

TIPS TO HELP PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

Preventing sexual abuse begins with teaching your child the difference between affection and abuse--between “real love” and “fake love” kinds of touching. Talking to your children about sexual abuse is the first step in preventing it from ever happening!

- ◆ **Teach your children the difference between “real love kinds of touching” and “fake love kinds of touching.”** We encourage you not to refer to inappropriate touching as “bad touching” because even if the child is confused or afraid, it may still feel good.
- ◆ Teach your children that **it is okay to say NO to ANYONE who touches them in a “fake love” kind of way**, and that they should always tell you about it. Be an “ask-able” parent, and LISTEN to what they say.
- ◆ Teach your children the **difference between good secrets and bad secrets.** Bad secrets are secrets that people want you to keep secret forever... and that’s not OK. Good secrets, like birthday surprises, are OK because you don’t have to keep them secret for very long. Make sure they know it is never OK to keep secrets about “fake love kinds of touching” and that they should always come tell you those secrets.
- ◆ **Don’t put all your focus on “stranger danger.”** Remember it is far more likely that your child will be approached by someone they know and trust.
- ◆ Teach your children that it is against the law for anyone to try to make your child touch or kiss someone’s private parts or anywhere inside someone’s clothes. **NOTE: Some offenders don’t want to touch your child – they want your child to touch them.** Teach them that it is against the law for someone to try to make them look at someone’s private parts or to show them movies or pictures of naked people.



Your child must KNOW that they can trust you.



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- ◆ Pay attention to your child! If your children are afraid or reluctant to be alone with someone, such as a relative or babysitter, **FIND OUT WHY. Most abusive touching is done by someone the child knows.**

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- ◆ Make sure your children know that if someone ever tries to touch them in a “fake love” kind of way, that **it is not their fault and they will NOT get into trouble for telling you about it.**
- ◆ **Model trustworthiness** and show your child that you will believe them when they come to you with a problem. Your child must **KNOW** that they can trust you in order for it to be safe for them to tell you if someone is touching them inappropriately.
- ◆ Make sure your child knows that **adults and older kids never need help doing stuff like changing their clothes, taking a bath/shower or going to the bathroom.** Teach modesty boundaries in your home. Teach children how to manage their own personal care (like how to wipe themselves after using the toilet, how to clean themselves in the bath or shower) so they don’t have to rely on adults or older children for help.
- ◆ **Supervise your children,** especially during larger family gatherings or other church or social functions where there are younger and older kids interacting.
- ◆ **Limit sleepovers!** Don’t provide the opportunity for other kids or adults to sexually molest your child!
- ◆ **Trust your instincts!** If you feel uneasy about leaving a child with someone, **don’t do it!**

Keeping your child safe in today’s world takes more than warning them not to take candy from strangers. We must teach our children how to have the confidence to defend themselves, if necessary, from abusive friends and relatives.

