

WHAT CAN I DO TODAY TO KEEP KIDS SAFE?

Dream Big for Children

Child sexual abuse is a silent epidemic too many fail to recognize. **Statistics tell us that 1 in 10 children will be victimized by their 18th birthday.** We can change that, but first, we must acknowledge that it exists.

Talk to Your Child

Start the conversation at a very young age.

Speak to your child in a way that is warm, open, and supportive. Important conversations like these should take place in the context of a supportive, trusting relationship.

Discuss boundaries.

Teach your child their body is their own. Teach your child the correct names for body parts.

It's okay to say "No" to an adult.

Give your child permission to say NO to an adult. Explain if someone makes him/her feel uncomfortable, find a safe place to go and then tell a trusted adult what happened as soon as possible.

Never keep secrets.

Teach your child that secrets can be hurtful. Explain that an adult should never ask a child to keep a secret and if someone does, to tell you right away.

Reduce the Risk

80% of sexual abuse occurs during **one-on-one** situations. Protect your child by minimizing opportunity, making sure that multiple adults are present. You can set an example by personally avoiding one-on-one situations with children other than your own.

Be Alert

In Texas, **98%** of children sexually abused are victimized by someone the family **KNOWS** and **TRUSTS**.

Perpetrators can be found any place children gather; schools, churches, youth serving organizations, and sadly, sometimes even families.

Know the Signs

Trust your instincts.

Some signs of abuse are more obvious than others.

Suspected abuse is enough of a reason to contact authorities. You do not need proof.

The Signs of Abuse

- Unexplained injuries
- Changes in behavior
- Returning to earlier behaviors such as thumb-sucking & bed-wetting
- Fear of certain places or people
- Changes in eating
- Changes in sleeping
- Changes in school performance & attendance
- Lack of personal care or hygiene
- Risk-taking behaviors
- Inappropriate sexual behaviors

What to do

Report It!

www.txabusehotline.org or call 1-800-252-5400.

Visit www.cactx.org for more information.

If we don't protect our children, who will?