



## Important Information for Parents

### Truths about child abuse

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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