



Adult Resource Packet

P.O. Box 745727
Arvada, CO 80006

720.210.4801

www.FrontRangeCAP.org

*So every child will know what to do
When it really matters!*

FRCAP © 2005 - All rights reserved

CHILDREN ARE VULNERABLE TO
ASSAULT... BUT THEY ARE NOT
POWERLESS TO PREVENT IT!

CAP teaches children from preschool through 12th
grade how to prevent bully assault, stranger
abduction and sexual assault.

Since 1978, CAP has been delivered
to more than
14 million children internationally.

Since 1996 more than 125,000 Colorado children
and adolescents have learned how to be
SAFE, STRONG & FREE!

WELCOME TO CAP!

HOW DO I TALK WITH MY CHILD ABOUT PREVENTING ABUSE?

That's the question this handbook answers.

Sometimes parents, grandparents, teachers and others who take care of children are initially afraid to talk with them about abuse and assault. They worry they might say the wrong thing and make things worse. They worry they might scare their children.

We think its fine to be a little cautious. When you talk with your children about a difficult issue like abuse, it is important to do it right.

With the help of CAP, we believe doing it right is not that hard. CAP IS FOR YOU, **TOO**. CAP gives you a way to talk with your children that really works. A way that will make you feel better and give your children increased confidence.

Parenting is the hardest and the most important job in the world. We hope that for you, it's also the most joyful. CAP cannot take the hard work out of parenting. But by helping your children be less vulnerable to abuse and assault, we believe it can help make parenting just a bit easier, more enjoyable, and more rewarding.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR YOU TO USE

In this handbook are highlights of the CAP program specifically tailored for people who take care of children. You will find a number of phrases you can say directly to your children, if you like. Feel free to say them in your own words and in your own way. And feel free to adjust how you say them according to your child's age.

Children have avoided unsafe situations by doing what they've learned from a CAP lesson in their classrooms. They've been able to ask for help to stop abuse because of CAP. We know that CAP works, but it works best when it's reinforced at home and in the classroom.

THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING...

The single most important thing we can do to stop child abuse is to bring children onto the **Prevention Team**. In the past, it's been up to a relatively small number of concerned adults to stop abuse. The **Prevention Team** has included therapists, child protective service staff, law enforcement officers, teachers, and parents.

Still that hasn't been enough. It's not that the **Team** isn't trying hard enough, the problem is simply too big for them to succeed by themselves. But children can join the **Prevention Team** and make all the difference in the world. They are willing to join; we just have to give them the tools.

The best way to protect our children is to teach them to self-protect!

CHILDREN ARE VULNERABLE, BUT NOT POWERLESS!

In most cases, there is something simple and effective a child can do to handle an unsafe situation on their own, or something they can do to get help. For example, abduction often occurs in a public place like outside a school, at a grocery store or on a busy street – places where children are within earshot of adults who could help. A child does not have to go along quietly. Every child can learn the CAP Safety Yell, and it could save their lives!

Strangers who assault children count on secrecy to get away with their crime. People within the family who assault children rely on secrecy too. Both types of abusers scare children into silence. But every child can learn that they do not have to keep a secret that is confusing, hurtful or unsafe. They can learn that there are no “forever” secrets. They can learn how and who to tell for help. They can learn that kisses and touches never have to be kept a secret!

Yes, children are vulnerable to abuse, but they are not powerless to prevent it. They can be very capable and effective, if they know what to do.

As adults who care about children, we need to teach them how to be safe. We can't be with them every moment of the day. As they get older, they are going to spend more time on their own, taking responsibility for themselves. Growing up is always a challenge, but by practicing prevention skills with our children, we can help them do their growing up safely and successfully.

The techniques and skills CAP teaches at school are indeed effective. But they work even better once you create a proactive mentality in your home or classroom. This handbook is designed specifically to help you reinforce these strategies with your children and continually improve their prevention skills.

Remember, it is not just children who benefit. Adults who teach children to be “SAFE, STRONG & FREE,” have told us they also learned to pay closer attention to child safety. They have also learned to stand up for their rights and assert themselves more effectively in their own lives.

**CAP is for kids *and* adults
We welcome you to it!**

SAFE, STRONG, AND FREE!

"Safe, Strong, and Free." Children across the country and around the world know CAP by these three words. They're our trademark, but they're more than that. They accentuate the positive. They give CAP a deeper meaning. CAP begins and ends with these three words.

Child abuse is a difficult, disturbing, and negative topic to talk about. But prevention is not. **Prevention is positive and hopeful. Prevention can triumph over abuse.** We've seen this again and again.

For example, children can use their strengths against an offender's weakness. Jesse was a 7-year-old girl. The stranger who tried to take her from a local bookstore was a grown man. In the past, the odds would have been in his favor. But in this case, CAP had been to Jesse's school, so she knew what to do. That was her strength. She did her CAP Safety Yell. Jesse's mom heard it and came running, store workers heard it and came running. The kidnapper heard it and went running.

Even though the stranger had greater physical strength than Jesse, he also had some important weaknesses:

- *He needed Jesse to be silent.*
- *He needed Jesse to obey his commands.*
- *He had very little time to work with, a matter of seconds.*
- *He could not afford to have any attention drawn to what he was doing.*
- *He needed to find a victim who did not know what to do.*

Jesse turned the tables on him. Kidnappers, molesters, and incest offenders used to say, "It's so easy to assault a child. Nothing is easier. They do what you say, just because you're an adult. You're bigger than they are, so you can intimidate them. You can lie to them. You can take advantage of them." CAP is making it harder—because children and the people who take care of children are learning how to prevent child assault. Day by day, they are making assault and abuse harder and harder to get away with.

It is great for children to know how to prevent abuse, but HOW is not enough. We also want them to know *why*. We want them to know why to prevent abuse, so they will be motivated to put what they learn into action. The simple answer to the question of WHY is that every child has the right to be "Safe, Strong, and Free." Every child is born with these three rights.

The more love and respected children feel, and the more deeply they feel they deserve to be "Safe, Strong, and Free", the more likely it is that they will turn their prevention training into action when the time comes.

In Children's Words

SAFE!

"Safe means you won't be hurt."

"Safe means people will take care of you."

"Safe is falling asleep on my mommy's lap"

STRONG!

"Strong means diving off the high diving board."

"Strong means backing-off from a fight."

"Strong is going to school the day after my puppy died."

FREE!

"Free is being able to have friends, and trust people."

"Free means having a choice."

"Free is not having to ride in the back of the bus like before civil rights ."

THE THREE RIGHTS

The Right to be Safe

Every child has the right to live a life

Free of abuse

The Right to be Strong

Every child has the right to be strong

In body, mind, and spirit.

The right to be Free

Every child has the right to be free

To love themselves, to love others,

And to take advantage of

All the opportunities life has to offer.

Children's Culture

One of C.A.P.'s long term goals is to change children's culture. We know the damage that negative peer pressure causes. There are children and teens that do harmful things like use alcohol or drugs, not because they really want to, but because they want to be part of a group. They want to be accepted.

There are also children and teens that do these things to escape. They are often children who are being abused or neglected, and their feelings are so painful that they will do anything to numb themselves. Even here peers play a part, as when friends let friends do self-destructive things without intervening, without saying, "You need some help, how about if I go with you to the school counselor?"

Instead of peer pressure, CAP promotes peer support.

Q: What does peer support mean? A: Children and teens know what to do to help other kids.

Because of her CAP training, 10-year-old Sarah recognized that 3 girls she knew were being abused. She talked with them and said, "You're being abused, and it's not your fault." She told her mom, who then made calls to see if she could get help for the girls.

A man grabbed a little girl. She could not get free but did her Yell as he dragged her toward his car. Five children in the neighborhood heard her and started doing their Yells too. Immediately parents came running out of their houses. The kidnapper let go of the girl and sped away.

One day after a classroom workshop two 7-year-old girls, came to Review Time together. One of the girls was being abused by her father at home. She started talking about the abuse, but then started crying so hard that she could not talk. Her friend, the only person she had told about the abuse, picked up the story, and helped her tell it.

Two teenage boys came to Review Time in much the same way. Sidney was being beaten by his stepfather. The only person Sidney had ever told was his friend Michael. When CAP came to their school, Michael talked to Sidney about getting some help, then came with him to Review Time. He stood behind Sidney, with his hands on Sidney's shoulders, giving him support while Sidney talked and cried, telling his story to the CAP staff.

CAP is teaching children what to do to help other children as well as themselves. When they know what to do, and when they know they will be supported for doing it, they can make such a difference in the lives of their friends.

Replacing peer pressure and peer silence with peer support is one of the most important steps towards ending child abuse.

Top 10 Parenting Tips

1. **Listen to your children** - good communication is the best antidote for assault.
2. **“No Secret” Policy** - Help children understand the difference between secrets and surprises, and that kisses and touches should never have to be kept a secret.
3. **Passwords/Code Words** - very unsafe for children! Predators know about passwords too, and they use them to trick children.
4. **Sleepover safety plans** - always give your child an out! Do not force your child to “Stick it out,” have a plan in place that allows your child to call you for help as soon as they feel uncomfortable.
5. **Participate in your child’s activities** - do not just drop them off and leave. Be the parent sitting on the sidelines at practices and games!
6. **Private Parts discussion** - Your child should know the correct names for his or her private parts. If your child asks for help with a problem, using anything other than the correct anatomical terms could be confusing to an adult who could help them if they are feeling unsafe.
7. **Alternate babysitter discussion** - In front of your child and the babysitter ***“I know you will do great tonight and follow our family rules. If anything happens while I am gone that makes you feel sad, confused or unsafe, we will talk about it first thing when I get home tonight.”***
8. **Public Restroom Safety** - Minimize the risks whenever possible. If you cannot go in the restroom with your child, send them in with another child or stand in the doorway until they come out, maintaining verbal contact.
9. **CAP Vibe** - Perpetrators can tell if a child has been educated and if parents are paying attention. **Re-address and reinforce** skills by role playing and practicing with your children on a regular basis!
10. **Reinforce CAP** strategies often! Practice helps build skills and confidence!

THE CAP PROGRAM - A SUMMARY

Before CAP comes to a school to teach prevention skills and concepts to children, we hold a **PARENT WORKSHOP**. We want parents to:

- can hear for themselves exactly what their children will be learning.
- learn how they can continue to teach prevention at home, after the CAP workshops are over.
- have the chance to ask all the questions they have regarding child abuse and how to prevent it.

We also hold a **TEACHER WORKSHOP** which covers much of the same material as the Parent Workshop, but adds more information teachers need about:

- how to identify abused children.
- how to get help for abused children.
- how to do follow-up lessons on prevention in their classrooms after CAP leaves the school.

Once parents and teachers understand what CAP will be teaching, we return to the school and do classroom-by-classroom children's workshops.

ELEMENTARY CAP

We spend 1 hour in each classroom. We start by discussing kids' rights to be Safe, Strong, and Free - and then ask the children to define these rights in their own words. This sets the theme and tone of the program. Next, we present three sets of role-plays. This is our format:

A. Role Play Part I: A Situation of Abuse or Assault

We do a brief role-play of a situation of abuse or assault. It's brief, because we've found children understand exactly what we are talking about without us having to get too graphic. The purpose of CAP is not to scare children with horror stories. They see enough of those in the media. Instead, we focus on the positives, on the things children can do to take care of themselves. This is what gives children the skills and confidence they need.

B. Guided Discussion

After the role-play, we ask the children: What happened? Did the child have his rights taken away? How did he feel? What could he do? Through guided group discussion, we work with children to get them thinking about what they could do if they were ever in a similar situation. They can generate a lot of good ideas. We help them evaluate the effectiveness of each idea. Then we add in any ideas we want them to know that they might not have considered.

C. Role Play Part II: A Prevention Success.

We re-run the original role-play, but now the child in the situation is using all of the ideas and skills the children in the classroom have just thought of, talked about, and evaluated together. When the children see a dramatic presentation of a child being effective, they start thinking, "I could do that, too!"

The three sets of role-plays are:

1. The Bully Role Play

Tori intimidates and bullies Sarah into handing over her football on her way out to recess.

In the successful role-play, Sarah says "No!" to the bully, takes along her friend, to help her say "No!" to the bully, and then says, "I'm going to tell my mom and I'm going to tell the teacher about this if you don't stop."

We also ask, "How does the bully feel? What kind of strength is she using?" As the children discuss those questions, you hear them saying very perceptive things like: "The bully just wants to make someone feel as bad as she feels." "That's not a good kind of strength. It's not being strong on the inside." "The bully has the right to be Safe, Strong, and Free, but does not have the right to hurt someone."

CAP prevents children from becoming victims, and at the same time, prevents children from becoming bullies or aggressors.

2. The Stranger Role Play

A stranger approaches Tommy and asks him his name, address, and mom's name. Then she says, "Oh, then you're the boy I'm looking for. Your mom is in the hospital, and I'm supposed to pick you up and take you there."

Tommy is confused and not sure what to do. At that point, the stranger reaches out, grabs him, and takes him away.

In the successful role-play, Tommy refuses to give any personal information and stays more than two arm's lengths away from the stranger. When the stranger tries to grab him, Tommy can turn and run to safety, while doing his Special Safety Yell.

We also teach, as part of this role-play, simple Escape Skills a child could use to break free, if the stranger were able to grab him.

3. The Known Adult Role Play

An uncle tries to bribe his niece, Tori, to give him a kiss on the mouth, and when that does not work, forces the kiss, and tells her, "This is our little secret, don't you ever tell anyone."

In the successful role-play, Tori says, "No!" when her uncle asks for the kiss. She gets up from where she is sitting with him and moves away. She says, whispering to the children in class "I'm going to tell!"

We talk with the children about the difference between safe and unsafe touches, kisses, bribes and secrets. We tell them that anytime anyone takes away their right to be Safe, Strong, and Free, they have the right to go tell someone who can help them. We help them think of people they could ask for help if they ever needed it.

4. Telling a Trusted Adult Role Play

At the end of the workshop, we show the children what it is like to ask for help from a trusted adult. The classroom teacher and one of the CAP staff, pretending to be a child in the classroom, do a role-play together. The "child" comes to the teacher privately and says, "Remember those people who came and taught us about being "Safe, Strong, and Free?" "Well, I have a problem I don't know what to do about." The teacher replies, "I'm so glad you decided to tell me. Let us talk about it and figure out what to do."

Finally, when the classroom part of the program is over, we have Review Time. This is a time when kids can come on a voluntary basis to talk with us, to review, to ask questions they did not get to ask, and to practice prevention skills. In some cases, children will tell us about being abused. Then CAP, the school, and Children's Protective Services (CPS), or the police, work together to do everything possible to get help for the child.

PRESCHOOL CAP

We cover the same themes and topics as in the elementary program, but at a preschool level. Due to the shorter attention span of preschoolers, we present the program in 30-minute sections, two days in a row. We use special pictures to illustrate "Safe, Strong, and Free" and we use toddler-size puppets for some of the role-plays.

We are constantly amazed at how much preschoolers learn and remember. When we present CAP for first and second graders, we often run into children who had preschool CAP a year or two earlier. They remember many of the key points of the program, and sometimes even the names of the staff who taught them!

KINDERGARTEN CAP

We cover the same themes and topics as in the elementary program, but at a kindergarten level, in 45-minute segments, two days in a row.

TEEN CAP

The Teen CAP program is for middle and high school students, and takes place three days in a row, during a classroom period. Topics we cover include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, bullying, stranger awareness, technology/internet safety, date rape, peer pressure, assertive behavior, sex role stereotypes, and abuse directed at people because of their race, religion, sexual preference, gender, or social status.

Using role-plays and interactive/group activities, the students are encouraged to discuss and express their feelings, the dynamics of teen abuse and violence, and prevention strategies. Teaching adolescents the types of assault that exist in our society is not enough. They need to understand how to act assertively, the attitudes that often lead to violence, the role of the media that desensitizes them, the importance of the beliefs of others, victim empathy, and the importance of bystander intervention.

The teens are very eager to talk about all these issues, and given the chance to talk about them, have very perceptive and insightful things to say.

Bully Behavior

Rationale

The CAP Project teaches children the importance of self-assertion, peer support and telling a trusted adult. Additionally, CAP teaches all children they have the right to be SAFE, STRONG, and FREE! The reason the “Bully Behavior” role-play is included in the curriculum is because most children encounter this behavior during their childhood. Bullying behavior is frightening to children, and adults often minimize or trivialize this fear. Additionally, if a child cannot stand up to a peer who might be bigger, or taller, or a year or two older, then this child will probably not be able to stand up to an adult who is violating his/her rights.

Bully behavior situations are another form of victimization. Studies show that bully victimization is not just a teenage or “gang” phenomenon, but a form of victimization that can begin as early as three years of age. Studies also show that many children exhibiting this behavior continue to victimize throughout life, often bullying/battering their spouses or committing other crimes.

The “Bully Behavior” role-play should be used not only to teach children how to keep their rights, but also to teach children that aggression is inappropriate, and that violence does not solve problems!

Objectives

The following are a group of situations that children may encounter. Each scenario is like the “Bully Behavior” role-play that was presented in the CAP workshop. After reading each scenario with your students, they should be able to:

1. Discuss whether students in the following scenarios lost or kept their rights.
2. Strategize what actions to take to keep themselves-safe, strong and free: self-assertion, peer support, telling a trusted adult.
3. Strategize what they can do the next time this happens.
4. Strategize which trusted adults they could go to for help.

BULLYING BEHAVIOR: A SERIOUS ISSUE

We know child abuse is a serious problem. Few would dispute that child sexual abuse, for example, is a problem that warrants immediate adult intervention. All too many adults, however, feel that bullying is not as serious or detrimental. Note the similarities listed below.

Sexual Abuse

Often covert

Memories last a lifetime

Denial by those around/involved

*Deep shame and humiliation
(Why was I chosen?)*

Fear of reprisal

Abuse of power

*Lack of communication w/ caring
adults. (Support system)*

Bully Victimization

Most often covert

Memories last a lifetime

Denial by those around/involved

*Deep shame and humiliation
(Why was I chosen?)*

Fear of reprisal

Abuse of power

*Lack of communication w/caring
adults. (Support system)*

- Surveys indicate that 50% of children are bullied at some time during their school years, and at least 10% are bullied on a regular basis. *American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 2008.*
- 1 in 3 middle and high school students said they do not feel safe at school. *Josephson Institute of Ethics, Report Card on the Ethics of American Youth, 2000.*
- 60% of boys identified as bullies in grades 6-9 had a least one criminal conviction by the age of 24. *Department of Education, Indicators of school crime and safety, 2007.*
- More than 6.5 million boys and 3.5 million girls are involved in fights during the school year. More than 4.5 million students are threatened with bodily harm and almost 2 million are robbed during the school year. *National School Safety Center, 1994.*
- 40% of primary students and 60% of junior high students felt that teachers only “once in awhile or never” responded to incidents of bullying. *Pepler, Craig, Zeigler and Charach, 1993.*
- From 1998 to 2002, teachers were the victims of approximately 234,000 total nonfatal crimes at school, including 144,000 thefts and 90,000 violent crimes (rape, sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault). *National Center for Education Statistics, Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2006.*
- 24% of students reported gangs at their schools. *Bureau of Justice Statistics, Indicators of School Crime and Safety, 2005.*
- Over 78% of the school-based police officers reported having taken a weapon away from a student. *National Survey of School-Based Police Officers, 2004.*

Bully Behavior Scenarios

Grades K – 2

1. When you were in the lunch line today, Joey got in front of you, and when you were playing kickball at recess, he pushed you down. You are really getting mad at him. What can you do?
2. For the past three days Jennifer has taken your lunch money. Today you have decided to keep your lunch money. What can you do?

Grades 3 – 6

1. You and a friend are at the park, when the neighborhood bully decides she wants to play with your friend. The bully pushes you out of the way so she can play with your friend. The bully tells you to go home. What can you do?
2. Rylie just moved to your neighborhood, so she is the new girl at school. You think she is really nice, but your friends start making fun of her and tell her she can't sit with you at lunch. What do you do?

Concepts and Strategies

1. Rights: Safe, Strong and Free
2. Saying "NO"
3. Peer Support (friends helping friends)
4. You have the right to tell a trusted adult
5. Who can you tell? (Brainstorm supportive adults)
 - Teacher
 - Parents
 - Principal
 - Relatives

Discussion Points

Some children want to use aggression as a solution. It's important (though sometimes difficult) to let children know that children with bullying behavior have rights too. Fighting only makes matters worse and fighting also takes away another person's rights. CAP attempts to encourage assertive behavior, rather than aggressive responses. We do not want children to escalate dangerous situations, but to maintain their rights to be safe, strong and free.

Tattling needs to be defined. Talking with an adult to keep your rights or to get yourself help is not tattling. It is an effort for you to be safe. Telling an adult just to get someone in trouble is tattling. Friends can help by standing up to this behavior. While a child might feel frightened, they can still act in a safe, strong and free manner.

When children with bullying behavior form a group or have weapons or drugs, children need adult help. Less intense situations can often be dealt with by the children themselves. Make this distinction clear to children. When adults treat bullying behavior seriously, children can ask for help.

Talk to your children about bullying behavior, even if it is not a problem now. Tell your children how you want them to behave. Be firm, clear, and consistent. Follow through with consequences if you find out one of your children bullied another kid, but do not use put-downs or physical punishment, which will only shame them and teach them that violence is okay. Set up family rules. For example, "In our family it's never okay to use bullying behavior or just stand by and watch others behave this way. Bullying behavior is wrong. If you find yourself bullying others, please let us know so we can help you change your behavior."

Watch for signs of bullying behavior. Children who exhibit bullying behavior often act as though what they do is no big deal. They might say they didn't mean to hurt anyone ("I was just kidding. She can't take a joke"). There may also be a problem if your child:

- Talks about other children in a negative way ("wimp," "loser," "stupid")
- Talks as though other children deserve what happens to them ("He asked for it")
- Does not seem to care about others' feelings
- Behaves in a rough way towards others
- Shows defiance ("You can't tell me what to do!")
- Is easily frustrated when she or he does not get her or his own way
- Is accused of bullying behavior
- Gets in trouble at school or elsewhere for fighting

If you are told by someone at your child's school that he or she is bullying others, it is important to take this seriously and make sure your child gets help if necessary. Children who frequently exhibit bullying behavior can go on to mistreat others as adults in their dating, family, and work relationships.

The Stranger

Rationale

Most of the time children are assaulted by someone they know and trust. But when strangers do assault children, the threat of physical injury is particularly high. As teachers and parents, we are constantly telling our children all the dos and don'ts regarding stranger abduction (e.g., do not take candy from strangers, do not talk to strangers, etc.).

Although the CAP workshop reinforces these concepts, we realize they are not effective by themselves. Children need safety skills and self-defense techniques that they may use in a dangerous or threatening situation with a person they do not know.

Objectives

The following scenarios deal with stranger assaults. After reading each scenario with your students they should be able to:

1. Discuss whether students in the following scenarios lost or kept their rights.
2. Strategize what to do when approached by a stranger.
3. Do the CAP Yell!
4. Discuss self-defense techniques and safety measures.
5. Strategize what to do in similarly dangerous situations.
6. Discuss the importance of being able to correctly identify a stranger and/or his/her automobile.
7. Discuss giving the description to their parents and the police.

Please Note: It is important to focus on strategies and not fear. During stranger assault discussions, focus the children's attention on what they can do to stay safe, not on what the stranger might do!

Stranger Scenarios

Grades K – 2

1. You are walking to your grandmother's when you meet a woman you do not know. She offers to give you a ride in her car and tells you if she gives you a ride, you will get there faster...What should you do?
2. You and your parents are having a great day at the fair, but when you went to the restroom something strange happened. There was a man in the restroom that tried to pull you into the same stall with him...What should you do?

Grades 3 – 6

1. You and some friends are at the mall shopping. While leaving the mall, a man in a shiny new car drives up and inquires about how to get to a restaurant. He then asks you where you are going. You tell him you are going to the store across the street. He says, 'Get in, I'll take you over there.'...What should you do?
2. On the way home from softball practice, you notice a teenager riding a bike. It appears he is following you. You keep walking and he keeps following you. When you get to a stoplight, he gets off his bike and walks up to you. He begins to ask you a lot of personal questions...What should you do?

Concepts and Strategies

1. Rights: Safe, Strong and Free
2. Saying "NO"
3. Peer Support (friends helping friends)
4. You have the right to tell a trusted adult
5. Who can you tell? (Brainstorm supportive adults)
 - Teacher and Principal
 - Parents
 - Relatives
6. Self-Defense strategies: Yell, kick, scrape, stomp, pinkie pull, RUN.

Discussion Points

Keep your distance. Many children when asked a question about giving directions do not see the danger in helping someone. It is important for children to remember that it is not their responsibility to help adults with directions. If they find themselves in this situation, especially young children, they should run and find a trusted adult. For older children, if they are going to give directions, they must do it from a safe distance or more preferably, not at all. There is no need to ever get close to a stranger's car.

Many children ask, "...what if there are two of them?" Strangers are looking for passive children and rarely work in pairs. If there are two strangers' children should remember to say "NO", remember your safety measures and self-defense, and most importantly, tell someone about what happened and describe the stranger.

Strangers use tricks. Children should not believe them. Discuss other tricks a stranger may try to use. Puppies, kittens, candy, toys, unusual animals are examples that could be discussed.

Women can be strangers too. Strangers are people that we do not know. Strangers are looking for meek and passive children. It is important for children to walk with their head up high with confidence.

Help children build a complete description of the stranger, explain the direction the stranger left, etc. Height, weight, race, clothing, license plate number, color and description of car should be included.

Discuss self-defense with the children by illustration. Show the children how to kick low (shin or knee), how to get a hand off your mouth by bending the pinkie of the assaulter, how to scrape down the shin with your heel, and how to stomp on the instep of the foot.

Reinforce with children the importance of practicing these self-defense techniques with their parents and siblings or friends. Stress the importance of these techniques and that they are to be used only if in danger with a stranger.

Passwords/Codewords: An Unsafe Strategy

You may be familiar with the idea of using a password or code word with your children to keep them safe from strangers. The general concept is that you and your child agree on a password, e.g., "strawberry." If there were ever a scenario in which you could not pick your child up from school, practice, etc. as scheduled, you would send a stranger with the password to give your child a ride. Your child is supposed to ask this person if they know the pass(code) word before entering their vehicle, and if the person responds correctly, your child may accept a ride from them.

**Passwords/Codewords are very confusing and unsafe for children.
Please do not use a password with your children.**

- Unsafe adults know about pass(code) words too. They use them just like puppies or candy to lure children closer.
- We teach children NOT to engage with or get too close to strangers. If a stranger says to a child, "Hey little boy, I know you do not remember me, but I'm a friend of your mom's. She sent me to pick you up and I know your password." Instead of ignoring the stranger and running away, your child is immobilized, engages with the stranger, and asks, "What's my password?" In that amount of time, a stranger can move close enough to grab a child.
- Can you think of any situation in which you would send a STRANGER to pick up your child? Neither can we. If there were an actual emergency, you would send someone like a family member or close friend to pick up your child. Sending someone your child does not know sets a dangerous precedent and puts your child in a very unsafe situation.
- The **only** time that passwords might be safe is if they are used **between adults**. For example, you could set up a password with the adults in the office at your child's school. If you needed to send someone to pick up your child who was not on the emergency contact list, that person would need to know the password before the office would allow them to take your child home. In this situation, **the child is not responsible for remembering a password or talking to a stranger.**
- In addition to not using a password with your children, make them aware of the concept, just as you would make them aware of other tricks a stranger might use (lost puppy, needing directions, candy, etc.). Thus, if a stranger tries to tell your child he has their password, your child will

recognize it as a trick, get away from the stranger and seek help from safe adults.

Strangers and Friends

Many of the people who sexually assault children know how to befriend a child in a matter of minutes. They know how to get children to let down their guard. They also know how to get parents to trust them and depend on them.

If we just tell our children, "Beware of strangers!" that might not be enough of a warning. They might think, "George is my friend. He is not a stranger. He must be safe." It is important for us to tell kids that even someone who acts like a friend *could* try to hurt us. Even someone we know, and love and trust *could try* to hurt us. We hope that does not happen, but it *could*.

We want to make sure that when our children meet strangers, they meet them in safe ways. We also want to make sure that they are safe when they are around people with whom they are familiar.

Remember, in 90-95% of abuse cases, children are hurt by someone they know. This is often someone they love and trust. Someone who should be helping keep them safe.

All our best friends were once strangers. We are glad that we met them and got to know them. Most strangers are not bad people. They are an exciting part of life. We want to be able to enjoy meeting them and getting to know them. There are safe ways to meet strangers and unsafe ways.

Here is an example of a safe way to meet a stranger:

We go to grandmothers for dinner. She is invited a family we do not know. We eat, talk, and play games together, and we get to know them safely. Perhaps we invite them to our house sometime.

*Why is this a **safe** way to meet strangers?*

Answers: Because I am with people who care about me and can help me if I need help. Because Grandmother already knows this family. Because we know why we are there.

Here is an example of an unsafe way:

You are walking home from school. A man leans out his front door as you pass by, calls to you, and says, "Come on in. I have a special game I'd like to show you."

*Why is this an **unsafe** way to meet a stranger?*

Answers: Because I am on my own. If I go into his house, he might not let me leave when I want to. I do not know why he really wants me to come into the house. He might be trying to trick me. He might try to take advantage of me.

Tell me about the people you know and how you met them. Did you meet them in a safe way or unsafe way?

Whenever someone tries to hurt you, you have the right to say NO, get away, and go get help. Whether you know the person or not, you always have the right to do those things, even if it's someone you like or love.

"If anyone, no matter who it is, tries to take away your right to be Safe, Strong, and Free, I want you to come tell me right away."

The C.A.P. Safety Yell

The C.A.P Safety Yell is special because it can only be used when you are in danger, and you need help. It is not to be played with. It is a special yell because it has a special job—helping to keep you safe. If you want to practice the yell, let me know, and we can practice it together.

LOW - It comes from your stomach, not your throat. It's not a scream or a screech kids do when they're playing. This is important, because when adults hear screeches or screams, they think you are playing, and might not come help you. This is a serious yell, IT'S DIFFERENT!

LOUD - When you are in danger, you need help fast. You do not have to worry about being rude. Take a very deep breath and make your yell as loud as possible.

LONG - If you take a deep breath, your yell will last longer than a scream or screech. Make it last as long as you can, do not cut it short. Do not worry about trying to keep yelling as you run out of breath. Just take another deep breath and start over as you run away to find help. Do not stop until you get somewhere safe, or someone comes to help you.

- ***The Yell says to the person trying to hurt you, "I'm a Safe, Strong, and Free person! I know what to do! I'm not an easy target!"***

Perpetrators prefer easy victims. The last thing they want to deal with is an educated, alert person. An offender cannot afford to have attention drawn to the scene. They cannot afford to have people get a description of them or their car and give it to the police. Sometimes The Yell itself is enough to scare away someone trying to hurt you. Sometimes it surprises or shocks the offender for a few seconds, which might be enough time for you to escape and run to safety.

- ***The Yell says to everyone within the sound of your voice, "I need help." It works like a help magnet.***

Sometimes if just one person comes running to help you, the offender will run away. Other kids that hear you can do their yell too, which brings even more people out to help. When someone tries to hurt you, they do not want anyone to notice, because they don't want anybody to be able to help you. Your Yell changes that.

- ***The Yell gets you going. It is the Yell that breaks the spell.***

One of the easiest things to do when you are scared is to freeze. It is also one of the worst things to do. When you take a deep breath, you send oxygen and energy to your brain and muscles. This improves your ability to think and escape. When you hear your own Yell, it can give you courage. Do not forget to yell and run at the same time. Try it. You can start running away at the same time you start your Yell.

Getting Away

- GO...** Get going as soon as you can. If you see or sense danger, you can get going immediately.
- GO...** Get going and keep going. Do not stop until you are sure you're safe.
- GO...** Loudly. You can do your YELL while you are running. You can think "Where is the nearest place where I can be safe? Who can I find to help me?"

Escape Skills

- Once a child has been abducted, the odds of recovery are incredibly low. It is extremely important for children to do everything they can to keep from getting taken.
- Anything that creates difficulty for the kidnapper, anything that can make the kidnapping take longer than expected or shows that this child is "just too much trouble," can make a life-or-death difference for the child.
- It is disheartening that we must teach our children things like Escape Skills, but the alternative is much worse. Not to teach them leaves kids vulnerable. We believe it's better kids be confident and prepared when faced with serious danger.
- The most important aspect of teaching kids self escape skills is *escaping* the threat. The goal is not to beat up the offender or teach the kidnapper a lesson. We do not teach fighting; we teach quite simple, practical techniques for quickly escaping an attempted abduction.

Self-defense training is an excellent activity for all children. It builds confidence, improves fitness, and teaches them about personal safety and responsibility. It is also good for children to hear martial arts experts say that the more they know about self-defense, the less they must actually use it! That is because they have learned how to prevent an attack.

Prevention is C.A.P.'s goal. The more kids know about preventing unsafe situations, the easier it will be for them to stay **SAFE, STRONG, and FREE!**

Escape Skills Discussion

Being aware of your surroundings and following safety rules are the most effective ways to stay safe around strangers. Staying with safe adults in public, not talking to strangers, and staying a safe distance away from strangers are just a few ways to prevent a dangerous encounter with an unsafe stranger.

It is a good idea to always stay at least **two arm lengths** away from somebody you don't know or are unsure about. That way, if they move toward you or try to grab you, you'll have time to run away.

The moment you sense danger or feel unsafe around someone, you always have the right to run away, do your yell, and get help from a safe person.

Sometimes, even the most aware and alert person can be taken by surprise. Let us talk about what to do if someone grabs you and tries to take you somewhere.

What if someone covers your mouth with their hand, so you cannot do your safety YELL?

You could bite their hand. What if the person cups their hand and you cannot bite it? Then you grab their pinkie finger and bend it back as hard as you can. This really hurts and will make them uncover your mouth so that you can do your YELL! It might shock them long enough for you to break free and start running to safety.

What else could you do if someone grabbed you (by the arm or torso)?

You could kick them in the shins (the front part of the lower leg). You could scrape the edge of your shoe down their shin. You could also stomp on the instep (the middle part of the foot where shoelaces usually are) with all your might. You can do these things together, one right after the other:

KICK...SCRAPE...AND STOMP!

- Even if someone is much bigger than you are, these Escape Skills can still help you get away. Why is that? Because you are using your strength against the bigger person's weakness.
- *When you pull back a pinkie finger, you are using the whole strength of your hand against the littlest finger, which is not very strong at all, and hurts a lot when it is bent backwards.*
- When you stomp on an instep, you are using the whole force and weight of your body against the bigger person's instep, and it will shock and surprise them, and probably make them lighten their grip or even let go of you for a couple of seconds.

Remember, these are **Escape Skills**. They are serious. They are not for playing with and they are not for hurting people you know. You use them only when you need to get away from someone who is trying to hurt you. When you are in a situation where you must use them, use them effectively. That means use them quickly and as hard as you can.

NO-YELL-GO-TELL

Here is a little rhyme of four words to help you remember what to do if you are in danger:

NO

- *NO is not just a word.*
- *You can say NO with your tone of voice, attitude, and body.*
- *Saying NO can scare off someone trying to hurt you.*
- *Saying NO can stop someone long enough for you to get away.*

YELL

- *You can do your YELL while you are running away.*
- *Your YELL can bring help.*
- *Your YELL can scare off someone trying to hurt you.*
- *Your YELL can stop someone long enough for you to get away.*

GO

- *GO even if you are not sure you're in danger.*
- *GO because its better to be safe than sorry.*
- *GO toward a safe place.*
- *GO toward someone who can help you.*

TELL

- *TELL someone who can help.*
- *TELL them that you need help.*
- *TELL them exactly what happened.*
- *TELL them who you are getting away from.*

What Kind of House Are You?



When an assault or an attack occurs, it is never the fault of the victim. The fault for the crime lies entirely on the perpetrator(s). We cannot be responsible for the choices that other people make. There are things one can do to stay safe and help prevent an assault by making it difficult for the perpetrator to proceed with his/her plan.

In *Safe Teen, Powerful Alternatives to Violence* the author uses the analogy of a house that is difficult to break into as a model for protecting ourselves and staying safe.

Imagine that you are a burglar. You are scouting out a neighborhood with the intention of breaking into a house. Now imagine that you see two houses side by side. They are identical in appearance except for the tall fence around the one on the left. When you look closer, you see surveillance cameras mounted all around this house and a security alarm system. The doors are locked, and “Beware of Dog” signs are posted in the windows. You can hear a large dog barking as you walk by.

The second house, the one on the right, has no fence. There is no visible security system of any kind. On closer inspection, you see that one of the windows is open, and as you walk up to the front door no dogs are barking, no lights go on and no alarms go off.

You are the burglar. Which house would you break into? This is not a trick question.

It is obvious that the house on the right is an easy house to break into and would be any burglar’s first choice. The house on the left—the hard house to break into—would be too risky.¹

We want to be the hard house to break into. Behaviors that keep us safe are like the security system on the hard house. By using assertive and intentional behaviors, our bodies and our words can communicate strong and clear messages that say: “I will not go with you” or “I do not like the way you are looking at me” or “I do not want your attention.”

Another way to help protect ourselves is to listen to our intuition, our gut instinct. If we learn to listen to it carefully, it can tell us when we are in real danger. Intuition can show itself in many forms, some of which may be surprising or unrelated at the time. When any of these signs send you a signal of danger it is important that you trust it, pay attention to it and follow it. Get yourself to a safe place immediately.

Messengers of Intuition:²

- Nagging feelings
- Persistent thoughts
- Wonder
- Anxiety
- Curiosity
- Hunches
- Gut feelings
- Doubt
- Hesitation
- Suspicion
- Apprehension
- Fear

¹ Anita Roberts, *Safe Teen, Powerful Alternatives to Violence* (Vancouver, British Columbia: Polestar of Raincoast Books, 2001), 12.

² Gavin DeBecker, *The Gift of Fear* (New York: Dell Publishing of Bantam Doubleday Publishing Group, Inc., 1997), 383—384

There are things that we can do to help make ourselves a “hard house to break into” and to help reduce the risk of a possible assault, whether it is on your way home from school, at a party, or in a relationship:



HARD HOUSE BEHAVIORS

- Being aware at all times of what is going on around you.
- Using good eye contact.
- Listening to and following your intuition (gut feelings).
- Being assertive. (Being assertive is *not* being rude.)
- Making responsible choices.
- Using strong body language to communicate your position. Using a firm hand gesture to indicate “NO” or “STOP.” Keeping shoulders and head square with the person you are confronting.
- Speaking up for yourself using a strong and firm voice. Using “I” messages. (i.e., “I want you to stop.”) Repeating your message several times if necessary.
- Getting yourself out of the situation immediately if it does not feel right.
- Keeping a healthy balance between living your life and being safe.
- Being prepared. Having a safety plan. Having alternate plans for how to be safe if your initial plans change.
- Knowing your capabilities and considering what you can do in given situations.
- Staying calm and keeping a neutral stance in a threatening situation. Looking calm and confident on the outside, even if you are scared on the inside. Keep from reacting to your anger in the moment. (Feeling angry is okay. Acting angry can be dangerous³.)



EASY HOUSE BEHAVIORS

- Being an easy target: Being quiet, following unsafe directives.
- Feeling obligated to help someone.
- Being reticent to say “NO” for fear of being considered “rude.”
- Smiling when saying “NO.” (This sends mixed messages.)
- Acting aggressively. Acting passively.
- Believing myths:
 - “It can’t happen to me.”
 - “Being paranoid keeps me safe.”
 - “Only women are at risk.”
 - “I can tell what a *bad person* looks like.”
 - “If I don’t wear certain types of clothes, I’ll be safe.”
- Believing that the offender is being polite or nice, when in reality they are trying to get something from you, or they are trying to get you to do something.
- Thinking that the offender is charming, when in reality they are charming you and trying to get something from you.
- Giving out personal information: your name, your age, where you live, where you are headed (i.e., “I’m going to work.”) or things you like or dislike.
- Apologizing unnecessarily. (This communicates insecurity.)
- Allowing your anger to take control, rather than using it to guide you in unsafe situations.

³ Anita Roberts, *Safe Teen, Powerful Alternatives to Violence* (Vancouver, British Columbia: Polestar of Raincoast Books, 2001), 25.

Internet Safety

Protecting your child from predators online:

- Explain to children that giving out an address online makes it extremely easy for someone to find your house.
- Tell children not to give out personal information like their name, age, school, jersey numbers, etc. over the internet because it could help an unsafe person find them.
- Children under 14 should not have their own online account/password, so you can more easily monitor their internet activity.
- Computers should be kept in common areas.
- Children should have gender neutral screen names and email addresses.
- Teach your children that they do not have to respond to every instant message or email.
- Teach children never to meet an online acquaintance without you.
- Talk to your children about which websites they visit, the people on their buddy list, and with whom they communicate.
- Remind children that social network sites like MySpace and Facebook are public forums, and that content they post on their profile is available to the general public.

Potential Indicators your child is involved in an inappropriate online relationship:

- Your child spends excessive amounts of time online.
- You find your child online after bedtime.
- Your child turns off the computer when you enter the room.
- Your child receives phone calls from adults.
- You notice long distance calls from unfamiliar numbers on your phone bill
- Your child receives mail from someone you do not know.
- Your child becomes noticeably withdrawn.

The Known Adult

Rationale

Statistics show that most of the time, children are assaulted by someone they know, trust and love.

We are constantly teaching our children about stranger assaults and tend to shy away from education regarding assault by a known person. For many of us this can be a difficult and embarrassing subject to talk about, but just as we teach our children about strangers, or about crossing the street safely, we must teach them about the possibility of assault by a known person.

Estimates show that 1 in 3 girls, and 1 in 4-6 boys will be sexually assaulted before the age of 18. The CAP workshop teaches children about this kind of assault in a non-threatening manner.

This is not a lesson in sex education but a means of helping children recognize and deal with a potentially dangerous situation.

Children need to know that if anyone touches them or kisses them inappropriately and tells them to keep it a secret they do not have to do so. They need to know that they have rights. One of those rights is the right to say "NO". Another right is the right to tell a trusted adult and to keep telling adults until someone believes them and provides assistance.

On average, children must tell three adults before someone believes their disclosure. That is why it is so important for them to know they have the right to keep telling and seek adult assistance.

Many perpetrators report that they did not assault certain children because those children said "NO" and said, "I will tell someone". Children need support to say "NO" to someone trying to take their rights away.

Objectives

The following scenarios deal with assault by a known person. After reading each scenario to your students they should be able to:

1. Discuss whether students in the following scenarios lost or kept their rights.
2. Recognize safe and unsafe secrets.
3. Recognize safe and unsafe touches.
4. Recognize safe and unsafe kisses.
5. Realize the importance of how unwanted touching/kissing is a violation of someone's rights.
6. Realize how important it is to tell a trusted adult.
7. Realize that if they tell someone and that person does not believe them or help them, they have the right to keep telling until someone does help.

Unsafe Touching Scenarios

Grades K – 2

1. Tonight, your mom and dad are going out for dinner. Your big brother is at a sleepover party at one of his friends, so your mom must find a sitter. She finds one, but it is someone you do not know very well. When your parents leave the house, they remind you to do what the sitter says, and to be good. As soon as they leave, the sitter tells you to play a special game. It is called "touches". The sitter says to touch whatever she tells you to. At first the game is fun, but then she wants to touch your body and you do not want her to. What should you do?
2. You and your favorite uncle are playing a tickling game...at first it is fun, and you are having a good time, but as the game goes on you notice your uncle tickling you in places that you don't want him to touch...What should you do?

Grades 3 – 6

1. Everyday after school you and some of your friends get together to study and play for a few hours. Today you go over to Beth's house. Beth's father has always been nice to you, today he seems nicer than usual. For some reason he keeps touching your hair and rubbing your face. You do not want to be disrespectful, but you do not like the way he keeps touching you... What should you do?
2. Nancy really enjoys spending weekends with her aunt and uncle. They seem to have a really close relationship. Every night before going to bed, she kisses her uncle goodnight. Then one night, while she is getting ready for bed, her uncle enters her room. They talk for a while and then he kisses her goodnight. But tonight's kiss was awful. Nancy did not feel good about what happened...What should she do?

Concepts and Strategies

1. Rights: Safe, Strong and Free.
2. Saying "NO"
3. Peer Support (friends helping friends)
4. You have the right to tell a trusted adult.
5. Who can you tell? (Brainstorm supportive adults)
 - Teacher
 - Parents
 - Principal
 - Relatives

Discussion Points

Silence often allows abuse to continue, so children must learn that they have the right to tell someone.

Sometimes a kiss or touch is confusing or uncomfortable. Children need to talk to a trusted adult.

It is important for children to keep telling adults until someone believes them and gives them assistance.

Remember to stress that the child is not responsible for what has happened and that it is not their fault.

Some children may not feel comfortable standing up to any adult because they have been taught to obey authority figures. Children need to understand that if they do what the babysitter says because they are afraid, they should still tell an adult later.

For many young children tickling is a favorite game, but when a child begins to feel uncomfortable it is no longer a game. If a child wants the game to end, that is okay. Children have the right to say when they have had enough.

It is also so important for children to know that you care about them, and you want to help them. The only way you can help them is if they talk to you or someone they trust.

Getting away is not always easy for some children but let them know that it can be something as simple as going outside or into another room.

Telling

Abuse thrives on secrecy. Open communication with our children is one of the absolute best prevention techniques. Communicating openly with children is easier said than done, but practice helps. Practicing is an important part of prevention.

First, we can practice by taking the time to listen to our children every day. If we actively listen to their discoveries and disappointments, embarrassments and delights, when they need to come to us about something like abuse, they will know we really want them to talk with us, and it will not be a big deal. When a child knows, you will listen to them, they will be less apprehensive about approaching you with such a sensitive issue.

Second, we can practice by asking our children to pretend that they have an embarrassing secret to tell and asking them to tell it to us. Then we can respond as if they were really telling us an upsetting secret by giving them a hug, comforting them, and saying, "I'm so glad you told me." Kids learn better when we practice things with them, instead of just telling them.

Here are some things you might want to talk with your child about specifically:

Sometimes it's easy to tell a person you trust that you need help. But there are other times when it's hard to tell someone that you need help:

- *Maybe you feel embarrassed.*
- *Maybe you feel scared.*
- *Maybe you feel that you will upset the person you tell.*
- *Maybe the person who hurt you is someone you care about, and you are scared about getting them in trouble.*

But when you need help, even if you experience these kinds of feelings, or you are feeling shy about telling, I still really want you to tell.

You could just come to me and say, "I have a secret that I'm scared to tell." Then I can help you tell it.

“Remember, I always want to help you be Safe, Strong and Free.”

TELLING: SAFE SECRETS VS. UNSAFE SECRETS

Abusers depend on secrecy. They depend on keeping a child isolated. They depend on tricks. They will tell you lies to keep you all alone. They depend on children not knowing what to do.

WHAT'S A SAFE SECRET?

A surprise birthday party is planned for your friend Chris. It is going to happen on Saturday. Chris's mom invites you but says, "Keep it a secret!"

Why is this a safe secret?

(Some answers: Because the secret will make Chris happy. Because the secret will not hurt Chris, or me, or anybody. Because I only must keep the secret for a little while. Because I can tell my mom or dad or grandma or grandpa about the secret. Because it is not a secret, I have to keep all to myself.)

WHAT'S AN UNSAFE SECRET?

A neighbor tells you to come inside and touches you in a way that you do not like, making you feel confused or uncomfortable. Then he says, "This is a secret! Do not tell anyone! Not anyone, ever! If you tell, I'll hurt you or I'll hurt your mom."

Why is this an unsafe secret?

(Some answers: Because it hurts me. Because I must keep it all to myself. Because I am supposed to keep it forever. Because this person scares me. Because I am not supposed to ask anyone to help me.)

IT IS ALWAYS OKAY TO TELL A SECRET TO SOMEONE.

*No matter what anyone says, it is always okay to tell someone who can help you. You never have to keep a secret **all to yourself**. You never have to keep a **forever secret**.*

If someone tells you to keep a forever secret and to keep it all to yourself, I want you to come tell me right away, because that is an unsafe secret. I want you to tell me even if you're scared to tell me. You can say, "Mom, I have a secret, but I am scared to tell you." If you can do that much, then I can help you with the rest!

**IT TAKES TWO
TO STOP A SECRET:**

**A CHILD WHO IS READY TO TELL
AND
AN ADULT WHO IS READY TO LISTEN!**

Why Children Don't Tell

Here are two common tricks offenders use to get children to keep a secret:

"IT'S YOUR FAULT"

If someone is hurting you or taking advantage of you, he or she might say, "This is all your own fault. You are bad. That is why this is happening to you. You deserve to have bad things happen to you."

If anyone says anything like this to you, I want you to come tell me right away.

If anyone says anything like this to you, they are not your friend.

If anyone says anything like this to you, you do not have to do what they tell you to do. You do not have to keep it a secret. You can come tell me.

"YOUR MOM AND DAD WON'T LOVE YOU ANYMORE"

If someone is hurting you or taking advantage of you, he or she might say, "If you tell your mom and dad about our secret, they won't love you anymore. They'll think you're bad and they'll stop loving you."

If anyone ever says anything like this to you, I want you to come tell me right away.

If anyone ever says anything like this to you, they are lying. They are trying to trick you and take advantage of you.

Mom and Dad (or Grandma and Grandpa) will always love you, no matter what. No matter how bad something seems, or how embarrassed you feel, or how scared you are, please come tell us.

*Then we can help you be a **SAFE, STRONG** and **FREE** person again.*

Age Appropriate Sexual Behavior

Sexuality is a part of every human, regardless of age. Below are some of the healthy developments for preschoolers to adolescents. These are only some of the developments and behaviors to be aware of, and it is always important to remember that each person develops at his or her own pace.

Preschool (0 – 5 years)

Sexual language is used frequently, primarily related to differences in private body parts, bathroom talk, pregnancy and birth; masturbation at home and in public is common; showing and looking at private body parts are common. Discussion of sexual acts is uncommon; contact (touching) experiences with other children are rare; adult like sexual behaviors is rare.

School Age (6 – 12 years)

Questions centered around menstruation, pregnancy, and sexual behavior; experimenting with other children is quite common and typically occurs during “games” with the same-age peers; could include kissing, fondling, exhibitionism and role-playing; masturbation is common in the home or other private places, but rare in public; sexual words and discussing sexual acts are more prevalent than in pre-school years although still uncommon.

Adolescence (13 – 16 years)

Questions focus on concerns about decision making, social relationships, and sexual customs; masturbation is common and restricted to private places; experimenting between adolescents of the same age is common and includes open-mouth kissing, fondling and body rubbing; voyeuristic behaviors are common; sexual intercourse occurs in approximately one-third of this group.

What is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child Sexual abuse is defined as any unwanted or forced sexual conduct with a child by and adult, adolescent or other child. Be aware of age, size, and social power differences between two children. Sexual abuse behaviors include:

Touching offenses such as:

- Fondling “private body parts”
- Touching a child’s genitals or asking a child to touch someone else’s genitals.
- Playing sexual “pants down” games.
- Coercing a child to be sexual with animals.
- Genital, oral or anal intercourse.
- Forcing a child into prostitution.

Non-touching offenses such as:

- Showing pornography to a child.
- Indecent exposure.
- Photographing a child in sexual poses.
- Encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts.
- Voyeurism
- Verbal or emotional abuse of a sexual nature.
- Obscene phone calls.

Adapted from: 1999 STOP IT NOW!

Front Range Center for Assault Prevention

Child Assault Prevention Project

***A project of the National Center for
Assault Prevention***

Executive Director
Victoria Strong
720.210.4801

www.FrontRangeCAP.org

What Do I Teach My Child?

Every child should have the chance to learn basic safety rules. Even if your child learns these skills at school, it is important to review them at home. Take some time to teach your child basic safety skills and offer help when it is needed. Repeated reviews will not only help your child learn but will reassure your child that you care and that you will listen.

Children need to:

- Learn about safe and unsafe touches.
- Understand that they are in control of their own bodies. It is not okay for them to try to control someone else’s body or for anyone to touch them in an unsafe way.
- Know the proper names for all body parts. This gives your child the proper language for understanding their bodies or talking about sexual abuse.
- Know that kisses and touches should never be kept a secret.
- Discuss family boundaries. All family members must respect rights to privacy in dressing, bathing and sleeping.
- Understand they have the right to say “NO” to touching and how to respond when someone tells them “NO”.
- Have a plan if he/she is threatened and a team of good listeners to talk about the experience.
- Model how to say “NO” and that “NO” should and will be respected. If a child does not want to give someone a kiss or hug, do not force them!

Adapted from: 1999 STOP IT NOW!

KNOWING PERPETRATOR TACTICS AND CHILD REACTIONS CAN HELP YOU DETECT SEXUAL ABUSE:

- Be aware of family members, friends and neighbors who spend an inordinate amount of time with your child. Listen to your gut when in doubt!
- Be aware if your child talks a lot about a particular adult or older child or adolescent.
- Offenders often follow up abusive incidents with treats or gifts for the child. This is very confusing for the child and may make her/him feel guilty for accepting the gifts and/or for feeling bad about the abuse.
- Offenders may threaten to hurt the child or a family member of the child if they tell anyone about the abuse. This is common regardless of whether the perpetrator is a family member, friend, acquaintance or stranger.
- A child often feels that she/he is to blame for the abuse. The offender may exploit these feelings by using guilt tactics on the child.
- It is common for a child to deny that abuse happened or talk about the abuse and then recant their original statement. If they tell you, restate their original statement to clarify what is being said. It is rare for children to make false allegations of abuse.
- While it's important for parents to know of the convicted sex offenders living in their neighborhoods, only a fraction of sex offenders are caught, convicted and registered. The bigger danger to children is the 'undetected' offender. It is estimated that only 16% of sexual assaults are ever reported (*Rape in America: A Report to the Nation, 1992*). Upwards of 90% of sexual assaults on a child are committed by someone the child/family knows (Colorado Department of Public Safety, Division of Criminal Justice, 2003).
- The sex offender registry is a useful tool, but it is only one tool. Realistically, any list as large and complex as the sex offender registry will contain a percentage of outdated and inaccurate information.
- Parents should take advantage of the educational resources available to them and encourage schools to do the same.

In Dealing with Child Sexual Abuse, Why Is Prevention So Important?

It affects millions of people:

Imagine a disease that affects 1 in 4 children and 60 million people in the U.S., a disease passed on from generation to generation; a disease in which entire families are impacted and where the symptoms are difficult to diagnose; a disease that can have profound implications for an individual's future health by increasing the risk of problems such as substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and suicidal behavior (Crowell & Burgess, 1996).

Imagine what we, as a society, would do if such a disease existed. We would spare no expense. We would devise systems to identify those affected and provide services to treat them. We would develop and broadly implement prevention campaigns to protect our children. Wouldn't we?

It can create a generational cycle of abusive behavior:

Recent studies show that survivors of childhood abuse do not become abusers 66% of the time (Kaufman & Ziegler, 1994). Indeed, many become exemplary parents. However, there is much to be said about how those parents dealt with their experiences. Many studies show that with proper intervention, treatment and supportive partners and families, these survivors have broken the cycle of abuse. For those without that support, early patterns may be repeated.

Prevention is cheaper than intervention, treatment, or incarceration:

Wang & Holton (2007) in their Economic Impact Study on the *Total Estimated Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States* estimated that child maltreatment cost the U.S. **\$103.8 billion** annually. That figure included protective services, foster care, health costs for low weight babies, medical treatment of injuries due to abuse, psychological care for child maltreatment victims, juvenile justice and correction services, adult criminality and projected tax revenue lost from infant deaths.

A similar analysis, commissioned by the Colorado Children's Trust Fund in 1995, determined that child abuse and neglect cost the state of Colorado **\$402 million** annually. Gould & O'Brien (1995) concluded that if prevention efforts could reduce child maltreatment expenditures by only 6%, prevention programs would pay for themselves.

Child sexual abuse is at the heart of many of our social problems:

Like any trauma, child sexual abuse can leave scars on its victims. Many people never marry, never have children, become social introverts or develop severe conduct disorders, and/or may suffer severe psychological damage because of the abuse they experienced. Preventing this trauma is a responsibility we all share.

It is the Work of Hope:

More than any other field, prevention gives people hope. If we are constantly exposed to statistics about child death and maltreatment (according to the Department of Health and Human Services *Child Maltreatment Report* (2006), 1,500 children die each year from abuse and neglect), we begin to wonder if we can ever reduce the severity of such horrid crimes. However, prevention does make a difference!

How Do You Make That Difference?

- Do not be overwhelmed. We do not change the way people behave in leaps and bounds. We do it in small steps. Changing the way a few think eventually changes the way many think.
- Keep track of your successes. Remind yourself again and again that you are succeeding. It is the successes that keep us going and help us continue to believe in our work.
- Know your stuff. Dispel the myths about child abuse and neglect. Education is at the heart of this issue.
- Be passionate. This problem belongs to all of us. If you are not a survivor, think like one. What does that mean? Be angry – be outraged. Anger is a great motivator. If you hear a story on TV or read about it in the paper, do not feel sadness or pity. That is not enough. We owe it to the millions of children and adults in our world who have been victims to feel more than sadness. When people become angry, they become activists. When you leave here today and every day after, keep a fire burning inside you. It does not have to be out of control – it just has to be there.
- Lastly, believe that you can make a difference. Remember Margaret Mead's famous quote, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that has."

HOW DO I SAFETY PROOF MY BABY?

At first glance, this might seem like an impossible question. What could you teach a little baby about prevention? But actually, it's a great question to ask, and there's an answer to it: When you treat your baby with love and respect, you are *already* doing the very best thing you can do to safety proof him or her!

Love means meeting your baby's needs.

A baby's needs are significant, but they're also simple: eating, sleeping, safety, warmth, attention and affection. It can seem like the needs of babies are endless. But when you meet a baby's needs, the need stops. It will come back, of course, often sooner than we are ready for, but babies are not insatiable.

The problem is not the baby's needs, but that the world is not set up to make it easy to meet the needs of the baby....or the needs of parents. Think how different things would be if children and parents were our #1 national priority. Even though it's not always easy, when we meet the needs of our babies, we are keeping them safe.

A child who is accustomed to being well cared for physically and emotionally, will cry out loudly and clearly if someone is hurting him. A child who is used to being ignored and feels unloved may not. In a sense, a baby's cry is his own, quite effective version of the Special Safety Yell!

What is love in baby terms? How do babies feel our love? They feel it when we meet their needs, especially when they can feel that we genuinely enjoy doing it.

Respect means involving your baby in decision making.

Babies being part of decision-making? How is that possible? How does it begin? It begins in those moments when we are watching our babies and listening to them to find out who they really are. It begins with the delight we take in discovering our baby's personality and way of doing things - as our baby is discovering that, too! It begins when we recognize cues from our baby about when they want to eat, sleep, play, and be held.

It begins when our baby, being held by someone else, reaches out to us crying, and we take her back. We hold her ourselves instead of forcing her to "get used to" being held by someone else. We know she will get used to it on her own time.

In all these moments, we are respecting her and her feelings, and that is exactly how she learns to trust and respect herself - from how we treat her. Whenever we give our baby love and respect, she feels, even as a baby, like a Safe, Strong, and Free person. This is where prevention begins and what a great beginning!

TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CARETAKERS

- Encourage your child to communicate with you and LISTEN to what your child has to say. Listen to find out what your child is saying before you judge how important or unimportant the subject is. Even if a situation is unimportant to you as an adult, it can still be ESPECIALLY important in your child's experience.
- Be sure your child knows his/her name, address, phone number.
- Be sure your children know that they have the right to decide how, when and by whom their body is touched, even when it is not a sexual touch. Tickling, wrestling and other “innocent” touches could make a child feel uncomfortable- depending on who is doing the touching.
- If your child does not want a relative or family friend to hug or kiss them, find out why, and if the reason is simple. e.g., bad breath, rough whiskers, etc., negotiate with your child for a way the child finds acceptable for that person to greet, depart and show your child affection and honor that negotiation.
- Know who your child's friends are and their phone numbers.
- Explain to your child who and where he or she may and may not visit
- Have your child call you to let you know where she/he is playing, etc. Also, instruct your child to call you when he or she changes location.

Personal Space Boundaries – Help children develop appropriate boundaries around touch, physical affection, privacy, and nudity. When discussing their bodies, talk about safe, unsafe, and confusing touches. Phrases like “under your dress” or “down your pants” can be used to describe potentially unsafe touches. If you are comfortable doing so, use more specific language. As a parent, teach your child to take care of his or her genitals and say that they are theirs to take care. You can also add “if anyone touches you there, I want to know.” Around age six or seven, children begin to ask for privacy when using the bathroom, dressing, bathing, etc. ***Please respect their privacy!***

***Room Privacy** – As children grow, they will increasingly want their own space, closed doors, and private time alone. It is important to appropriately accommodate these feelings to foster a child’s sense of control over his or her body and personal space. An analogy can be drawn between a bedroom door (closed or open) and physical affection. If a door is closed, one should not enter without permission. A child will eventually generalize this to mean “no one has the right to touch me without my permission.”

***Learning to Say No – A Safe, Strong, and Free Word** – One reason children often have difficulty asserting themselves is that children learn that they should respect adults and not talk back to them or argue. For example:

- “Don’t talk back to me! Just do as I say.”
- “Be kind to people. It’s not nice to hurt someone’s feelings.”
- “Don’t be rude. If someone speaks to you, answer him or her.”

Statements like these make children vulnerable because they may be generalized into potentially unsafe situations with an adult or authority figure. A much safer statement would be “If you think you’re in an unsafe situation, don’t worry about being nice. Run away and go find help.”

The “No” Game – This game lets children practice saying “no.” A child makes a request and the other simply says “no”, without any explanation. Let them play long enough to get comfortable saying “no.” Parents are often concerned that their children will begin saying “no” to them when it is not appropriate. This concept does not suggest that every time children say “no” to bedtime, vegetables, baths, or homework, they should get their way. Instead, when appropriate, give kids the option to say “no,” and if they do, respect their decision. When you cannot give them the option, discuss the situation with the child. For example: “I understand that you don’t want to go to the babysitter today. I have been gone a lot this week, but I must go to work. Are you feeling lonely? Do you want me to stay home? Is something happening with the babysitter that makes you feel unsafe?”

Make sure games - like tickling - do not leave children powerless. Respect the child when they say “no” (or “stop”) and end the game. **Do not be afraid to intervene when someone else doesn’t stop!**

***Physical Activities** – Encourage games and organized sports for boys and girls. Physical activity increases fitness and fosters the confidence necessary for a child to protect himself or herself. Discourage games in which an older child or adult says things like “hit me as hard as you can; you can’t hurt me.” This teaches children that they are powerless against someone bigger than them, which is not necessarily true.⁴

Saying NO Effectively

Talking to kids about when and how to say NO:

1. *I want you to know it is okay to say **NO** to anyone, including adults, if they are doing something to hurt you, or if they’re trying to get you to do something you know is wrong.*
2. *I want you to know that you can say **NO** again and again. You do not have to be polite and get into a conversation with someone who is trying to hurt you. You do not have to explain yourself or tell them why you are saying **NO**. They do not have to understand. They just must stop what they are doing.*
3. *I want you to know that you have the right to say **NO** whenever it will help you be **SAFE, STRONG AND FREE!***

⁴ Information provided by the CAP Project of Costa County

* Information from No More Secrets, by Caren Adams and Jennifer Fay

Prevention Do's & Don'ts

- If your child tells you that someone is making them feel unsafe, be thoughtful and calm in your response. Listen carefully to what your child is telling. Clarify with the child what happened. Let the child know you love him/her. Let the child know that it must have been scary to tell. Emphasize to the child that she/he did nothing wrong.

Do NOT say "it can't be." Do NOT demand to know if your child is telling you the truth. Do NOT ask questions like "Are you sure?". Do NOT cross-examine your child. Do NOT become visibly upset if possible.

- Define a stranger to your child. A stranger is **ANYONE THEY DO NOT KNOW**. A stranger can be male, female, tall, short, old, young, any race.

- Teach your child to tell you if any person (even someone their own age) tells them to keep a secret that confuses them or makes them feel unsafe.

- If you observe a strong change in your child's behavior, check it out with him/her. While no abuse experience might have occurred, the child is likely having a problem.

- Explain the difference between a gift and a bribe to your child (a bribe is offered to encourage you to do something you do not naturally want to do) and instruct him/her never to accept a bribe and to tell you if someone offers him/her one.

- If you hear, see or even only strongly suspect a child is being harmed, you are encouraged to report this to Child Protective Services.

DISCIPLINE YOUR CHILD WITH LOVE

- Be firm, consistent and fair.
- Explain to your child the rules in your home. Tell your child what can and can not be done and why.
- Share your feelings with your child. Listen to your child's feelings and your child will listen to yours.
- Praise your child for doing the right thing or for doing things well.
- Tell your child "I love you" whenever you feel it.
- Allow your child to have his/her own feelings about different issues. Modify his/her behaviors rather than feelings. As humans, we have a right to feel however we feel.
- State suggestions or redirection in a positive, rather than a negative way.
- Use words and tone of voice that will help your child feel confident and reassured, not afraid, guilty, or ashamed.
- When possible, give the child a choice, but only when you are willing to accept his/her decision.

***CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW THEY
ARE LOVED AND ENJOYED!***

Saying Yes to Affection

With the media attention that has been given to child abuse in the recent years, some people feel uneasy about being affectionate with children. There have been a lot of excellent, educational stories on child abuse in the newspapers and on TV. But there have also been too many sensational stories. We believe that sensational stories can do more harm than good. They can scare people.

CAP BELIEVES THAT AFFECTION IS PART OF PREVENTION.

In fact, perpetrators have told us in no uncertain terms that the easiest child to take advantage of is the child who feels lonely, unloved or abandoned.

So, it's as important as ever that we tell our children that we love them, and it is just as important as ever to show them that we love them.

One great thing to do, as part of your discussions of prevention at home and school, is to talk with children about the kind of hugs they like and do not like, the kind of touches they like and don't like, and the times when they like and don't like affection.

These are good questions for parents and teachers to ask themselves too!

These days it is easy to get so busy that we start missing out on the simple things that make life most worth living. Many of us would like more affection than we are getting, or perhaps want it in a little different way than we are currently getting it.

Prevention means saying NO to the things we do not want, but it also means saying YES to the things we do want. It means asking for the affection and closeness we want. That is very much a part of being a SAFE, STRONG and FREE person. This is true of both children and adults.

Prevention accentuates the positive!

DISCIPLINE VS. ABUSE

Discipline should be used to teach self-control which the child then uses without adult supervision.

The list below shows differences between discipline and abuse.

DISCIPLINE IS:

- Limit setting
- teaching
- respects developmental stages and individuality
- allows learning by experience
- allows choice
- allows for praise
- sets a good example
- makes a positive statement
- instills pride and trust

ABUSE IS:

- severe punishment
- controlling
- shows no respect
- does not allow growth by experience
- allows no choice
- creates negativity
- sets a bad example
- negativity
- creates low self-esteem and elicits fear

Defining Abuse and Neglect

CHILD PHYSICAL ABUSE: A wide range of behaviors which physically injures or harms a child's body. Some behaviors include burning, punching, shaking, kicking, and throwing a child.

CHILD NEGLECT: Failure to provide nutrition, clothing, shelter, supervision, or medical care for a child. Neglect is different than poverty.

CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULT: Any forced, exploitative or coercive sexual contact or experience with a child (17 and younger). Child Sexual Assault includes:

- molestation
- rape
- incest
- voyeurism
- exhibitionism
- pornography
- forced prostitution

There are three types of force: physical, emotional and authoritative.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE: A pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional development and positive sense of self.

Emotional Abuse includes the presence of a pattern of demeaning language and/or behaviors directed at the child including:

- profanity
- belittling
- excessive criticism
- rejection
- threats

Emotional Abuse also includes the absence of supportive language and/or behaviors directed at a child including:

- pride in the child
- praise
- expressions of love and concern

Myths and Facts About Child Abuse

RARE Myth: Child abuse is a rare occurrence.

Fact: Statistics indicate that child abuse and neglect occur with frequency.

- An estimated 3.5 million child abuse reports are made each year to U.S. Child Protective Services agencies involving approximately 6 million children.¹
- In 2006, approximately 905,000 children in the U.S. were victims of maltreatment.¹
- In Colorado, the rates of child maltreatment have increased 43 percent since 2000. In 2006, 10,086 children in 2006 were victims of abuse or neglect. 60 percent were children under the age of 8. Of these, 24 children died.¹
- Child maltreatment is the second leading cause of death for children under the age of five.²

1. US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *Child Maltreatment*, 2006.

2. Colorado Department of Human Services, *Child Maltreatment Fatality Report*, 2007

POOR Myth: Abused and neglected children almost always come from poor, minority, and/or inner-city families.

Fact: There is no evidence that links socio-economic status, race, or educational level to abuse and neglect. Child abuse occurs within every neighborhood and school community across the country.

Myths and Facts About Child Abuse

GIRLS Myth: Sexual assault only happens to girls.

Fact: We may not know yet the full extent of sexual assault against boys because of their tendency to not report. Current research, however, estimates that 1 out of every 3 to 4 girls and 1 out of every 4 to 6 boys will be sexually assaulted by their 18th birthday.¹

1. US Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, *Adverse Childhood Experiences Study*, 1997.

STRANGER Myth: Most children are sexually assaulted by a stranger.

Fact: It is estimated that more than 90% of all child sexual assaults are perpetrated by a known and trusted person. Nearly 83% of victims are abused by a parent acting alone or with another person.¹ Only a small percentage of assaulters fit the stereotype of a stranger.

1. US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *Child Maltreatment*, 2006.

EASY Myth: Child abusers are easily identifiable.

TO

SPOT

Fact: Child abusers can not be easily distinguished from others. They usually are not people with mental illness or mental retardation. In fact, many offenders appear to be up-standing community members.

ASK Myth: Most children who are abused do something to cause
FOR IT the abuse.

Fact: The child is always the victim. The responsibility for the abuse lies solely on the perpetrator. In the case of sexual abuse many perpetrators try to displace the blame by accusing the child of being seductive or promiscuous.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS BEING ABUSED?

With certain kinds of abuse there are physical signs that you can see that will immediately cause you to suspect abuse. For example, if your child has unexplained bruises or injuries every time after you leave him with a certain babysitter, you'll start asking, "What

happened? Is anyone hitting you? Is anyone hurting you? Please tell me. You won't be in trouble. I want to help you be a Safe, Strong, and Free person."

Other kinds of abuse might be harder to recognize at first, because you only have behavioral signs instead of physical symptoms. The same behavior can have two different causes. Two children can be having nightmares, one because of abuse, and the other because she thinks her parents want to get a divorce, or he has watched a scary movie.

Two different behaviors can have the same cause. Two average students are being abused. One starts getting D's and F's because she's so distressed. The other suddenly starts getting all A's, working very hard in an attempt to pretend everything is okay, when it's not at all.

What should a parent do? We can look for signs of stress and find out what's behind them.

Abuse usually causes a great deal of stress in children, but other things cause stress, too. When you see signs of stress, you don't want to make any assumptions. Instead it's time to ask questions in a nurturing, comforting, yet effective way. You might ask general questions about stress, "Are you having a hard week? Is anything making you unhappy? Are you worried about something? How can I help?" You can also ask specific questions about abuse. They may be harder to ask, but they can make a big difference in helping a child who is being abused to start talking with you. For example:

"Is anyone making you feel unsafe? Is anyone touching you in a way that scares you or confuses you or feels unsafe? Is anyone hurting you? Is anyone telling you to keep something a secret? Is there something you wish you could tell me, but are afraid to? What can I do to help you right now?"

There are many behavioral signs which definitely indicate stress, which might indicate abuse, and which, in either case, need to be looked into immediately: alcohol abuse, drug abuse, delinquency, losing friends, low self-esteem, very aggressive behavior, very submissive behavior, very depressed behavior, running away, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, self-destructive behavior, sexual promiscuity, sleep disorders, nightmares, withdrawn behavior, masturbating in view of others, genital infections.

If your child exhibits any of these signs, you'll want to know why, and you'll want to know what you can do to help. Communication is the key. The more children feel we want to understand what they're going through day in and day out, the more willing they'll be to confide in us in a crisis.

Potential Indicators of Victimization

Keep in mind that some clues can be normal behaviors for a given child at a given time. Therefore, it is important to be aware of behavioral *changes*, extreme behaviors, or combinations of the following characteristics.

Abused children can not be identified by racial, ethnic, religious or socio-economic class. Abuse crosses all these lines.

Abused children are often:

- fearful of interpersonal relationships or overly compliant
- withdrawn or aggressive, hyperactive
- constantly irritable or listless, detached
- affectionless or overly affectionate (misconstrued as seductive)

Physical Symptoms:

- bruises, burns, scars, welts, broken bones, continuing or unexplained injuries
- urinary infections, (particularly in young children)
- sexually transmitted diseases
- chronic ailments, stomach aches, vomiting, eating disorders
- vaginal or anal soreness, bleeding or itching

Activity and Habit Clues:

- nightmares
- inappropriate masturbation
- a child afraid to go home or to some other location
- running away
- delinquency
- fear of being with a particular person
- lying
- prostitution

Age-Inappropriate Behavior:

- an onset of thumb sucking
- promiscuity
- sexually active or aware
- bed wetting
- alcohol/substance abuse
- older child assaulting younger children
- child takes on adult responsibilities

Educational Concerns:

- extreme curiosity, imagination
- academic failure
- sleeping in class
- inability to concentrate

Emotional Indicators:

- depression
- phobias, fear of darkness, public restrooms, etc.
- chronic ailments
- self-inflicted injuries
- injuring/killing animals
- excessively fearful
- lack of spontaneity, creativity

WHAT DO I DO IF MY CHILD IS BEING ABUSED?

1. BELIEVE YOUR CHILD.

The first thing to do is focus on your child. You will probably be quite upset yourself, and that is understandable. Do not forget to take care of yourself during this crisis. Find an adult you can talk to about your feelings.

But there are some key things your child needs to hear from you immediately:

“I believe you.”

Children are afraid you won't believe them, especially if the abuser has told the child, he or she wouldn't be believed. This is also particularly true if the abuser is someone you like or love.

“I'm glad you told me.”

Children are often afraid that if they tell, they will make things worse. They are afraid they will upset you so much by telling, that you'll be mad at them.

“It's not your fault.”

Abusers usually try to make the children feel guilty. They might say, "You like this as much as I do." Or "This is all your fault, because you're bad."

“You're not alone.”

Children often feel isolated or scared that they'll be abandoned once they talk about abuse.

“I'm going to help you.”

Abused children often feel hopeless, as if there is something permanently wrong with them now.

“I love you.”

Abused children often feel unlovable.

An abused child may need to hear you say the above statements many times, before letting them really sink in, and believing that you really mean them. You might also want to turn these statements into questions, to get your child talking about his or her feelings:

"Were you afraid I might not believe you?"

"Were you worried that I might be mad at you for telling?"

"Were you feeling like it's your fault that the abuse happened?"

"Were you feeling like nothing could be done to help you?"

"Were you scared that I wouldn't love you?"

2. FIND OUT THE WHOLE STORY.

Some people ask, "How do I know if my child is lying about abuse? What if she's just making it up?"

The question of lying is a very important one. The problem is that the way children most commonly "lie" about abuse is by not telling the whole story. They omit pieces of the story. Sometimes important pieces. You might ask, "Who did this to you?" They might answer, "I don't know." But they do know who did it. They don't tell you. They "lie," because they want to protect someone who they've always liked, but who is now abusing them. Or because the abuser is someone you like or love and the child knows this and wants to spare your feelings. But in cases like this, we would have to say the children are not really lying. They are just very scared, and it is our job to help them feel safe enough to tell the whole story.

What about a situation where a child says she was molested, but in fact she wasn't molested?

There are relatively few cases of children telling this kind of lie about abuse. However, it does happen and when it does it's very serious. But again, what's the rest of the story? For example, in bitter custody battles, sometimes one parent forces a child to lie about the other parent. But if an adult forces a child to tell a terrible lie about someone he or she loves, isn't that abuse? And doesn't the child need help?

What if a child lies without being forced? This is an extremely rare situation! Let us say a teenager lies about abuse to retaliate against an adult they are mad at. That teenager still needs help because that's such a serious lie to tell. Something serious is going wrong in that teen's life that needs immediate attention.

In each and every case, when a child tells us he or she has been abused, we need to keep communication open and keep it going until we know the whole story. That's when we'll know how to make an action plan that's appropriate and effective. Remember, you don't have to do it all by yourself. You can call your local social service agency which has the legal power to investigate abuse. Or you can call your local police department if the abuser is a stranger. There are many treatment centers with therapists skilled at helping abused children talk about the abuse they have suffered.

There are skilled physicians and other staff at Children's Hospital in Denver or your local child advocacy center who can give your child a complete medical exam with regard to abuse. You don't want your child to be alone and suffering. And we don't want you to be alone either. There are people who want to help and know how to help. You have the right to get help right away if your child tells you about abuse.

3. TAKE ACTION BASED ON THE WHOLE STORY.

Healing starts from the very first minute when your child tells the secret, and you say, "I believe you and I'm glad you told me." When the whole story is known, you, along with the staff at Children's Hospital or the Advocacy Center can make a plan for healing and recovery

WHERE DO I GET HELP?

MAKING A REPORT

It can be extremely hard to pick up your phone and ask for help. You might feel upset or embarrassed. But remember that the people at the other end of the line are very used to talking with parents who are worried or upset about their children.

If you believe that your child has been abused by someone the child knows, you can call your local Department of Social Services. They have the power to investigate and take legal action to protect your child. See do's/ don'ts and resource pages at the back of this book.

Active Listening Guidelines

- 1.) Always stay calm. Your reaction makes a difference.
- 2.) Believe what you are hearing. Too often, children lack credibility. Listen to the child in a non-judgmental way.
- 3.) Deal with explicit language. A child may use explicit terms to describe his or her experience. Be prepared and be willing to use their language.
- 4.) Do not try to avoid embarrassing subjects. Let the child know that he or she can talk about anything that concerns him or her.
- 5.) Do not assume or project anything. Let the child tell the story and leave out your own assumptions.

Primary Objectives

- 1.) Assess the child's safety needs.
- 2.) Find out what the child wants from you.
- 3.) Validate the child's feelings.
- 4.) Assure the child that:
 You care
 You are still a friend
 The child is not to blame
- 5.) Let the child know that he/she has the *right* to be safe.
- 6.) Let the child know what action you will take.

When a child discloses to you that he/she has been assaulted, it is difficult to know how to respond. The above guidelines will help you and the child through this crisis period.

If you suspect that abuse has occurred, the following information is helpful when making a report:

- Name and address of the child
- Name and address of parents or caretaker
- Age and sex of the child
- Nature and extent of injuries, or description of suspected abuse

Putting it All Together: The "What if..." Game

The "What If" Game is as old as time, but it is still one of the best ways to teach prevention skills and concepts at home. It is simple, yet challenging to play, and teaches serious lessons. It is a fun way for kids to learn and reinforce safety rules and skills. You can play it riding in the car. You can play it waiting for a bus. You can play it at home when a child says, "I'm bored, there's nothing to do." It is even more fun (and effective), if you act it out while you play. It is like a dress rehearsal of prevention skills.

THINKING

CAP teaches prevention in a way that gets children thinking and keeps them thinking. To be effective, CAP strategies should be reinforced at home. There are so many hypothetical unsafe situations children might face, it is impossible to list them all and give our children the correct response to learn for each one. To effectively teach prevention, children should learn their basic safety rules by heart, but it is even more important for them to learn how to think for themselves and make educated decisions.

HOW DO YOU PLAY?

Once you and your child have agreed to play, you set a scene. It is a situation in which someone is trying to take the child's rights away, or in which there is potential for the child to be hurt or abused. Once you describe the situation, you get your child involved by asking, "What would you say? What would you do?" Once the child has responded, take some time to discuss the validity of the response. Commend the child for providing safe answers and correct answers that may have unsafe consequences.

ADD A CHALLENGE

If your child gives a good first response, you can respond in turn with another challenge for him/her. For example:

Situation: I'm a stranger and I drive up to you on the street and I say, "Hey, kid, come on and get in the car with me. **Let's go for a ride.**"

Child's response: "NO! I don't take rides from strangers." (Child keeps at least 2 arm's lengths away from the stranger and the car.)

You: "But I have 3 cute puppies in the back seat, and I want you to see them."

Child response: "NO!" (Does her Yell, runs to a safe place.)

REVERSE ROLES

Now ask your child to think of a "What If," and you play the child. Give a few unsafe answers and let your child correct you. This role reversal helps children see how much harder it is to take advantage of a child who knows what to do, than a child who has no idea what to do.

Often children will come up with situations that are of concern to them which we would not have thought of. Sometimes you get an insight into a challenge they are facing in their life that you did not know about.

Doing Nothing in the Moment, but Telling Later

Children are usually quite good at knowing when not to do something. In the majority of situations, it is best to say NO to the abuser right away.

But there are some situations where your child might say, "I would just keep quiet. I would not say anything if my aunt hit me, because I'd be too scared of her. But I would tell you about it the minute I got home."

There are situations where keeping quiet now, but telling later, is a good prevention strategy. Whenever a child feels they will be hurt worse if they speak up, it is okay for them to wait and tell **later**.

This is one more reason why it is so important that we focus on helping children learn to think through situations themselves, instead of just telling them what to do. **They will probably be on their own if they face danger or abuse. They will have to make their own decisions at that moment.**

Example #1: WHAT IF A BULLY...

Situation: You want to play kick ball with a bunch of other children who always play at lunch recess. You go over to join them, but an older girl tells you, "You can't play with us, because you're not good enough and you look funny."

What would you say? What would you do? (Parent plays older girl.)

Child: "I have a right to play."

Older Girl: "No you don't. Not until I say you do. "

Child: "You're not in charge of this game."

Older Girl: "I am now."

Child: "NO! I am going to tell my teacher. She'll let me play."

Older Girl: "Okay, you can play, but you have to pay me a dollar to play."

Child: "NO!" (Talks to 3 kids she knows and says, "I want to play ball with you, but Theresa says I can't unless I pay her a dollar. Will you help me say NO to her, so I can play with you?")

Example #2: WHAT IF A STRANGER...

Situation: You're standing on the corner in the morning waiting for the bus to come. A stranger pulls up in a car and says, "I'm the new principal at your school. I want you to get in the car with me right now and ride to school with me, so you won't be late."

What do you say? What do you do? (Parent/Teacher plays fake principal.)

Child: "NO! I don't know you" (Moves away and stays a safe distance from the car.)

Pretend Principal: "I'm your new principal. You have to do what I tell you. "

Child: "NO! I don't know you." (Not getting drawn into the conversation.)

Pretend Principal: "Get in this car or you're going to be in big trouble, kid."

Child: "NO!" (Does his Yell and runs to the nearest safe place where someone can help him - maybe back home, maybe a store near the corner.)

Example #3: WHAT IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW...

Situation: I am a new babysitter. I've been at your house once before. We played games all evening while your mom and dad were out. I let you stay up way past your bedtime and let you eat 3 bowls of ice cream.

Now I am back to watch you for another evening, and your parents have just left. I say, "Tonight, we're going to play a special touching game. First, we take off all our clothes. Then we take turns touching each other.

What do you say? What do you do? (Parent/Teacher plays babysitter.)

Babysitter: "Okay, let's start. You take off your clothes first."

Child: "NO! I'm not allowed to play a game like that. "

Babysitter: "But it's fun, and we won't tell your parents we did it. It'll be our secret, just between you and me, okay?"

Child: "NO! I'm not playing that game with you."

Babysitter: "But you're hurting my feelings. I really, really want you to play. Be nice."

Child: "NO! I'm not playing that game with you. NO!"

Now what? What should your child do after saying NO?

Here is one more reason why it's good to play "What If." As a family you should make a safety plan, just in case something goes wrong with a babysitter, or if your child feels unsafe when home alone.

Maybe you have a neighbor next door who agrees to help out. You let her know when you are going out, and your child knows he can run over there if he needs help. You might be surprised at how many new ideas you will come up with when you play "What If."

"What if..." Game Suggestions

Here are some other "What If" situations you can use with your child. These suggestions are only to help get you started. You and your child will be able to think of other "What If" situations that are closer to home and more relevant to your family.

1. You and three friends are waiting at the bus stop. Two men pull up in a car. They ask "Where are you going? Come with us, we will give you a ride! We can get some pizza on the way." What do you say? What do you do?

2. You go to spend Saturday with your aunt. You are making cookies together. But she gets angry with you when you make a mistake and starts yelling at you and hitting you. What do you say? What do you do?

3. Someone in your family is always putting you down. They say things to you like, "You're too stupid to do that... You'll never learn... You're hopeless...." What do you say? What do you do?

4. You're spending the afternoon at the babysitters. She is also babysitting for a 9-year-old girl who lives in the neighborhood. In the middle of the afternoon, when you and the girl are playing alone in the back yard, the girl asks you to touch her private parts. What do you say? What do you do?

5. We've been shopping at the mall, and now want to get something to eat. We get our food and sit down at the table. You decide to go to the restroom. You tell me and leave. In the restroom, an adult starts following you around and bothering you. What do you say? What do you do?

6. You're out in the school yard at recess. You are playing down at the end of the playground near the gate. A man out on the street calls to you and says he will give you \$10 to help him carry his groceries from his car into his house. What do you say? What do you do?

7. You and some friends have been out at the mall. It's time to go home, but you don't want to hassle with taking the bus. An older guy you do not know, but have seen around the mall, has a really nice car, and he looks like he is getting

ready to leave, too. One of your friends says, "Let's ask him to give us a ride." What do you say? What do you do?

8. You're having a slice of pizza with a friend after school one afternoon. Some older kids come into the pizza parlor, and as they are walking by you, one of them says, "What are you looking at?" You were not looking at them, but before you can answer, the same kid says, "I'm talking to YOU!" You can tell this kid's trying to show off by picking a fight with you. What do you say? What do you do?

9. One of your relatives likes to wrestle with you when he comes over to visit. You have known him all your life and like him a lot. But today when you are wrestling, he is putting his hand between your legs, in a way in which he doesn't need to if he's just wrestling. What do you say? What do you do?

10. You have a Cousin Lee, who you like and who's ten years older than you. He comes over to visit when you are alone and says, "Let's go to your room, get under the covers, and play the Kissing Game!" What do you say? What do you do?

RECOMMENDED READING FOR PARENTS & CHILDREN

For Parents:

Child Abuse on the Internet: Ending the Silence. By Carlos A. Arnaldo

How to talk to Teens about Love, Relationships, and Sex. A Guide for parents.

By Amy G. Miron, M.S. and Charles D. Miron PhD

Protecting Your Children from Sexual Predators. By Leigh Baker

Protecting the Gift: Keeping Children and Teenagers Safe. By Gavin De Becker

Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect Through Parent Education.

By N. Dickon Reppucci

The Safe Child Book: A Common-sense Approach to protecting children and teaching children to protect themselves. By Sherryll Kraizer, PhD

For Children:

A Very Touching Book...For Little People and for Big People. By Jan Hindman and Tom Novak ***For adults to read to children.***

No More Secrets for Me. By Oralee Wachter **Ages 2-14.**

Your Body Belongs to You. By Cornelia Spelman **Ages 3-6.**

Something Happened and I am Scared to Tell. By Patricia Kehoe, Ph.D. **Ages 3-7.**

The Trouble with Secrets. By Karen Johnsen **Ages 5-10.**How to Handle Bullies, Teasers, and Other Meanies. By Kate Cohen- Posey, M.S. **Ages 5-12**

My Body is Private. By Linda Walvoord Girard and Kathleen Tucker. **Ages 6-11.**

Sometimes It's Okay to Tell Secrets (It's OK to Say No). By Amy C. Bahr and Frederick B. Green **Ages 6-11.**

It's Perfectly Normal. Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health. By Robbie H. Harris **Ages 11-15.**

The Sex Book. By Jane Pavanel **Ages 13-18.**

**We all need Safe touches and kisses.
Here's how to be... SAFE, STRONG & FREE!**

Safe Touching & Kissing Checklist

- ✓ My body belongs to me!
- ✓ Touches and kisses are always my choice.
- ✓ I do not have to have a kiss or touch if I don't want it!
- ✓ No one has the right to make any part of my body feel unsafe.
- ✓ My private parts are special and belong to me. No one has the right to touch or see my private parts.
- ✓ I do not have the right to make anyone else's body feel unsafe.

My parents or my doctor may need to check my body for health or safety reasons but must always have my permission before doing so.

I will always listen to the little voice inside of me. If I am feeling unsafe, I will talk to a grown up and share my feelings.

If someone makes my body feel unsafe, I will go to a grown up for help right away!



www.FrontRangeCAP.org Safe, Strong & Free © FRCAP 2005*
720.210.4801



Child Assault Prevention (CAP) Project

Dear School Staff,

We appreciate your willingness to share your valuable classroom time so students may participate in the CAP workshop being offered at your school. Your continuing faith in children and commitment to preventing abuse makes it possible for CAP to be a success year after year.

The following information is being provided to ensure that the implementation of the CAP workshop in your classroom proceeds smoothly. Please feel free to contact our office if you have any questions or concerns.

We look forward to the privilege of serving your school community.

Best Regards,

Victoria Strong, MNM

Victoria Strong
Executive Director
720.210.4801

Important Teacher Information

- Those children whose parents ***did not give*** permission should be removed from the classroom ***before*** the facilitators arrive.
- Have the children use the restroom or get their drinks of water before the workshop begins to avoid any interruption of the workshop.

- Let your students know about the workshop in advance and then introduce the Workshop Facilitators the day of your workshop.
- Please have the children sit in a semi-circle on the floor, in an open space of your room. Desks and chairs may need to be rearranged to accommodate this. No child should be sitting in front or behind anyone else, one large semi-circle is ideal.
- During the workshop, you may relax and enjoy the presentation. Allow the Workshop Facilitators to handle classroom discipline during the workshop. If the students are not responding in an appropriate manner or seem particularly unruly, the Facilitators will request your assistance. ***Classroom teachers need to remain in the classroom during the workshop. If for some reason the classroom teacher can not be present during the workshop, another adult staff person must be present.***
- You will be asked to participate in a role-play during the workshop. We believe it is important that children know that their teacher or other school staff can be good support people. One of our Workshop Facilitators will pretend to be a student in your classroom in an unsafe situation. Your lines will be: ***“I am really glad you came and told me. That was very brave of you. When the other students go out to recess, you and I will talk more about this and see what can be done to get you some help.”*** If you do not want to participate in this role, please let one of the Facilitators know.
- The last half-hour of the scheduled time is called Review Time. This time is set aside for students voluntarily wishing to review what they have learned in the workshop. The Workshop Facilitators will conduct Review Time in the hallway outside of your classroom.
- Involve the children in an activity during Review Time that will allow them to freely participate in this session. Suggestions: read a book, review CAP workshop, have children write letters to CAP Facilitators, etc. ***Please do not send them out for recess until Review Time is over.***
- In the event that a child discloses a suspected case of child abuse, the Workshop Facilitators will follow the reporting procedure previously arranged with your principal. They will inform the principal of the situation before they leave your school.
- Following the CAP workshop in your classroom, Facilitators will give you a brief evaluation of the classroom presentation. We ask that you please take a few minutes to complete this evaluation and return it to the designated school personnel. This provides us with the necessary feedback on the effectiveness of the CAP workshop and helps us to better serve your school community. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this effort.
- Please know that you are welcome to use us as a resource if you happen to have any questions or concerns related to child abuse and neglect issues. Our office hours are Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and we can be reached at the following numbers:

Victoria Strong 720.210.4801

This section is designed to be used by teachers whose elementary school students have participated in the Child Assault Prevention (CAP) Project. This information can be used as a follow-up tool to reinforce the concepts children have learned during the workshop.

Please use this section and those provided previously in this packet regarding “**What If...?**” Games. There are multiple “scenarios” similar to the CAP role-plays. Each scenario should be read to the students several times. Then students should be asked for strategies to handle the situation. Prior to each scenario information is provided with rationale for why students need to learn specific prevention strategies, as well as a list of strategies to be reinforced.

Teachers may precede the scenarios with a discussion of rights, specifically the rights to be Safe, Strong, and Free. Older children can write their responses, or a discussion format can be used.

The more these strategies are reinforced, the more effective the prevention education will be for the students. Children love to role-play. Allow them to practice the strategies as often as possible.

Suggested Follow-Up Activities for 30 Minute Post-Workshop Review Time

- 1.) Have children identify places they could go to for help, or support people they could get help from.
- 2.) Ask children to draw a picture or write a story about what they just learned.
- 3.) Children often enjoy writing letters to the CAP facilitators.
- 4.) Have children write a note to their parents inviting them to discuss what they learned today.
- 5.) Practice the safety yell and review self-escape skills. Encourage a practice session at home. Reinforce the importance of using the yell only when they feel unsafe.

Reinforcing CAP in the Classroom

***“What If” Game** – This is a game you can play to help children brainstorm about what they would do in dangerous situations. Having a plan ahead of time is an important part of reducing a child’s vulnerability to assault. During classroom free time or inside recess are good times to play this game. Take advantage of opportunities to play this game spontaneously, like when a child asks you a question or tells you a story.

The game is played by asking the child “what would you do if…” and then letting the child respond. The key is to let the child generate ideas, and to reinforce the good ideas with praise and approval. This empowers children by building confidence in their ability to handle unsafe situations. Some questions you can ask are:

- What would you do if your bike got a flat tire on your way home from school and a stranger offered you a ride home?
- What would you do if your parents were not home, and the telephone man came to the door and said he wanted to fix the phone?
- What would you do if the babysitter did something unsafe and told you to keep it a secret?
- What would you do if someone touched you in a way you did not like, or in a way that confused you?

***Storytelling** – You can tell any kind of story about a child staying safe. A story about being lost, scared, dealing with a stranger, etc. can be used. Use your imagination. Always end with a successful example of staying safe. For example:

There was a little boy who had a favorite uncle that he loved to spend time with. But his uncle would often scare him by hiding corners and jumping out just when the young boy came along. The little boy did not like to be scared like this, but he didn’t know what to do about it. One day he asked his father if he ever got scared. His dad said that he felt afraid sometimes. The little boy asked his dad how he got “unafraid.” The boy’s dad asked if something was frightening him. The boy told his dad about the way his uncle scared him. His dad helped him figure out how he could ask his uncle not to do that anymore. When his dad asked him if he wanted any help, the little boy said he would try it himself first, and let his dad know how it went.

Additional Follow-Up Ideas

- 1.) Develop a learning unit on “Safety in the Community” focusing on assault prevention strategies.
- 2.) Incorporate the “Safe, Strong, and Free” model into your classroom curriculum. Encourage children to problem solve relational conflicts and look to peers for ideas and support. Review definitions of the words Safe, Strong, and Free in the context of scenarios that arise at and away from school.
- 3.) Request that resources be budgeted for the CAP Maintenance program for the following school year. Celebrate CAP Day once a year in your school to reinforce the CAP concepts. Decorate hallways and classrooms with pictures and stories of Safe, Strong, and Free strategies

Follow-Up Periodically Throughout the Year

- 1.) Practice strategies from the workshop. Practice what to do in bully, stranger, and trusted adult situations. Reinforce skills in a positive, rather than negative manner. Review rules about what *to do*.

For example, in bully situations:

Do be self-assertive

Do seek peer support

Do tell someone

In stranger situations:

Do stand two arm lengths away

Do use your safety yell if you are uncomfortable

Do say “No” and put up a fight

Do run to a safe place

Do tell someone

*Reinforce self-escape skills, e.g., kick, scrape, stomp, elbow, etc.

In a trusted adult situation:

Do say “No” if you feel unsafe

Do remove yourself from the situation, if possible

Do tell adults until someone believes you

- 2.) Practice observation and description skills. Have one child stand in front of the class and allow other students to look at him or her for a brief period. Ask other students to describe clothing and physical characteristics. Younger children can play description games with simple objects. Let them see an object, put it away, then let them describe it in detail.
- 3.) Allow children to identify the support people in their own lives. Be careful not to identify *all* persons of a particular profession or status (e.g., clergy, babysitters, coaches, etc.) as trusted adults. A typical response might be:

“Yes, some teachers are easy to talk with. Can you think of a teacher that you feel safe with?”
- 4.) Encourage children in your class to talk openly about their feelings. Use posters or cards with emotions such as angry, happy, sad, disappointed, excited, etc. Allow children to share incidents when they experience these feelings.
- 5.) When discussing safety, include personal/body safety in addition to fire, traffic, and water safety.

Reporting: Rights & Responsibility

In the State of Colorado school personnel are required to report suspected child abuse and neglect. The following information will assist you in understanding this responsibility.

- School personnel are required to immediately report suspected abuse. You do not need to have proof or evidence of abuse. If you have “reason to believe” a child is being abused or neglected, you are mandated to report.
- A report may be made by phone to the children’s services agency in your county.
- School personnel should provide the name of the child and the parent(s), the address of the parents(s), the age of the child, and the reason(s) for suspecting abuse or neglect. If you know the name of the person you suspect is abusing the child, this information should also be provided.
- Reporters of child abuse and neglect are immune from any civil or criminal liability.
- All child abuse and neglect reports and investigations are confidential including identity of the person making the report. The reporter’s name can not be released without his/her written consent.
- Failure to report child abuse and neglect by any mandated reporter is a third-degree misdemeanor. It is punishable with a maximum of six months imprisonment and/or a \$950.00 fine.

2016 National Assault Prevention Center

If a child discloses abuse:

- **Stay as calm as possible.** Try not to over-react. Even though thoughts and feelings will be intense, staying calm, being with the child and listening is the best option. If we become extremely angry or upset, the child may internalize your anger and feel as though you are angry with them.
- **Believe the child.** The child's greatest fear is that they will not be believed.
- **Listen carefully to the child.** Repeating what the child has reported to you, in the child's language.
- **Respect the pace** in which the child is telling you about their experience. They may tell you only bits and pieces to test the water. Or they may need to tell you every gory detail. They lived through it; adults need to be prepared to listen.
- **Give positive messages.** Tell the child you are proud of them for telling and that they are very brave.
- **If the child is in your direct care, (parent, guardian) it is important to arrange for a medical exam.** If you suspect any penetration, orally, anally or vaginally, it is important to have the child examined. For both their physical safety and any evidence that could be collected. It is recommended that the child is taken to their own family doctor if possible, or to an advocacy center in your community. If necessary, as a last resort, take the child to an emergency room for the exam.
- **Do not lie to the child.** Let them know exactly what you intend to do with the information. "You will be calling some people who can help them stay safe". The child has already been violated. We do not want to hurt them further by lying to them and/or keeping the report from the authorities.
- **Report** all suspected or disclosed abuse to the proper authorities. Even minor infractions! The incident may be a grooming behavior by a perpetrator and needs to be taken seriously.

- **Do not confront the offender.** It could put you or the child in danger. Allow the authorities to handle the confrontation.

- **Do not classify information as "family business"** and try to handle the abuse on your own. Seek help from authorities and professionals.

- **Do not blame the victim.** There is nothing a person can do to bring this on to themselves. It is always the fault of the perpetrator or abuser.

Local Resources

Department of Social Services

Adams County	303-287-8831
Arapahoe County	303-636-1130
Boulder County	303-441-1000
Broomfield County	720-887-2200
Denver County	303-944-3666
Douglas County	303-688-4825
Jefferson County	303-271-1388

Abuse & Neglect Hotlines

303-636-1750
720-887-2271
720-944-3000
303-271-4131

Family Assistance

Adams County Children's Advocacy Project	303-864-5271
Boulder: Blue Sky Bridge	303-444-1388
Denver: Children's Advocacy Center	303-825-3850
Jefferson County Children's Advocacy Center	303-987-4885
Larimer: Child Advocacy	970-407-9739
Lincoln, Arapahoe, Douglas & Elbert: "Sungate" Children's Advocacy Center	303-368-1065
Alternatives to Family Violence	303-289-4441
Families First	303-745-0327

Mental Health Centers

Adams County	303-853-3500
Arapahoe/Douglas County	303-730-8858
Aurora	303-617-2300
Boulder & Broomfield Counties	303-443-8500
Broomfield County	303-688-6276
Denver	303-504-6500
Jefferson County	303-425-0300
Mental Health America of Colorado	720-208-2220

Parent Support

4-PARENTS HELP LINE	303-620-4444
STOP IT NOW!	1-888-PREVENT

Rape Assistance

Ending Violence Effectively	303-322-7010
RAAP	303-329-9922
Rape Crisis Team of Boulder County	303-443-7300
Volunteers of America Victim Asst.	303-620-9190
High Plains Sexual Assault Center Sterling, CO	970.522.8329

Victims Assistance

Denver Victim Services Center	303-894-8000
Victim Outreach Information	TTY 303-860-9555 303-202-2196

Women's Assistance

Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault CCASA - Toll Free	303.861.7033 1.877.37.CCASA
Counseling and Shelter-Denver Area Safe House for Battered Women	303-830-6800
Emergency Shelters for Battered Women Adams County	303-289-4441
Arapahoe & City of Aurora-Gateway	303-343-1851
Boulder County Safe house	303-449-8623
Denver County –Brandon Center	303-620-9190
Douglas County Women's Shelter	303-688-8484
Jefferson County Women in Crisis	303-420-6752
9-5 National Association of Working Women	303-866-0925
Denver Safe House	303-318-9989

Youth

Vocal (Victims of Child Abuse Laws)	303-430-4813
Kempe Center	303-321-3963
Families First	303-745-0327

National Resources

National Center for Assault Prevention New Jersey	1-800-258-3189
National Center of Child Abuse and Neglect P.O. Box 1182, Washington, D.C. 20013	703-385-7565
National Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-4-A-CHILD
National Community for the Prevention of Child Abuse 332 South Michigan Ave. #1600, Chicago, IL 60204	312-663-3520
National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse 1033 N. Fairfax Street, #200, Alexandria, VA 22314	703-739-0321
National Runaway Hotline	1-800-621-4000
American Bar Association Center on Youth and the Law	202-331-2250
American Humane Association Child Protection 63 Inverness Dr. East, Englewood, CO	303-792-9900
Child Find	1-800-970-5678
Vanished Children's Alliance	408-971-4822
National Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-955-TIPS