



Parent/Guardian Involvement

Preventing child sexual abuse takes everyone. Staff, volunteers, guardians and community members alike need to know what the warning signs of abuse might look like and what they need to do if they spot them. Below you will find guidance that you can give to parents, so that they become an integral part of fighting against child sexual abuse.

Organization's Policies and Procedures

When a child first comes in to your care, review the following with their parents or guardians:

- Inform them on what your child protection policy is. Make sure everyone is aware of the rules each staff member needs to follow.
- Educate them on what your mechanism is for reporting rule-breaking, suspicions and acts of abuse.
- Let them know how your employees and volunteers are screened and what training they have completed.

Signs of Child Sexual Abuse

Educate parents/guardians on the following signs they should watch out for:

- Behavior problems, physical aggression, non-compliance and rebellion
- Anxiety, depression, fear, withdrawal and suicidal thoughts
- "Too perfect" or over compliant behavior
- Nightmares, bed-wetting, bullying and cruelty to animals
- Lack of interest in friends, sports and other activities

Responding to Children Who Report Abuse

It is important to educate parents and guardians on how to respond if their child discloses that they have been abused. If someone discloses abuse to you, it's extremely important to:

- Listen calmly and openly
- Don't fill in any gaps or ask leading questions about the details
- Tell them you believe them and that it isn't their fault
- Don't promise that the information they say will be kept confidential
- Report the abuse to the police or CPS

Talking to Kids About Sexual Abuse

Teach parents and guardians how to appropriately talk to their children about sexual abuse.

[Darkness to Light](#) recommends the following:

- Teach children that it is "against the rules" for adults to act in a sexual way with them, and use examples.
- Teach them what parts of their bodies others should not touch.
- Be sure to mention that the abuser might be an adult friend, family member or older youth.
- Teach children not to give out personal information while using the Internet, including email addresses, home addresses and phone numbers.
- Start early and talk often. Use everyday opportunities to talk about sexual abuse.
- Be proactive. If a child seems uncomfortable, or resistant to being with a particular adult, ask why.