



Keeping Kids Safe: How to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

All adults should learn the signs of abuse and to be vigilant in protecting children. While there are rarely physical signs that a child has been abused, changes in behaviors (eating, sleeping, school performance, etc.) and unexplained injuries can be cause for concern. Some children display risk-taking behaviors and others may display inappropriate sexual behaviors.

Talk to Your Child

- Educate your child about his or her own body. Let them know that some parts of their body are “private.”
- Talk to your child about sexual abuse and (when age appropriate) about sex.
- Tell your child that it is OK to say “no” to touches that make them uncomfortable.
- Teach your child that it is against the rules for anyone to ask them to keep a secret about what they do.
- Tell your child that if someone tries to touch or wants to look at their private areas or if someone tries to show the child their own private parts, they should tell a trusted adult as soon as possible.
- **Start early. Talk often.**

Minimize Opportunity

- Sexual abuse is overwhelmingly committed by someone the family knows and trusts. Parents should sense a “red flag” if any adult – a friend, coach, minister, teacher, or family member – seeks to spend significant amounts of time alone with your child.
- 93% of all victims know their abuser and more than 80% of sexual abuse cases happen in one-adult/one-child situations.
- Avoid placing your child alone with one adult. Look for group situations instead.
- Drop in unexpectedly when your child is alone with any adult.
- Monitor your child’s use of the internet.
- When your child tells you they do not like someone, ask them why.
- Be aware of changes in your child’s attitude; look and listen for small cues that signal something might be wrong.

A Child’s Safety Is an Adult’s Job

If you suspect that a child is being abused or have reasonable suspicion of child abuse, you are legally required by the state of Kentucky to report the crime.

- If the suspected abuse occurred in Kentucky, call **1-877-597-2331**
- If the suspected abuse occurred outside of Kentucky, call **1-800-752-6200**