

The Parent's Guide
to
Children's Personal and Body Safety



Our children are the future!
Let them know it's OK to say NO!

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Start here! Start now!

Child Sexual Abuse occurs in every country, across all parts of the society. We hear more about Child Sexual Abuse problems than solutions. As adults, we are responsible for protecting our children from sexual abuse. Parents teach their children about road safety, fire safety etc., but they do not teach children how to keep their bodies safe. This is mostly because parents do not know how to approach their children on this sensitive but important topic.

This booklet is designed to empower adults to prevent Child Sexual Abuse by:

1. Educating adults how to recognize, respond, and prevent Child Sexual Abuse.
2. Helping adults to teach children how to protect themselves in dangerous situations in simple steps

Know the facts

What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child Sexual Abuse is any sexual act between an adult and a minor, or between two minors where one uses the other for sexual stimulation and for gratification.

It includes touching (inappropriate touching to severe sexual assault) and non-touching (seeing children's private parts or exposing their private parts to children) behaviours.

Photography of children showing uncovered areas of the body is Pornography. This is also a form of sexual abuse. It is a crime punishable by law.

Who is Sexually Abused?

Children of all ages and economic backgrounds are sexually abused. Both boys and girls are equally vulnerable to sexual abuse.

What are the effects of Child Sexual Abuse?

- * Sexual Abuse in children causes *long-term emotional and psychological scars* with varying degrees of insecurity and inferiority complexes.
- * In some situations, they fall victim to other abusers and this may extend into adulthood.
- * It can lead to depression, loss of self-esteem, nightmares, suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.
- * It can also lead to difficulty in forming long-term relationships resulting in separation, divorce, or conflicts between spouses.



Overall, these unfortunate experiences as children can inflict *severe hardship and pain throughout their lives and often they have to suffer in silence.*

Who are abusers?

- * People who abuse children are usually not someone with an obvious psychiatric disorder.
- * They look normal and act like everyone else.
- * They may be married and live with their own children.

Adults who derive sexual pleasure from children are called Pedophiles. Pedophilia is a psychiatric disorder and is observed in both males and females.

What are the techniques used by abusers?

- * They groom the children by isolating them, gaining their trust, and conceal and control their relationship.
- * They bribe and lure children by offering gifts, food items or money.
- * Sometimes they give extra attention by showing affection.
- * They convince the child that this behaviour is a “game” or that it is “normal”.

Why don't children tell about Sexual Abuse?

- * Children feel ashamed and afraid of not being believed by their parents.
- * Sometimes children are blackmailed or threatened by the abuser and so they are scared to disclose it to the parents.

Take action

Here are a few steps that you can take to reduce the chances of a child being sexually abused.

- * Reduce *one-adult (or teenager)/one-child situations* such as during special classes, sports lessons, extra-curricular activity classes, riding in the car or van with the driver, even when they are in a family friend's, or relative's house. Make sure parents/caregivers can be present during the classes.
- * Do not leave the children alone in the home even for a short time.
- * Know where your child is at all times and be familiar with your child's friends and daily activities.
- * Know the people who are visiting, and when they are visiting your house.
- * Observe the adult who is paying an unusual amount of attention to your child or making frequent visits to your home.
- * Be alert to the behaviour patterns of adults who are in close contact with children.



Talk to your child

- * Teach your child “The Children’s Book on Personal Safety”. Discuss the activities given at the end of the book and teach them how to react to each situation if it ever happens to them.
- * Even adults who are taking care of our children cannot always be trusted. Teach the children that NO ONE should touch their private parts, *including family friends, family members (uncle, cousin brother, and aunt), people who work in your home, (driver and housekeeping personnel), and people who are in authority, such as coaches and teachers.*
- * Teach your child to let you know if someone does something that confuses or scares him/her.
- * Let the children in your building know that they must use the “buddy system” while playing outside so they can both keep an eye on each other.
- * Give your child emergency telephone numbers where he/she can call if he/she senses any danger.



Stay alert and make a plan

- * Sometimes, a child may not be able to tell anyone about the abuse, so look for the warning signs, such as the child going out of the way to avoid being alone with a particular person, or refusing to go to someone's house.
- * If your child discloses any details about the abuse, it is very important that you stay calm, listen to him/her completely and show your support.
- * Stand by your child and do not get into open arguments with a family member who has sexually abused your child as this will make the child feel responsible and guilty for the situation.
- * If needed, consider taking your child for counseling to a professionally qualified child psychologist.
- * Report the abuse to local police, social worker, or local NGOs. Only the fear of punishment will prevent such actions.

Monitoring T.V time

Some movies and television shows have age inappropriate graphic content and language. Children should not be exposed to vulgar and abusive language.

They should not be allowed to see disturbing images of a sexual and violent nature. When children are exposed to such age inappropriate content, this will result in negative psychological and behavioural effects on young children. It is the responsibility of the parents to:

- * Monitor the content of television shows.
- * Pay attention to the rating given to movies.
- * If the rating of a particular movie is not clear, then parent/caretakers should first watch the movie to make sure that the content is child-friendly.
- * Limit the amount of time children are allowed to watch T.V.
- * Be aware of negative characters that can frighten and influence your child.

Child Sexual Abuse in the new era of technology

The wide spread use of Technology and Social Networking sites has expanded this problem. Teach your child how to keep safe while they are online. This will help them navigate his/her online world without getting hurt.

- * Place the computer in a main area of the house. In this way, you or other adults in the house can monitor the activity on the Internet.
- * Install Internet safety software on all computers that your children have access to. Some of the internet safety software tools can limit what your child can see online, block objectionable websites and can let you monitor what your child does online.
- * Children and even adults can easily stumble onto pornography websites or pictures. This age inappropriate information will cause negative psychological or behavioural effects on children. Teach children to quickly turn off the computer monitor and go to get an adult if they come across any inappropriate materials online.
- * Monitor the usage of your child's internet activity, including email, instant messaging, and activity on social networking sites such as Facebook and Orkut.
- * Manage your children's time on the Internet. Scheduling times when a child can be on the Internet and the amount of time to be online will help you monitor their activity online.

Get involved

- * Educate people who work in your home and in your neighborhood about Child Sexual Abuse Prevention.
- * Talk to other parents, teachers, and friends whom you know about the steps they can take to prevent Child Sexual Abuse.
- * Ask your child's school to include the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention program and policies in their school system.
- * Support the organizations working to prevent Child Sexual Abuse.

Secure childhood for a happy adulthood

Children should understand that while a few people may inflict harm, most people are good caregivers, teachers, mentors, guides, and friends. They should build healthy relationships with good people while taking care to avoid those who may cause harm.