Six Ways You Can Keep Children Safe

Know the facts

Be aware of the signs

Talk with your child

Minimize opportunity

Have a family plan

Take action

Visit www.BaltimoreChildAbuseCenter.org to learn more.
Creating A Family Safety Plan

When creating your Safety Plan speak openly and calmly with your children, utilize teachable moments, and try to practice “what if” scenarios in an age appropriate manner. Try to remember the point of the Family Safety Plan is not to scare your children, but to have an honest discussion about their safety.

What is sexual child abuse?
Any act or attempted act of sexual contact, activity or exploitation of a child under the age of 18 by a parent, teacher, coach, counselor, guardian or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member regardless of consent.

FACT: In the majority of sexual abuse cases, the perpetrator is very close to the family.

What are the signs?
There is no one sign that indicates a child has been sexually abused. Each child may have a different reaction to abuse. Some children might show many behavioral and emotional changes (such as, sexual talk and touching, fearfulness, nightmares, etc.), others might show little or no change. You know your child best. Talk to him or her and increase your vigilance if something seems wrong.

What should you tell your children?
It is important for children to know the proper names of their body parts, where no one is allowed to touch, what to do if someone touches them inappropriately, and that they have a right to be safe. A set of Family Safety Rules should also be discussed and decided upon. In addition, each of your children should have a set of rules depending on where they are, i.e. a friend’s house, at school, with a babysitter, etc.

You should also let them know it is never ok for someone to ask your child to keep a secret from you or to help them with something without your permission. An adult should never need something from a child, they should ask an adult. Explain to your child they can talk to you about anything and they are not a “tattletale” for talking to you.

What should your child say to someone who is hurting them?
Children need to know it is ok to say no if someone tries to touch them, or treats them in a way that makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused, even if it is a person they know and love. They should then try and get out of the situation as quickly as possible and tell someone. If the abuser is present the family should have a special word or signal they can use to let someone know without informing the abuser.

Who should your child tell?
Write a list of people, including names, whom your child can tell if something happens to them. Make sure your child knows there will always be someone to help them.

What should you do if your, or someone else’s child, discloses they have been abused?
Listen to the child. Try to remain calm and let the child tell you what happened. If you ask questions make sure they are open ended (who, what, where). Call either 911 (police) or 410-361-2235 (Child Protective Services) and report the abuse. Do not try and conduct an investigation yourself, leave that to the professionals.
Our Safety Plan

Our Family Safety Rules:
Example: We do not keep secrets.
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Our Family Special Word or Signal:
(This is a special word or signal your child can use with trusted adults
to let them know they feel endangered and the abuser is present.)
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Trusted Adults:
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Steps I Need to Take to Put My Safety Plan into Use:
1. ..............................................................................................................
2. ..............................................................................................................
3. ..............................................................................................................
4. ..............................................................................................................

Rules for My Children:
Child's Name ............................................................................................
Place ........................................................................................................
Rules ........................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................
Child's Name ............................................................................................
Place ........................................................................................................
Rules ........................................................................................................
How to Report Abuse

If you suspect child sexual abuse please call either

**9-1-1** or **410-361-2235**

Police or Baltimore City Child Protective Services

You can also call Maryland’s 800# to report: **1-800-332-6342**.

**Try to have as much of the following information as possible:**

- Child’s Name
- Age or Date of Birth
- Child’s Permanent Address
- Caregiver’s Name & Address
- Present Location of the Child
- Brief Description of the Allegations

Facts on Reporting Abuse

- It’s the Law
- It Can Make a Difference
- It’s Anonymous
- It Starts a Process
- It Can Save A Life

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