

The Child is Never Responsible for the Abuse

♥Protecting Your Child from Sexual Abuse♥

Prevent Abuse

There are some important steps you can take to protect your children from sexual abuse:

- Talk to your children about sexual abuse, being sensitive to their age level and understanding.
- Teach children that they have private areas on their bodies (the parts covered by a swimsuit) that no one may touch.
- Explain to children that they do not have to do everything an adult tells them to do, especially if something makes them uncomfortable.
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- Teach children not to accept gifts from acquaintances or strangers and to tell a trusted adult if someone has offered a gift.
- Work with your children to make some basic “safety rules” they should follow. For example, teach them never to go with or get in a car with a stranger.
- Teach children how to say “no” and how to get away from dangerous situations.
- Create open communication with children at an early age. Encourage your children to come to you with their problems.
- Make sure your children know their full name, address, and phone number. Teach them how to make a collect call or dial “0” or “911” from a pay phone.
- Set rules for using the Internet. Teach children that they must not meet in person anyone they meet on the Internet.
- Choose babysitters carefully, taking suggestions from trusted friends and checking references.
- If you feel in danger of abusing children yourself, seek help from a physician, counselor, or clergy member.

Toledo Sexual Assault & Crisis Center
580 West Main ♥ Many, LA 71449
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Recognize the Signs of Possible Abuse

Sexual Abuse can happen to any child. Parents should know their children's moods and behaviors and notice any changes. Some changes may indicate other problems, but children who have been sexually abused often display certain signs, including the following:

- Not wanting to be around or alone with certain people
- More mature knowledge of sex than age appropriate
- Acting out sexually
- Depression, sadness, or suicide attempts
- Fear of being touched
- Fear or avoidance of bathrooms
- Overly submissive behavior
- Sleep problems, such as insomnia, frequent nightmares, or bedwetting
- Changes in schoolwork
- Hostility, anger, or frequent fights
- Difficulty trusting others
- Poor relationships with friends
- Difficulty trusting others
- Drug or alcohol use
- Sexually transmitted diseases, such as gonorrhea or syphilis, in young children
- Torn skin in and around the vagina or anus
- Swelling in the genitals frequent urinary tract infections
- Pregnancy at an early age

Facts about Child Sexual Abuse

- Research shows that up to one out of three girls and one out of six boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18.
- Children between the ages of 8 and 11 are at the greatest risk of being abused.
- Most cases of child sexual abuse are not reported.
- The child typically knows the abuser.
- Abusers seek power and control over children. They may use tricks, lies, threats, or bribes to take advantage of a child's trust and vulnerability.

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