



HOW TO TALK ABOUT CHILD ABUSE & CHILD ABDUCTION

It's OK to feel uncomfortable when talking about this subject, but think of it as another part of a child's personal safety training. Children feel safer if they know what to do if they are threatened.

There are four main points children should know if they are threatened:

- TRUST their feelings
- Say "NO"
- GET AWAY
- Tell and KEEP TELLING until someone believes them

By the time they are 3, children can begin to understand respect for their body and should be taught

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proper names for body parts. One idea is to teach them the concept of "Private Parts": as being wherever your bathing suit

covers. Private parts are not to be touched by anyone besides parents or the doctor.

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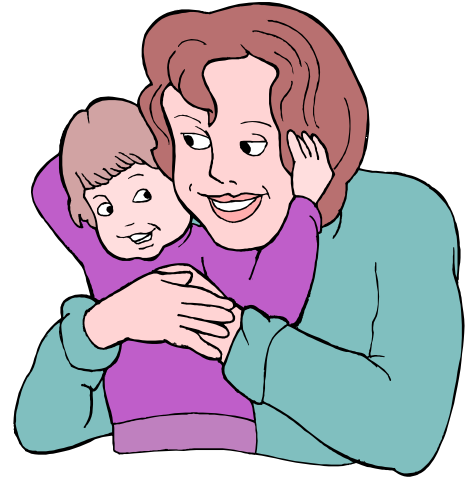
Use a "What if" game to practice what they can do in a situation. There are some signs that a child may exhibit if they are being sexually abused: return to bedwetting or thumb-sucking, changes in relationships with friends, genital disease or irritation, unusual sexual knowledge or behavior.

Changes in their normal behavior: nightmares, insomnia, loss of appetite, withdrawal from normal playing, intense fear of a person, disruptive or poor behavior.

Most states have hotlines to call if you feel a child has been abused by a parent, guardian, relative or caregiver. Most of these hotlines are 24 hour a day, 7 days a week. If a stranger has abused them, call

the local police or sheriff's department.

There are more than 100,000 reported ATTEMPTED abductions each year. Teaching a child self-esteem, how to recognize "bad feelings," warning of danger and self-confidence can thwart most of these attempts.



Children should know:

- If they get a bad feeling inside, something is probably not right and they need to get help.
- That they are empowered to tell an adult "NO", run away and tell a trusted adult.
- To recognize their natural "fight or flight" response; it's nature's built in alarm system.
- That there will be no secrets in your family.

Photos and videos that are at home will not help in the critical first 15-30 minutes; parents, guardians or caregivers should carry the following information about their children:

- Name and nicknames
- Current photo
- Eye and hair color
- Current height and weight
- Medical alert, birthmarks, scars and specific physical characteristics.

If you can hand a police officer a card with all this descriptive information, he/she can immediately put it out over their radio, or PA system and increase the chances of immediate recognition. In a panic you may give vague descriptions.

Source: www.safewithin.com

For more information, please call (925) 417-8733 or visit www.childcarelinks.org