

PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS

“Personal Safety Tips for Children and Their Parents” is the sample personal safety tip sheet offered by the Department of Human Services for use by Drop In Child Care Centers. This tip sheet is given to parents and provides an overview to aid parents in empowering their children to prevent abuse. This information is not presented directly to the children by this agency.

What is Abuse?

- Physical abuse exists when a child has a non-accidental injury.
- Emotional abuse exists when adults blame, reject, shame or humiliate a child.
- Sexual abuse exists when an adult involves a child in any part of any type of sexual act.

What is Neglect?

- Emotional neglect is when the child suffers from the parents not giving them chances for feeling loved, wanted, secure, and worthy.
- Physical neglect is when a parent does not provide for the basic needs of a child. Examples:
 - not having adequate food, clothing or heat in the cold;
 - lack of medical attention;
 - inadequate supervision

PREVENTING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Facts:

- Most children are sexually abused by someone they already know.
- Pedophiles are notoriously personable with children and will go out of their way to put a child at ease.

What Parents Can Do:

- Make your child familiar with the common lures used by child molesters and abductors.
- Explain that most adults would never do anything to hurt a child; those who prey on children are the exception.
- Teach your child that the areas of the body covered by a bathing suit are private.
- If a situation or person makes you or your child uneasy, trust your feelings.
- Give children the confidence to assert themselves with adults by establishing that sexual advances from adults are against the law.
- Do not insist children give out kisses.
- Stress that there should be no secrets from you, especially those involving another adult.
- Explain the importance of reporting abuse to you or another trusted adult.
- Spend time with your child; lonely children are easy targets.
- Make a strong effort to know your children's friends and their families.
- Volunteer to chaperone activities, especially those involving overnight trips.
- Do not rely entirely on “The Buddy System.”
- Instruct children never to go with or get in a car with anyone, without your permission.

Internet safety:

Teach your child to:

- always let you know immediately if they find something scary or threatening online
- never give out name, address, telephone number, password, school name, parents' name, or any other personal information
- never agree to meet face to face with someone they've met online
- never respond to messages that have bad words or seem scary or weird
- never enter an area that charges for services without asking you first
- never ever send a picture of themselves to anyone without permission

RECOGNIZING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Physical Signs- note any unusual pattern or location of injuries, such as:

- Unexplained bruises, welts, broken bones, cuts or scrapes or burns, missing hair
- Injuries or redness around the genitals
- Injuries at different stages of healing
- Injury or medical condition that hasn't been properly treated
- Dirty appearance and poorly groomed and inappropriate or inadequate clothing for weather.

Child's Behavior- abuse can lead to major changes in behavior, such as:

- Aggressive or withdrawn behavior
- Unusual fears (of certain people, of going home, etc.)
- Craving attention
- Fatigue
- Lack of concentration
- Hunger, begging for food, stealing
- Frequent tardiness or absence from school
- Unusual knowledge of sex
- Children may talk of being abused

Adult's Behavior- an adult who is abusing a child may:

- Harshly punish the child in public
- Refer to the child as "difficult," "different" or "bad"
- Seem unconcerned about the child
- Give conflicting stories about injuries
- Become defensive when asked about the child's health

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE AND NEGLECT

If you suspect a child is the victim of abuse or neglect, the law requires you to report it.
Call the

Tennessee Child Abuse Hotline

1-877-237-0004

Information in this document was taken from the following:

Child Lures Parent Guide www.childlures.com/home/safety/index.html
National Crime Prevention Council <http://www.ncpc.org/>
Nebraska Child Abuse Prevention Fund Board and Nebraska Health and Human Services Systems