

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT TRAFFICKING

AGE-APPROPRIATE CONVERSATIONS FOR PREVENTION

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT TRAFFICKING MAY FEEL OVERWHELMING, BUT IT'S ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL TOOLS FOR KEEPING THEM SAFE. OPEN, ONGOING CONVERSATIONS HELP YOUR CHILDREN RECOGNIZE UNSAFE SITUATIONS AND KNOW HOW TO RESPOND.

AGES 3–5: BUILD A FOUNDATION OF SAFETY

Teach body boundaries — Explain that their body belongs to them and they have the right to say “no” to unwanted touch.

Use proper names for body parts — This gives kids clear language to use if they ever need to tell you something.

Identify safe adults — Help them know who they can go to if they feel unsafe.

Simple rule: No one should ask them to keep secrets about touch, gifts, or time alone.

AGES 6–9: INTRODUCE AWARENESS WITHOUT FEAR

Explain “tricky people” — Instead of “stranger danger,” focus on behaviors that are unsafe, even from people they know.

Talk about online safety basics — No sharing personal info, photos, or location online.

Practice scenarios — Role-play how to respond if someone offers gifts, asks for photos, or tries to meet in private.

Safe exits — Teach them how to say no, leave a situation, and tell a trusted adult.

AGES 10–13: EQUIP FOR REAL-WORLD RISKS

Discuss grooming — Explain that some people try to earn trust before doing harm.

Talk about trafficking in simple terms — People may try to trick, bribe, or pressure kids into doing things for money, gifts, or promises.

Online safety deep dive — Social media privacy settings, recognizing fake profiles, and why they shouldn't share personal images.

Empower, don't scare — Emphasize their ability to recognize and report unsafe behavior.

AGES 14–18: FOSTER CRITICAL THINKING & INDEPENDENCE

Discuss healthy vs. unhealthy relationships — Look for signs of control, secrecy, or manipulation.

Address recruitment tactics — Traffickers may offer modeling gigs, music careers, travel, or romance.

Talk openly about exploitation — Including how pornography and sextortion connect to trafficking.

Encourage peer awareness — They can be allies in keeping friends safe and speaking up if something feels wrong.

TIPS FOR EVERY AGE

- **Keep it ongoing** — One big “talk” isn't enough; make it part of everyday life.
- **Listen more than you speak** — Create a safe space where they can ask questions without fear.
- **Model healthy boundaries** — Let them see you respecting your own boundaries and theirs.
- **Use teachable moments** — News stories, shows, and online trends can spark discussion.