Parents Can Help Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

Knowledge about sexual abuse helps protect children. Lack of knowledge leaves children vulnerable.¹

Why are PARENTS the right people to teach their children about sexual abuse?

PARENTS:
• Influence children's KNOWLEDGE and VALUES.
• TEACH children the facts.
• Have more influence on children's decisions about sex than their friends.²

How do you talk to children about sexual abuse?

• Start at an EARLY AGE.³
• Keep discussions DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE, with an awareness of normal behaviors.
• REPEAT the message.⁴
• Promote HEALTHY SEXUALITY by teaching respect and value of body and gender.⁴
• Teach CORRECT NAMES FOR BODY PARTS, to reduce children's vulnerability.⁵
• Establish TOUCHING BOUNDARIES so children understand they can say “no” to unwanted touch.⁵
• Establish PRIVACY RULES in the home and away from home.
• Talk about SECRETS/TRICKS/THREATS that a perpetrator may use to keep children from telling.⁶
• Educate children on VULNERABLE SITUATIONS, including social media and online activities.
• Educate children BEYOND “STRANGER DANGER” because approximately 90% of sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows.⁶
• Give children PERMISSION to tell about anything happening to them.

What do you do if a child discloses sexual abuse?

• Stay CALM and LISTEN to the child.
• Tell the child you BELIEVE him/her and are glad they told you.
• Tell the child that what happened is NOT THEIR FAULT.
• REPORT THE DISCLOSURE to professionals for investigation and help.
• DO NOT ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS. DO NOT CONDUCT YOUR OWN INVESTIGATION.

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REFERENCES


