

# PARENT GUIDE

PERSONAL SAFETY for CHILDREN OF ALL AGES

## Think First & Stay Safe®

by  
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and Kenneth Wooden





Dear Concerned Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for reading this personal safety guide.

While the majority of children live abuse-free, far too many do not. The most common crimes facing children today are bullying and sexual abuse. Fortunately, most child victimization is preventable, and this guide contains information needed to help keep your child safe.

You will learn when, where and by whom children are abused, as well as Grooming Behaviors, Child Luring and Signs of Abuse. This guide also provides specific safety tips, a Family Safety Plan and Helplines to call/text questions and report suspected or known abuse.

Over 90% of child sexual abuse is committed by someone known to, and usually trusted by the child, such as a parent, step-parent or other relative, family friend, instructor or an older youth. The shame and secrecy surrounding child sexual abuse needs to end, as it allows the cycle of abuse to continue. We need to teach children: **All Secrets Can Be Told.**

Our children also need to know: **Abuse is never a child's fault.** Nothing a child says, does or wears causes mistreatment to happen. The abuser is the sole person at fault.

Years ago, the National Weather Service reported that tornado-related deaths had declined by 2/3 rds in one year. The reason? Increased public awareness and preparedness. Using this same effective combination, we can and will help children stay healthy, safe and happy. Thank you for doing your part to become informed and prepared to stop child abuse, in all its forms.



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Child Lures Prevention/Teen Lures Prevention



## Getting Started

1. Read this Guide through to become familiar with its contents.
2. Sit with your child and review, suitable by age, each of the Child Lures & How to Stay Safe. (pp. 4-14)
3. Review Personal Boundaries and the Family Safety Plan together. (pp. 16-17)
4. Look for small ways to reinforce safety concepts during the course of everyday life.
5. Praise your child for making safe choices and asking for advice or help.
6. Children learn best through repetition, so read and discuss this Parent Guide regularly.

## Contents:

3	Personal Safety Basics Trusted Adults Secrets The Concept of Law False Accusations Child Sexual Abuse Facts
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## Personal Safety Basics

- Make personal safety an ongoing conversation with your child. This will keep safety strategies fresh in mind and parent-child communication open.
- Ensure even very young children know their complete name, address and phone number.
- Teach your child how to dial 911 and ask for help.
- Help your child establish personal & digital boundaries, and encourage your child to defend those boundaries with both peers and adults.
- Know all your child's passwords.

### Trusted Adults

- **Help identify (2) Trusted Adults** in your child's life: one inside the home, one outside the home.  
(See *Family Safety Plan*, p.17)

### Secrets

- Assure children: **All Secrets Can Be Told**, especially secrets they have been threatened to keep or have been keeping for a long time. Let them know that it's never too late to tell a Trusted Adult about anything that makes them feel sad, embarrassed or unsafe.



An excellent video for parents & children to view together is Tom's Secret, free to view at <http://www.childluresprevention.com/global-partnership>

## The Concept of Law

Youngsters who understand the concept of law – and the concept of breaking the law – are better able to assert themselves and speak up about any form of abuse. The following two questions help children understand the basics of law, crime and punishment.

**Q: Are there rules you must follow in your home, school or house of worship?** **A: Yes.**

**Q: What happens when you break those rules?**

**A: You are punished.**

Explain that everyone has rules they must follow. Adult rules are called "laws" and were made to protect all people, including children. It is against the law for someone to look at, touch or photograph a child's private parts (see p.4 for exceptions) or to force a child to look at, touch or photograph another's private parts. It is also against the law to bully or cyberbully another person. Children can tell a Trusted Adult about any bullying or abusive behaviors.

**False Accusations:** While children rarely make up stories about abuse, do explain to your child the seriousness of accusing someone of a crime they didn't commit. Falsely accusing a person of a crime is also against the law. It is always best to tell the truth.



## Who Abuses Children?

**Over 90% of reported Child Sexual Abusers are known to the child and their family**, and about 1/3 are family members. Only 7% are strangers.\* Abusers come from every race, class, age and gender. They are mainly male, although females do offend. The majority of abusers are **adults**, such as parents, step-parents, foster parents, grandparents, uncles & aunts, family friends, instructors. Nearly one-third are **juvenile offenders**, such as siblings, cousins, playmates or older kids.

\*Exception: American Indians, ages 12+, 41% by strangers  
Source: US Department of Justice

## Where does Sexual Abuse Happen?

**Over 80% of child sexual abuse occurs in one-on-one situations, one offender/one child in a home or residence.\***

Sexual exploitation can also occur electronically through messaging, gaming, social media, apps, webcams, websites and browsing.

**WHEN?** Incidents of physical child sexual abuse spike around meal times; 8am, noon and 6pm. With incidents involving juvenile offenders, 1 in 7 occur on school days between 3-7pm, with a peak from 3-4pm.\*

Knowing this, close supervision in homes/residences – especially after school and while kids are using technology – can help keep children safe.

\*Source: US Department of Justice



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**Learn the Lures.** While numerically and creatively infinite, the **Child Lures** used to groom, intimidate, and exploit children generally fall into sixteen categories and are explained on the following pages:



Affection .....	p. 4	Emergency .....	p. 7	Pornography .....	p. 10
Assistance .....	p. 5	Hero .....	p. 8	Drug .....	p. 11
Pet .....	p. 5	Games .....	p. 8	Threats & Weapons .....	p. 12
Authority .....	p. 6	Name .....	p. 9	e-Lure .....	p. 12
Bribery .....	p. 6	Job .....	p. 9	Bullying & Intolerance .....	p. 14
Ego/Fame .....	p. 7	Friendship .....	p. 10	Human Trafficking .....	p. 15

**Child Lures are used both individually and in various combinations.** For example, an abuser may give a girl special attention and compliments for six months (Affection Lure), show her x-rated videos, (Pornography Lure), sexually abuse her and then threaten to hurt her, or loved ones, if she reports the abuse (Threats & Weapons Lure).

## 1. The Affection Lure

Most children who are sexually abused are abused by someone they know. Access to a child creates opportunity. Showering the child with affection and attention helps secure their trust. Youngsters who are starved for attention, lack adequate supervision or face issues at home like divorce, substance abuse or neglect are at increased risk. (See p. 16)

Offenders are experts at taking advantage of a child's innocence or natural curiosity about sexual development. Exploitation usually begins with innocent behavior that escalates into abuse over hours, days, weeks, months or years. Youngsters - and their parents - don't realize they are gradually being groomed for abuse. (See p. 15)

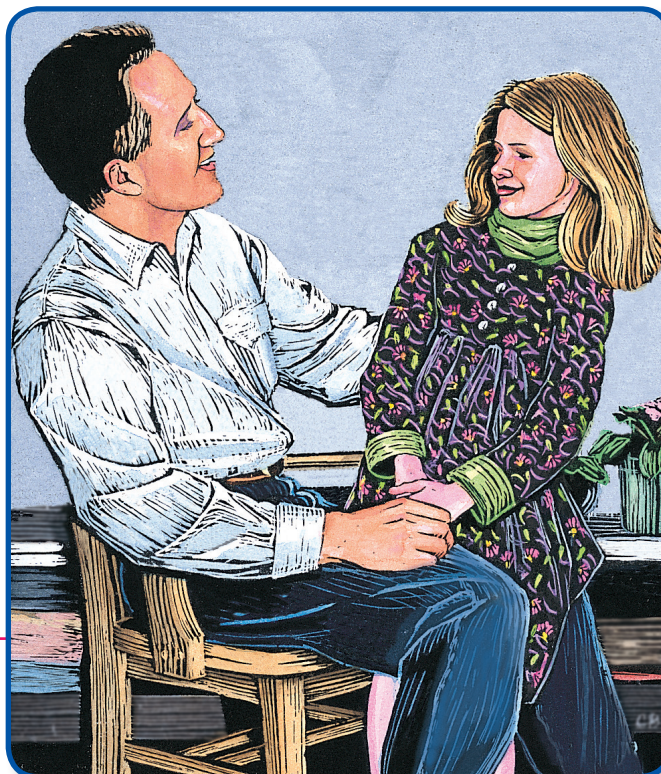
### How to Stay Safe

Establish a basic understanding of private parts: the parts of the body covered by a bathing suit. Teaching children anatomically-correct names for private body parts promotes positive body image & ownership, self confidence, and parent-child communication. Using proper names discourages perpetrators; and in the event of abuse, helps children and adults with the reporting and interview process.

Explain that it is against the law for anyone (i.e., family member, scout leader, coach, teacher, peer, clergy) to look at, touch or photograph a child's private parts - or force the child to view or touch theirs. Assure children that they have the right to stop anyone who tries.

*Exceptions: Doctor's visit with a parent or guardian present, injury to the private parts, bath time for young children.*

Differentiate between Real Love (being tucked into bed at night by Mom, a big hug from Grandpa) and Fake Love (touching a child's private parts). It is important to use the terms Real Love and Fake Love rather than "good touch" and "bad touch," since a bad touch may actually feel good.



Parents, especially single Moms: Question the motives of individuals who take extreme interest in your child, or are always first to offer rides or babysitting services. Rely heavily on your parental instincts. (See bottom of p. 17)

Monitor and participate in after-school, youth group, summer camp, sport and faith-based activities – especially those involving travel, overnight stays or sleepovers.

Let your child know they can tell you anything – and you will believe and support them. Stress that secrets should not be kept from you, even seemingly innocent ones. Secrecy often plays a significant role in the grooming process. □

*"It's important to teach your child the proper names for body parts. Making up names for body parts may give the idea that there is something bad about the proper name," states the American Academy of Pediatrics.*





## 6. The Ego/Fame Lure

Sincere compliments make kids feel good about themselves. However, flattery can also be used to lure youngsters into exploitation. Complimentary remarks and other appeals to the ego are a significant part of the grooming process. This can happen in person or when using technology.

Some children are offered chances to model, act, appear on tv or other exciting opportunities. They may be urged to keep these offers secret from parents or guardians.

Photo sessions may involve requests to take some images without clothing.

### How to Stay Safe

Explain to youngsters that not all compliments are sincere; abusers use flattery to groom their victims. Parents, chaperone all talent pursuits and verify credentials of those involved. By law, a parent or legal guardian must co-sign any contract for children under 18.

Youngsters should not remove clothing for photos or video. Regularly monitor your child's electronic devices for inappropriate messages and images. ☐

## 7. The Emergency Lure

Emergencies are a fact of life. They require quick decisions and immediate action, which can short-circuit our basic self-protection instincts.

When a crisis is faked, youngsters can easily be tricked into believing, or even going with, someone. Children may be told that a loved one has been hurt or is in danger to confuse them and rush them into making a split-second decision.

### How to Stay Safe

Explain that emergencies can and will happen. Children must not go with anyone until an emergency has been verified. It's safest to stay put, try to stay calm and seek help from a relative, neighbor or other Trusted Adult.

Pre-arrange a specific Family Emergency Plan. (Free download at [childluresprevention.com/pdf/Family-Emergency-Plan.pdf](http://childluresprevention.com/pdf/Family-Emergency-Plan.pdf)) Who will contact your child if there really is an emergency? Where can they go? Whom should they call? (See p. 17) ☐





## 17. Bullying & Intolerance

Kids are generally kind and accepting of others, but sometimes they're not. Bullying/cyberbullying threatens the safety and well-being of youngsters. And, like child sexual abuse, bullying can profoundly traumatize youngsters, effecting their development and education.

Youngsters may mistreat peers - even good friends - with verbal, emotional (excluding or ignoring others) and physical abuse. Cyberbullying can be particularly traumatic, in that kids are effectively stalked 24/7, even inside their own homes - at times by multiple known and unknown individuals. The resulting humiliation and fear causes many youngsters to skip school or flatly refuse to go. Some even contemplate, attempt or commit suicide.

Bullying/cyberbullying is often based on prejudice against different races, cultures, religions, disabilities, gender, sexual orientation or social standing. Such intolerance may be learned from friends, family, or media - and then fueled by peer pressure, low self-esteem, feelings that they don't fit in, anger and frustration. In some school shootings, relentless bullying by fellow students has been determined to be the main motive for the violent actions of the young gunmen.

### How to Stay Safe

Urge your child to respect and admire the differences in people. Encourage her/him to be understanding of those who are different and to have empathy for those less fortunate.

Stress the importance of standing up for kids who are bullied, and reporting abuse. Bullying, cyberbullying, threats of violence or weapon possession by schoolmates can be reported anonymously, but parents and school officials need to be told.

**Limit how much violence your child is exposed to via media, gaming, music and books.** Point out the physical and emotional pain violence causes victims and their families. Create and practice anger resolution techniques as a family. If you own guns, it is safest to lock up firearms and ammunition separately.

**Supervise your children.** Know their interests and what they do in their free time. What are your kids and their friends posting, texting and talking about? If your child displays symbols of intolerance on social media, clothing, jewelry or other belongings, disallow it - and find out why!

**Ask about bullying and cyberbullying.** Reassure your child that she can tell you, or another Trusted Adult, about anything. If one Trusted Adult can't help, encourage her to tell another and another until she feels safe again. No youngster deserves to be mistreated, and it's not their fault if it happens.

**If your child is mistreating others, insist he/she stop.** Contact school officials to find out how you can work together to fix the problem. Seek professional help for any troubling behaviors, prolonged depression or withdrawal by your child.

**Foster self-esteem.** Children who feel good about themselves generally treat others with kindness and respect. Consider reaching out to kids who may need a mentor. A few well-placed words of praise can work wonders on a youngster's self-image! Kids learn by example, so be a positive role model. ☐

### RED FLAGS OF CONCERN That May Indicate A Need For Professional Help

- ☐ Reports that your youngster is bullying or cyberbullying others
- ☐ Social media posts containing intolerant messages or images
- ☐ Mistreatment of pets or animals
- ☐ Prolonged depression or withdrawal from family and peers
- ☐ Clothing or belongings bearing symbols of intolerance
- ☐ Lack of friends or inability to make friends
- ☐ Obsession with violent movies or video games
- ☐ Fixation with guns, bombs and other weaponry
- ☐ Talk of hurting/killing self or others



## Signs of Abuse

**Behavioral** and **emotional** signs in both female and male victims are typically more evident to all adults who interact with these girls and boys, and can include (but are not limited to):

- Sudden withdrawal from friends, teachers and schoolmates.
- Marked change in behavior or appearance (clothing, weight loss/gain, hygiene).
- Sleep disturbances.
- Depression, anxiety, phobias.
- School problems (difficulty concentrating, poor grades, disinterest, absences).
- Balks at attending certain activities (lessons, sports, faith-based, scouting, clubs).
- Avoids, or seems threatened by, physical contact.
- Uncharacteristically aggressive or disruptive behavior.
- Physical complaints (stomachaches, headaches).

**Physical** signs of child sexual abuse are usually not observable to adults other than parents, caregivers and health professionals, but may include difficulty sitting, pain, injury, bleeding, discharge or infection. Bed wetting or soiling accidents unrelated to potty training should be closely monitored and questioned.

- Interest or knowledge of sexual matters beyond the child's years.
- Using sexual language or acting out sexually.
- Touching other students sexually.
- Running away from home.
- Self-harm or mutilation (cutting, burning, scratching, hair-pulling, banging).

**Please note:** *any one physical, behavioral or emotional sign does not mean that a girl or boy has been sexually abused, but the presence of several signs gives reason for parents or guardians to begin asking questions and consider seeking professional help.*

**Reporting Abuse:** Suspected abuse is reason enough to contact authorities. (See p. 20) **Questions? Call the National Child Abuse Hotline: 1.800.422.4453**

## How Sex Offenders Groom Children For Abuse

Grooming refers to deliberately establishing an emotional connection with a child to prepare him/her for abuse. Abusers build familiarity and trust with the child (and their family), using some or all of the following grooming behaviors - which on the surface can appear innocent:

- Spends time befriending the child and doing things busy parent may not be able to do.
- Gives gifts, money, trips and/or performs special favors for the youngster
- Offers to drive carpool or babysit, including overnight trips or sleepovers.
- Encourages harmless secrets, laying the foundation for future sexual secrets. ("Let's get ice cream, but don't tell your Mom!")
- Promotes the notion that the relationship with the girl or boy is special.
- Initiates body contact games and sports, such as tickling, backrubs or wrestling with children.
- Uses swear words, roughhousing, dirty jokes or sexualized games (truth or dare, pants-ing, strip poker) with children.
- Desensitizes the child through nonsexual touching, "accidental" touching of privates and/or walking in on bathroom or dressing time.
- Encourages the youth to break rules, which can then be used to blackmail the child into abuse and secrecy.
- Excessive texting or calling with the girl or boy.
- Regularly takes pictures and video of the boy or girl.
- Introduces pornography to initiate sexual interest or to normalize the behaviors.
- Provides alcohol/drugs to the youth.
- Makes the child feel responsible for the abuse and what may happen if anyone finds out.
- Uses threats, as well as the child's embarrassment, guilt and shame, to keep him/her from reporting the abuse.

## Sex Offenders also Groom "Safe" People

Abusers also groom "safe" families and co-workers and consciously don't abuse their children. Instead, the abuser manipulates these families into believing he/she is an upstanding citizen. In this way, the abuser builds support for his/her innocence should abuse allegations arise against him/her.



## About Human Trafficking

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, each year 100,000-300,000 American children are at risk of being trafficked for commercial sex in the United States. While many at-risk children (including runaways and foster children) emerge from poor neighborhoods, broken homes and immigrant families, no child or community is immune to the threat of human trafficking.

Child Lures are regularly used by traffickers to entrap children & youth. Most victims are lured

into sexual slavery by clever predators who promise attention, affection, jobs, modeling opportunities, new clothes, jewelry or a place to stay. Kids are being lured into this life in plain sight; victims are recruited at the mall, school or on social media.

By teaching kids about healthy relationships and Child Lures routinely used by sex traffickers, we can begin to cut off the supply to those who prey on - and profit from - vulnerable children. Parents and guardians can help protect children from human trafficking by modeling healthy relationships and being aware of how easily kids can be lured into modern day slavery.

National Human Trafficking Resource Center

Text "HELP" or "INFO" to 233733 (BeFree) or call 1.800.373.7888

## Important National Helplines

Nat'l Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-422-4453 (1-800-4-A-CHILD)

Nat'l Runaway Switchboard

1-800-786-2929 | Text 66008

Nat'l Human Trafficking Resource Center

1-800-373-7888 | Text HELP or INFO to 233733

Nat'l Domestic Violence Hotline

1-800-799-7233 (1-800-799-SAFE)

Nat'l Hope Line Network (Suicide)

1-800-784-2433 (1-800-SUICIDE)

Nat'l Center for Missing & Exploited Children

1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)

Nat'l Sexual Violence Hotline: Rape, Abuse  
& Incest National Network (RAINN)

1-800-656-4673 (1-800-656-HOPE)

## Mandated Reporters

All U.S. States and territories identify persons who are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to an appropriate agency. These persons are known as Mandated Reporters.

Mandated reporters, listed by state, can be found at:  
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/manda.pdf>

To report, call a local law enforcement agency, State agency (child protective services) or your State's toll-free child abuse reporting hotline, which are listed at:  
[http://www.nccafv.org/child\\_abuse\\_reporting\\_numbers\\_co.htm](http://www.nccafv.org/child_abuse_reporting_numbers_co.htm)

## Think First & Stay Safe® Adult Training Modules

*Think First & Stay Safe®* now includes Training Modules for Youth-Serving Adults and Parents & Guardians. Ask your school or organization for access to these Training Modules.



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and Child Lures, Ltd.

## Reporting Child Abuse

All adults should not hesitate to make a report when there is reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Any reasonable suspicion is reason enough to report. Sometimes a single incident may not seem significant, but when combined with other reports on the same individual, it may be the tipping point for an investigation to be opened.

Questions? Call 1-800-422-4453 (1-800-4-A-CHILD)

Reporting suspected child abuse makes it possible to protect a child, and for a family to obtain help.

## Think First & Stay Safe® Youth Curriculum

If you are reading this guide, there's a good chance your child is participating in the *Think First & Stay Safe®* Youth Curriculum for Grades PreK-6.

*Think First & Stay Safe®* provides students with specific health and personal safety strategies, using interactive classroom activities, roleplaying, PowerPoint & video presentations, posters and more.

While adults are responsible for the safety of children, teaching students about personal safety helps them recognize personal safety risks, make healthy and safe choices and ask Trusted Adults for help when needed. For program specifics, visit [childluresprevention.com](http://childluresprevention.com). To order: [childluresprevention.com/order/index.asp](http://childluresprevention.com/order/index.asp)

For Grades 7-12, *Teen Lures®* TV Newscast School Program information, please visit  
[childluresprevention.com/grades7-12/index.asp](http://childluresprevention.com/grades7-12/index.asp).



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