

Child Abuse Detection, Reporting and Prevention Information for Parents

The following information has been researched and collected by the Catholic Mutual Insurance Company.

It is a very sad fact that today as parents and educators we have to be knowledgeable on physical and sexual abuse of children. We have to know the warning signs, we have to know who to turn to for help, and we have to know how to help prevent abuse. This hand-out was designed to give parents some extra tools for early detection, and some keys for prevention.

Know the Warning Signs

If your child is around an adult who exhibits any of the following behaviors on a regular and on-going basis, the parent should be wary and consider prohibiting contact with that adult:

1. Suspicious or inappropriate behavior-the adult tries to act too much like the child or tries to seem on the child's level.
2. Excessive gift-giving
3. Excessive touching
4. Seems to think that the rules/policies do not apply to them and often tries to break those rules/policies
5. Talks about sex at all with a child
6. Shows any kind of inappropriate material to a child.

Control Access to Your Child

It is a fact that some adults simply should be kept from our children. It is the parent's job to make sure that any and all adults that their child will be around in a daycare or school setting has had all references checked and has had their background checked. Most centers, programs and schools require this be done prior to being around children.

Monitor All Programs

Child abusers have to have access to our children in order to perpetrate. Parents should monitor all programs that their children are in, including school, sports, music etc. The more involved a parent is the more likely it is that their child will seem off-limits to a perpetrator. Be wary of any of the following:

1. A closed-door policy that exists in any activity in which you child is involved, including school.
2. An adult that wants to spend time alone with you child.
3. A program or activity that has not gone through an approval process, ie: one that seems to be started in a hurry and has no apparent guidance.

Be Aware

Parents need to know what is going on in the lives of their children and the older they get, the more we as adults need to ask questions and listen! Parents should trust their instincts about their children and should follow-up on anything that simply “feels wrong” to them. Some ways to remain aware of your child and what is going on in his/her life are:

1. Talk, talk, talk to your child
2. Teach your child about his/her body
3. Know your child’s friends and try to get to know the parents
4. Talk often about safety rules and about appropriate adult behavior and inappropriate adult behavior so that it is clear to your child when an adult has crossed the line.

Communicate Your Concerns

Tell the appropriate people when you feel your child is in an odd situation. Sometimes bringing attention to strange behavior can make a difference. Notify leads, directors, church officials, school staff and anyone else who needs to know. File reports and document everything!

Interesting Facts

Did you know:

1. Most children know their offenders? 11% of abuses are committed by strangers, 29% are committed by relatives and 60% total are committed by someone the child knows.
2. Children usually DO NOT lie about abuse.
3. Most sexual abusers are not homosexual, they are heterosexual.

Together, we can provide a safe and nurturing environment for our children. They need to know first and foremost that we, parents and educators, can be trusted to listen to them and protect them.

The information in this hand-out is being provided to SFA in fulfillment of the TN Child Care Approval Requirements, Section 0520-12-1-.05