



Important Information for Parents

Truths about child abuse

- Child abuse can happen to children of any race, income, culture, and religion; child abuse happens to boys and girls of all ages
- An estimated **1 in 4 children** are abused
- There are not always physical or behavioral signs of abuse
- Children rarely lie about being abused
- Many cases of child abuse go unreported

Myths about child abuse

- Only strangers abuse children; **NOT TRUE!** 90% of those who abuse children are someone the child knows and 68% are family members
- Only men abuse children; **NOT TRUE!** Women also perpetrate abuse
- Only girls are sexually abused; **NOT TRUE!** Boys are also victims of sexual abuse
- Children are too young to learn about child abuse; **NOT TRUE!** You can start teaching your child about body safety and how to prevent child abuse before they go to school, children can be abused at any age

What parents can do to help to keep children safe

- Become familiar with the signs of child abuse
- Teach your child about body safety, a knowledgeable child may be less likely to be a target of abuse.
- Teach your child the proper words for their body parts, including their private parts.
- Pay attention and ask questions; adults have a right to ask about what is going on when their child is at a friend's house or with another adult; ask about who will be there, what they will be doing, the level of supervision there will be, and the address and phone number; know what your child does when using the Internet and cell phone; you should ask questions about the staff working with your child at afterschool programs, clubs, and camps including their qualifications and whether a criminal background check has been completed on all staff; if something doesn't seem right, trust yourself and look into it
- Follow up! If your child tells you something that concerns you, ask questions to learn more
- Believe a child that tells you they have been abused and take action right away; be informed and prepared; get information about who you can call and what you can do; don't be afraid to ask for help
- If your child tells you that abuse has happened to him/her or a friend, praise the child for telling and report it to authorities; stay calm and comfort the child
- Develop a safety plan with your child