing at the park when someone (child, adult, known person, or unknown person) walks up to you and says, “My puppy is lost. See, here’s his picture. Won’t you please come with me and help me find him before he gets hurt?” What would you do?
8. A cousin that often visits enjoys hugging you. When she hugs you, she also touches your private parts? What would you do?
9. You are playing at the park and see someone (stranger or known person) standing by some trees. He asks you to come over and talk to him. What would you do?
10. You just got out of school. A man (stranger or known person) in a car says to you, “Your mom told me to pick you up. Hop in the car.” What would you do?
11. You are playing in your front yard when someone in a car drives up and says, “Hi there. I think I’m lost and I need some help. Can you please come over here and tell me where I

- am?" What would you do?
12. You win a game at the carnival and get to choose a prize. No one else is around, so the carnival man tells you to come around to the back of the truck and look at the bigger and better prizes. What would you do?
  13. You are playing in your front yard by yourself when someone (stranger or known person) in a car drives up and says, "Hi, can you come over to the car? I have something for your parents." What would you do?
  14. You are riding your bike, and the chain falls off. A man (stranger or known person) comes out of his house and says he can help you, but you have to bring it into his garage. What would you do?
  15. You are admiring kittens in the pet store when an older person (stranger or known person) comes up and tells you she will give you a kitten for free if you come with her. What would you do?
  16. An uncle who you like always wants to wrestle. When you wrestle with him, he touches your private parts. What would you do?
  17. You are playing at the playground, and someone (a stranger or known person) comes over to you and says, "Come here. Your mom sent me to give you some money for a treat later." What would you do?
  18. You are in a store looking at the toys. Someone you don't know says to you, "Come outside to my car with me, and I'll give you some money to buy that toy." What would you do?
  19. You are in your front yard running through the sprinkler. A man (stranger or known person) walks up and says, "Why don't you take off your swimsuit? It would be more fun and a lot cooler." What would you do?
  20. You are playing at the park, and a man is standing among some trees. You see that he doesn't have any clothes on under his coat. What would you do?
  21. You are playing in your front yard when someone (stranger or known person) walks up and says, "Hi, I'm going to go play in the park. Would you like to come with me? There's going to be other kids there that you know." What would you do?
  22. You are in the swimming pool at your swimming lessons. Someone (stranger or known person) in the pool comes over to you and touches your private parts. What would you do?
  23. You are playing in your yard by yourself when a person (stranger or known person) walks up and says, "I lost my kitten around here. Will you come with me and help me find it? Please. I just know if we don't find it soon, something bad might happen to it." What would you do?

## Physical and Emotional Abuse and Neglect

There are forms of child abuse and neglect other than sexual abuse. Almost 2/3 of all child abuse is neglect, followed in order of frequency by physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional maltreatment.

### Neglect

Neglect is the most common type of reported child maltreatment. It includes the failure to provide necessary food, clothing, shelter, education, supervision, and care, including medical care. Neglect includes inadequate supervision or failure to provide for a child's safety, physical or emotional needs. Allowing your child to be exposed to domestic violence, drug abuse, and criminal activity, or leaving your child in the care of a known sex offender are all actions that are considered neglectful.

### Physical Abuse

Roughly 5 out of 1000 children are physically abused. It is the most visible form of maltreatment because it can be seen in the form of bruises, burns, or broken bones. Most physical abuse results from an unintentional but harsh discipline that escalates to physical injury. It includes punching, kicking, hitting, biting, burning, or otherwise harming a child. While certain injuries can occur by accident, physical abuse is suspected if the explanation does not fit the injury or if there is a pattern of repeated injury.

#### *What about spanking?*

While spanking your child is not considered child abuse, the authorities may become involved anytime an object is used or the spanking results in a physical injury to the child. In general, physical discipline is not the most effective form of punishment. Other means of discipline such as time-out or loss of privileges can be more effective and consistent in teaching children acceptable behavior. No child deserves to be hit for any reason.

### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the most difficult type of abuse to determine. Unfortunately, it is often accompanied by physical injury before authorities step in and assist a child. Also, the effects of emotional abuse are very similar to symptoms of many childhood mental and physical disorders, which makes identifying emotional abuse challenging. It includes habitual scapegoading, belittling, or rejecting treatment by parents. Children who are constantly shamed, terrorized, humiliated, or rejected suffer at least as much, if not more than if they had been physically abused.

## What Is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse is about **power** and **control**. It can be defined as one person in an intimate relationship using a variety of coercive and abusive behaviors to establish and maintain power and control over the relationship and their partner.

There are many forms of abuse within a relationship. It is a common misconception that domestic abuse means only physical or sexual violence; however, **the abuse may be verbal, emotional, physical, financial, or sexual.**

- **Verbal Abuse:** Verbal abuse means that one partner repeatedly demeans the other partner to the point of making them feel powerless. Examples are continuous put-downs, criticism, and name-calling.
- **Emotional Abuse:** This can be disguised as acts of kindness and concern but, it is manipulation. One partner may try to limit contact with friends and family, monitor phone calls or messages, or drop in unexpectedly to “see if everything is ok.” They may ignore the other partner or withhold affection to punish them, constantly criticize or humiliate their partner, or threaten to hurt themselves or another family member. They may control their partner through money, threats, or by making their partner feel something is wrong with them.
- **Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse is the physical control of another person. This includes slapping, punching, burning, stabbing, restraining their partner from leaving, hitting, hair pulling, shoving, choking/strangling, and driving too fast or recklessly to frighten the other person. This may also include locking their partner out of the house, abandoning them in a dangerous place, and intimidating them to maintain control of the relationship.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse can be psychological or physical. This includes rape and any forced sexual activity. It also includes insisting on unwanted or uncomfortable sexual acts, criticizing a partner sexually, demeaning a sexual partner, publicly having affairs, or showing interest in other women/men.
- **Financial Abuse:** Financial abuse is a form of abuse when one intimate partner has control over the other partner's access to economic/financial resources, which diminishes the victim's capacity to support themselves and forces them to depend on the perpetrator financially

Abuse is never a one-time event. There is usually a pattern of behaviors that abusers use to maintain control in their relationships

# Domestic Violence Power and Control Wheel



If you believe you are in an abusive relationship, there is help. For a list of controlling behaviors, early warning signs, or other more specific information, please contact your Family Advocate. Support groups, therapy, and shelters are available. Your Family Advocate can provide information about these and other services.

# Domestic Violence Power and Control Wheel

## Abuse of Children



DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION PROJECT

202 East Superior Street  
Duluth, Minnesota 55802  
218-722-2781  
[www.duluth-model.org](http://www.duluth-model.org)

# The Impact of Domestic Abuse on Children

Each year, an estimated 3 to 10 million children witness assaults against a parent by an intimate partner. Domestic abuse does not discriminate across race, culture, nationality, economics, or gender lines. The experience of family violence can be among the most disturbing for children because both victims and aggressors are the adults who care for them and who are most closely attached to them. For many of these children, the abuse interrupts their experience of consistent safety and care and creates an environment of uncertainty and helplessness.

## Emotional Effects:

Guilt – Feeling Responsible  
Shame – Doesn't Happen in Other Homes  
Fear – To Express Feelings, Fear of Separation, Etc.  
Confusion – Conflicted Loyalties  
Anger – About Violence/Chaos  
Depression/Powerlessness to Change Things  
Burdened – May Become a Caretaker

## Social Effects:

Isolated – No Friends/Distant Relationships  
Relationships w/ Friends Start and End Quickly  
Difficulty Trusting Others  
Poor Conflict Resolution Skills  
Very Socially Involved – Stays Away from Home

## Behavioral Effects:

Acting Out *or* Withdrawn  
Overachieve *or*  
Underachieve  
School Refusal  
Caretaking – Other Children or a Parent  
Aggressive *or* Passive  
Attention Seeking  
Bedwetting/Nightmares

## Cognitive Effects:

Feels Responsible for Violence  
Blames Others for Behaviors  
Low Self-Esteem  
Does not ask for what they need  
Learns More Strict Gender Roles

## Physical Effects:

Headache/Stomachaches, etc.  
Nervous, Anxious (seems hyperactive)  
Often Sick  
Poor Personal Hygiene  
Regression in Development

## The Legal System

It is challenging to predict what will happen for you and your child after the report has been made and the case is in the legal system. Sometimes the chance to speak up about what happened can be a good thing for the child – whether or not the abuser is convicted. Many children are relieved to think that someone more powerful will tell the offender they were wrong and help protect them. However, for other children, the events following the report can be scary.

You can make the process easier for your child by working with, and not against, the authorities. The legal system may be able to protect your child from future unsupervised contact with the offender. It is also a powerful way to hold the offender accountable for their actions.

The legal process is complex and can be confusing at times.

To help guide you through it, the County Attorney's office will assign a Victim Advocate to help you through this challenging period. It will be available to answer your questions, explain the types of victim assistance and services for which you may be eligible, and generally help you through this difficult period. Also, your Victim Advocate will serve as your direct liaison to the County Attorney's office and the attorney assigned to prosecute your case. Once the investigation in your case is completed, and your case is received in the County Attorney's office for prosecution, you will be notified by letter of who your Victim Advocate is. Please get in touch with your Victim Advocate as soon as possible, and they will be happy to assist you throughout the entire court process.

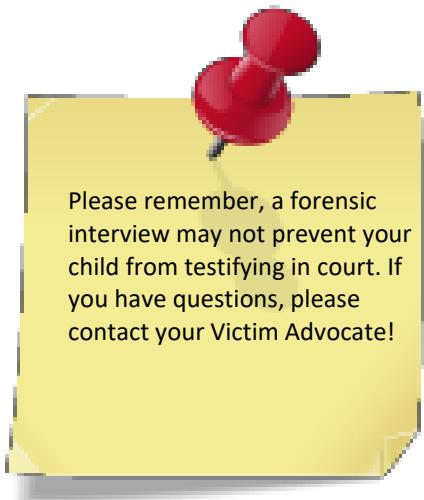
### How the Legal System Responds to Abuse

The legal system can be confusing and frightening to children and families. Part of this confusion stems from the fact that two different “legal systems” can be working on the same case simultaneously. These two systems are the “criminal” and the “civil” systems. In addition, two different court systems can work on a child abuse case: Criminal Court and Family Court. Both courts may work on the same case simultaneously, but they have different purposes.

The Criminal Court is concerned primarily with the guilt or innocence of the accused and often uses a trial to decide on the suspect's guilt or innocence. The criminal trial focuses on issues such as:

- Is there evidence to prove the child was abused?
- What illegal acts occurred?
- Was there a confession?
- If proven guilty, what punishment should the offender receive?

The Family Court is concerned primarily with the child's safety and focuses on custody, supervised visitation, and counseling. Several different court hearings can be held to decide these issues. The decisions in the civil system do not depend on whether the criminal procedure finds guilt or not.



## Limits of the Legal System

Always remember that the well-being of your child should be your objective. Don't lose yourself in the legal system because it is the only step in the process, and it is *not* essential to your child's recovery. The best advice is to enter the legal system without expectations because the more you expect from the system, the more complex the experience is likely to be.

Another thing to remember: Day after day, therapists who talk with adult survivors of child sexual abuse hear them say, "My parents didn't do anything about it." However, your child will never say that you will not tolerate abuse if you do everything you can to help them understand. This is very important.

Celebrate when it is over. No matter the outcome, conviction or not, tell the child it is over. You and the child did your best, worked hard, and put in a lot of time. Celebrate a job well done.

## How to Tell Your Child about the Legal Outcome

It is best to be honest, and direct with your child. How much you explain depends on your child's age and what they can understand. The most important thing is letting the child know that you are proud of them for being brave.

When the case is completed, you may feel let down or have a period of depression. It happens to most parents, even if it is a positive experience. If your child hears you express disappointment in the outcome, your child may think you are disappointed in them.

Instead, find a supportive friend with whom you can share your feelings and frustrations.

Remember, you have done your best to prevent further abuse and hold the offender responsible for what they did. Even if the case was dropped, this is a significant accomplishment.

You can say things to your child if the alleged offender is not held legally accountable.

- Just because they didn't find \_\_\_\_\_ guilty, that doesn't mean they didn't believe you. It's just that they must follow the court's rules.
- You may be wondering how someone can do something wrong or against the law and not be punished. It doesn't make sense to me, either.
- It doesn't matter what the court process did. What matters is that you did what you needed to do – you told.
- You are safe. You have been very brave.

A special thank you to our sponsor, Diana  
North, *North Star Business Center*.

These booklets would not have been  
possible without your support.



- ★ Notary Public, Mail & Admin Support
- ★ Fax, Print, Copy, Scan & Email Services
- ★ Co-working & Meeting Spaces
- ★ Full-Time & Part-Time Office Space



141 N 6th Street  
Show Low, AZ 85901  
928★532★2680

[NorthStarBusinessCenter.com](http://NorthStarBusinessCenter.com)

## Important Phone Numbers

Family Advocacy Center (928) 532-6047

Forensic Interview Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Advocate: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician: \_\_\_\_\_

Nurse: \_\_\_\_\_

### Law Enforcement

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Department of Child Safety

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### County Attorney's Office

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Other Contacts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



## References

- Champaign County Children's Advocacy Center (2010). *A Parent's Guide to the CAC*. Champaign, IL.
- Child Advocacy Center. *Parent Handbook*. Lincoln, NE.
- Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs (2008). *The Duluth Model*. Retrieved June 9, 2011 from: <http://www.theduluthmodel.org/duluthmodel.php>.
- Domestic Violence Roundtable (2008). *The Cycle of Domestic Violence*. Retrieved June 9, 2011 from: <http://www.domesticviolenceroundtable.org/domestic-violence-cycle.html>.
- Gil, E. (1994). *Children Who Molest: A Guide for Parents of Young Sex Offenders*. Denver, CO.
- Hagens, K., Case, J. (1988). When Your Child Has Been Molested: A Parent's Guide to Healing and Recovery. Lexington, MA. Lexington Books.
- National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (2003). *Children and Violence*. Retrieved June 9, 2011 from: <http://www.nccev.org/violence/domestic.html>.
- National Child Advocacy Center. *Parent Guide*. Huntsville, AL. Project Harmony (2011). *A Parent's Guide*. Omaha, NE.
- Red Flag Green Flag Resources (2003). *Role Play Scenarios*. Fargo, ND.
- Sopris West Educational Services (2004). *Common Reactions to Stress or Trauma*. Parent Education Session 1, Parent Handout.
- St. Luke's Hospital Child Protection Center (2011). *CPC Sexual Abuse Prevention*. Retrieved from: <http://www.stlukescr.org/our-services/pediatrics/resources-for-families/child-protection-center/sexual-abuse-prevention>.
- St. Mary's Home for Children, The Shepherd Program (2007). *Parenting a Sexually Abused Child*. North Providence, RI.
- TAALK (2008). *Child Sexual Abuse – Signs to Look For*. Laguna Niguel, CA.
- Internet Safety 101  
<https://internetsafety101.org/>

# Made Possible by



- ★ Notary Public, Mail & Admin Support
- ★ Fax, Print, Copy, Scan & Email Services
- ★ Co-working & Meeting Spaces
- ★ Full-Time & Part-Time Office Space



141 N 6th Street  
Show Low, AZ 85901  
928★532★2680

[NorthStarBusinessCenter.com](http://NorthStarBusinessCenter.com)