
How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse: *A Parent's Guide*

Introduction

Children are often faced with choices that affect their development and safety. As parents, we must do our best to provide education and guidance to prepare our children to make the best decisions. Talking with our children is a great start. Some subjects are easy to discuss – sports, their grades in school, their friends, and many other features of our daily lives. Other topics, like child abuse – especially sexual abuse, are more difficult.

Discussing child abuse with your children is difficult but very important. Open communication in the home is perhaps the most important step you can take to protect your children from abuse. Research shows that children whose parents talk to them about preventing abuse are more effective at fending off assaults. Your role is very important.

In 2000, children made up 23% of the Canadian population and were victims in 23% of all incidents of violent crime according to a sample of police forces. Our children need our help. Good self-esteem and self-confidence are very important in a child's ability to prevent, avoid and report abusive situations.

As a major youth-serving organization, Scouts Canada has a unique opportunity to help protect youth. This booklet will help you teach your children how to protect themselves. It will help you and your children establish (reinforce) open communication on this sensitive topic. This booklet covers four types of child abuse, with a main focus on preventing sexual and physical abuse. We don't expect that your children will be victims of child abuse. It's extremely important, however, that if your children are ever confronted with an abusive situation, they'll know that there are adults who will listen and offer support.

Section I *Information for Parents*

Using This Booklet

This booklet is divided into two sections. The first section contains general information about child abuse. It will help parents talk about child abuse with their children. The second section is for you to share with your Cub or Scout aged children. It begins with a few simple exercises for you to complete together. The second section also contains some optional activities for your children. Parents of Beaver aged children should introduce the scenarios and discussion as their child's understanding develops.

Read the entire booklet before you and your children do any of the exercises together. Once you are comfortable with the topics in this booklet, you'll be able to present the information in ways they can understand. Feel free to reword an exercise in order to help your children gain a better understanding.

Child Abuse:

Basic Information for Parents

An abused or neglected child is a child who is harmed, or threatened with physical or mental harm, or from who is withheld the necessities of life. There are several forms of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Power and control are central themes to all types of abuse.

Child abuse and neglect are serious problems for our society. In 2000, 61% of police-reported sexual assaults and 19% of physical assaults reported to the police were against children under 18 years of age.

Here are brief, non-legal descriptions of each form of abuse.

Neglect

A child is neglected if the persons this child depends on do not provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, and supervision. Parents/guardians have a legal obligation to ensure proper care and supervision for their children. When children are properly supervised, there is less risk of physical or sexual assault.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes the broad range of physical force resulting in non-accidental injury. Physical abuse often stems from unreasonable punishment, or by punishment that is too harsh for the child. Despite different cultural standards and views on discipline, injuring a child is not acceptable and must be stopped. Children have rights under the law and must be protected. Sometimes a care-giver's reaction to stress results in physical abuse. Drinking and drug abuse by caretakers have become more common contributing factors in physical abuse cases.

Physical abuse injuries can include bruises, broken bones, burns, and abrasions. Children experience minor injuries as a normal part of childhood, usually in predictable places such as the shins, knees, and elbows. When the injuries are in soft-tissue areas on the abdomen or back, or don't seem to be typical childhood injuries, physical abuse becomes a possibility. Injuries don't need to be visible to be considered abuse.

Physical abuse happens to children of all age groups; however, youth ages 12 to 17 suffer the highest rate of injury from physical abuse. This is possibly due to increasing conflict between children and parents as children become more independent. In 2000, 23% of physical assaults against children were carried out by a family member. 62% of all child victims were male. (Canadian Statistics)

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is harder to recognize, but is just as harmful as other forms of abuse. Emotional abuse damages the children's self-esteem and, in extreme cases, can lead to developmental problems and speech disorders. Constant ridicule, rejection, blaming, threatening, isolating, name calling, or unfavourable comparisons with brothers or sisters or other children are forms of emotional abuse.

Children who suffer emotional abuse may demonstrate severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal or self-destructive behaviour or aggressive behaviour.

Emotional abuse may occur when adults demand that children meet unreasonably high expectations, such as in academics or athletics, and the children are made to feel inadequate when they cannot meet these expectations. Parents may quite rightly have high expectations of their children, without being abusive.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or an older child uses authority over children to involve them in sexual activity. The abuser might use tricks, bribes, threats, or force to persuade children to join in sexual activity. Sexual abuse includes any activity performed for the sexual satisfaction of the abuser, including acts ranging from exposing sex organs (exhibitionism), observing another's sex organs or sexual activity (voyeurism), to fondling and sexual assault.

More Information About Sexual Abuse

Here are a few facts you should know about child sexual abuse:

- ◆ Child sexual abuse occurs to as many as 25% of girls and 14% of boys before they reach 18 years of age (USA).
- ◆ Boys and girls could be sexually abused at any age; however, sexual abuse occurs most frequently between ages 4 and 8 for boys and between the ages of 12 and 15 for girls.
- ◆ Children are most likely to be sexually abused by someone they know and trust. One third of assaults are by family members including extended family, while unrelated acquaintances account for 49% of reported abuses.
- ◆ Males inflict 80% of the sexual abuse of boys and 95% of sexual abuse of girls.
- ◆ Few sexually abused children tell anyone that they have been abused. Children are usually told to keep the abuse secret. This could involve threats, bribes, or physical force.
- ◆ Children might feel responsible for the abuse and fear an angry reaction from their parents.

Preteen and teenage children are especially at risk for sexual abuse. The physical and hormonal changes caused by puberty, and their natural curiosity about

their new emotions and feelings, make these youth likely targets for child abusers. The normal desire of children this age to show their independence from their parents' control adds to the risk. This combination might stop victims from asking for their parent's help.

Sexual Abuse by Peers

Approximately one-third of sexual abuse in the USA is inflicted by other children. If your child tells you about club initiations in which sexual activity is included; or about inappropriate or tricked, pressured, or forced sexual activity by other children, you need to stop the activity. This kind of sexual misconduct is serious and should not be ignored.

Children who abuse other children need professional help. They're much more likely to respond to treatment when young.

Parents and others who work with children need to distinguish between normal sexual behavior of children and abusive behaviour. All children are curious about sexual behaviour as a part of growing up. This behaviour is not appropriate when it is forced, when the person who provokes the activity has more power, or when the sexual behaviour lacks consent. When parents are concerned about their children's sexual behaviour, they should discuss these concerns with their children.

Sexual Abuse by Adults

Adults who perpetrate sexual abuse on children often use their positions of power or trust to gain access to children and to conceal their activity. Your children's awareness of an abuser's tactics are their best defence. Tell your children that they can trust you to respond to their concerns about sexual advances or assaults. This will help to prevent more serious situations. Other tips include:

- ◆ be alert to adults who take an over interest in your children.
- ◆ be in the habit of asking your children what they did while they were away at school, daycare or camp.
- ◆ take time to listen.
- ◆ discuss what to do when threatened to keep a secret.
- ◆ know who your children spend time with.
- ◆ know how adults are chosen for positions of trust over your children (daycare, leaders, instructors, coaches).
- ◆ introduce yourself to adults who work with your children.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

The clearest sign that children have been sexually abused is their statement that they were. Children often do not tell about their abuse, so parents should be alert for other signs. These are some signs to watch for:

- ◆ Hints, indirect messages - Refusing to go to a friend's or relative's home for no apparent reason; for example, "I just don't like him anymore."
- ◆ Seductive or provocative behaviour - Acting out adult

sexual behavior or using sexual language children their age is unlikely to know.

- ◆ Physical symptoms - Irritation of genital or anal areas.

The following are common signs that children are upset. If present for more than a few days, these signs could indicate that something is wrong and your children need help and parental support. They might also be signs that your children are being sexually abused:

- ◆ Self-destructive behaviour - Using alcohol or drugs, deliberately harming themselves, running away, attempting suicide, or sexual recklessness or promiscuity.
- ◆ Unhappiness - Undue anxiety and crying, sleep disturbances, or loss of appetite.
- ◆ Regression - Behaving like a younger child, thumb sucking, or bed-wetting.
- ◆ Difficulty at school - Sudden drop in grades, behavioral problems, or truancy.

These signs are not an absolute signal of sexual abuse. But if they persist, your children need your help for whatever is bothering them.

Preventing Abuse

Preventing Abuse in the Family

The following tips on communicating with children, both around the sensitive topic of child abuse in general plus the tips on how to keep your cool may be sufficient support for some people. Parents and caregivers who require additional assistance should not hesitate to seek professional help through the broad range of sources available, including support groups, social workers, physicians, agencies, and other resources.

Sometimes, children who are considered 'difficult' may require professional care. Parents often fail to recognize, or refuse to recognize that the child has a medical problem. Failure to seek appropriate professional help, however, when a child has severe emotional problems could be considered neglect. Situations such as conflicts in a family are also problems that can be fixed.

How to Communicate with Kids

Communicating with kids isn't easy, especially for difficult subjects like child abuse. Good communication with children will establish trust and help to reduce stress in your relationship. It's hard, but not impossible, especially if you keep these tips in mind:

- ◆ Establish rapport. Rapport comes from friendly, honest, face-to-face adult/kid relations. Welcome their suggestions. Laugh at their jokes. Downplay the lectures.
- ◆ Teach decision making. Allow your children to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Confidence in making simple decisions in their lives will help to prepare them for the more difficult choices they will face on their own. Foster a sense of responsibility for decisions and an understanding of consequences. Encourage your child to explain the reasons for their choices to develop their understanding of values.

Offering choices between two desired actions can also reduce the number of commands you give.

- ◆ Whenever possible, join the group your kid joins - or at least work closely with it. Sign up as a leader in your children's Cub pack or Scout troop. This lets you have fun together. It also puts you in a position to help choose the other leaders, stress the values important to you, and influence the program.
- ◆ Use peer pressure - the influence of kids on other kids - to help get your message across. A street gang, school group, ball team, or Scout troop can turn a youth on (or off). Guide the majority - or the influential minority - toward the right attitudes and actions. And they will begin working on other children.
- ◆ Explain consequences - explain how your children's actions, such as ignoring family rules affects you. Example: "When you stay out past curfew, I worry about your safety."
- ◆ Listen for the hidden needs and feelings - Ask clarifying questions without being confrontational to discover why your children have changed patterns or are avoiding people or places.
- ◆ Teach openness - Explain the difference between good secrets such as a surprise party and secrets that make you feel bad.
- ◆ Be the adult - Children expect their parent's decisions to be fair, just and consistent. Create reasonable limits. Be aware of the capabilities of your children as they develop. Admit your own mistakes. Nobody is perfect.
- ◆ Walk the talk - Be careful not to expect more from your children than they can expect from you.
- ◆ Help children solve their own problems - use questions to help your children identify issues and appropriate alternatives.
- ◆ Share your strategies - Children often experience similar challenges to their parents. Share how you have overcome challenges like dealing with frustration, failure, fear, stress, loss, and even success.
- ◆ Think long term - in the heat of an issue or situation consider the long term impact on the relationship. Are you really willing to risk everything you have invested in your children over this issue? Or can you put the discussion in perspective as another challenge in your journey together?
- ◆ Smile, even if you don't feel like it - Your body language speaks louder than your words and how you say them. Smiling can also help you to gain perspective.
- ◆ Be curious - Develop an insatiable curiosity about your children. Take a sincere interest in their views, their joys and their sorrows, their sense of failure and of success. Enjoy watching them grow up as they develop their own identity.

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- ◆ Catch your children doing something right - Too often children only hear about what they have done wrong. Recognize even small efforts to improve and you'll provide the encouragement to try harder.
 - ◆ Provide sufficient direction - Do your children know exactly what you mean by a clean room? Failure to follow through may mean your children don't understand your directions. But too much direction on simple tasks is demeaning. Find the balance for the situation. Check for understanding when children seem confused or lack follow through.

Keeping Your Cool - Tips for Parents

The next time everyday pressures build and you feel like lashing out - Stop! Try any of these simple alternatives. You'll feel better...and so will your children:

- ◆ Take a deep breath. And another. Then remember you are the adult.
- ◆ Close your eyes and imagine you're hearing what your children are about to hear.
- ◆ Press your lips together and count to 10; or, better yet, to 20.
- ◆ Put your children in time-out chairs. (Remember this rule: One time-out minute for each year of age.)
- ◆ Put yourself in a time-out chair. Think about why you are angry: Is it your children, or are they simply convenient targets for your anger?
- ◆ Phone a friend.
- ◆ If someone can watch the children, take a walk.
- ◆ Splash cold water on your face.
- ◆ Smile until your emotion matches your expression.
- ◆ Hug a pillow.
- ◆ Turn on some music. Maybe even sing along.
- ◆ Pick up a pencil and write down as many helpful words as you can think of. Save the list.

Few parents mean to abuse their children. When parents take time out to control themselves before they grab hold of their children, everybody wins.

Parents and other caregivers should think about the following questions* suggested by Douglas Besharov, the first director of the US National Centre on Child Abuse and Neglect, regarding the methods of discipline they use.

- ◆ Is the purpose of the punishment to educate the children or to vent the parent's anger?
- ◆ Are the children capable of understanding the relationship between their behaviour and the punishment?
- ◆ Is the punishment appropriate and within the bounds of acceptable discipline?

- ◆ Is a less severe, but equally effective, punishment available?
- ◆ Is the punishment degrading, brutal, or extended beyond the limits of what the children can handle?
- ◆ If physical force is used, is it done carefully to avoid injury?

Note: Most child protection agencies view physical discipline as inappropriate.

These questions help to define the boundaries between acceptable discipline and child abuse. Other causes of child abuse inside the family might be much more complex and require professional help to resolve.

*Adapted from Douglas J. Besharov. *Recognizing Child Abuse: A Guide for the Concerned*. New York: Free Press, 1990.

Preventing Abduction and Abuse by Strangers

While strangers are the abusers in only 20% of assaults on children, they are often the focus of prevention strategies. Here's what you can do to help protect your children:

- ◆ Don't leave your children alone in shopping centres.
- ◆ Go with your children when using public washrooms.
- ◆ Keep a current photo (head and shoulders) in your wallet.
- ◆ Don't put the children's names on outside of clothing.
- ◆ Know where your children are at all times and visa versa.
- ◆ Closely supervise Beaver and Cub aged children when doing door-to-door activities such as fundraising.
- ◆ Teach the Three R's of Youth Protection.
- ◆ Discuss common situations where your children are at risk and what to do when in danger. See Section II.

The "Three Rs" of Youth Protection

- ◆ Recognize that anyone could be a child molester and be aware of situations that could lead to abuse.
- ◆ Resist advances made by child molesters to avoid being abused.
- ◆ Report any molestation or attempted molestation to parents or trusted adults.

Talking with Your Child About Sexual Abuse

It's very difficult for some parents to talk to their children about sexual abuse.

Here are some tips to help you through this tough task.

- ◆ If you feel uncomfortable discussing sexual abuse with your children, let them know. Otherwise, they might misinterpret your anxiety. Then, they may not approach you when they need help. You can use a simple statement like, "I wish we didn't have to talk about this. I'm uncomfortable because I don't like to think that this could happen to you. I want you to know that it's important and you can come to me whenever you have a question or if anybody ever tries to hurt you."
- ◆ Select words your child understands. One main concern of parents is finding words to explain sexual abuse. Most child abuse prevention experts believe that children should learn the proper names for their genitalia. However, if you are uncomfortable with using the names of body parts, use whatever terms your child understands. Help your child to be comfortable with their bodies. An over-emphasis on privacy can make them uncomfortable.
- ◆ Provide the opportunity for your child to practice youth protection skills. Children learn better when they can practice the skills they are taught. Practising the exercising of their rights (see Section II. Information for Children) with parents gives children confidence.
- ◆ Support your children in trusting their instincts - Don't make them kiss someone they feel uncomfortable with (even if they are a close family member). Confidence in their own instincts will be their greatest defence when on their own. Don't discount what they say. If children say "I'm scared," don't respond with "Don't be silly." Ask what they're scared of and how scared they are. Help them understand their instincts.

Many parents feel that teaching children about sexual abuse will take away their children's innocence. In fact, many children are at risk of sexual abuse because they aren't mature enough to understand why a child molester would want to look at, touch, or otherwise violate them. This partly explains why children who are sexually abused at a young age do not realize it until they are older. It also explains their confusion if parents or other adults overreact when told about sexual abuse.

When a Child Tells You About Abuse

If your children become victims of abuse, your first reaction can be very important in helping them through the ordeal. The following guidelines may help you:

- ◆ Don't panic or overreact to the information your children tell you.
- ◆ Don't criticize your children or tell your children they misunderstood what happened.

- ◆ Do respect your children's privacy and take them to a place where you can talk without interruptions or distractions.
- ◆ Do reassure your children that they are not to blame for what happened. Tell them you appreciate being told about the incident and will help to make sure that it won't happen again.
- ◆ Do encourage your children to tell the proper authorities what happened, but try to avoid repeated stressful interviews.
- ◆ Do consult your family doctor or other child abuse authority about the need for medical care or counselling for your children.

You should show real concern, but NOT alarm or anger, when questioning your children about possible sexual abuse.

In most Canadian jurisdictions, there is a legal duty to report if a child has been or is at risk of being physically or emotionally harmed (including sexually molested) by a person having charge of the child. There is also a duty to report if a child less than 12 years of age has seriously injured another person or caused serious damage to another person's property and is either not appropriately supervised or is not getting the treatment that the child requires.

Finally, if your children have been sexually abused, do not blame yourself or your children. People who victimize children are not easy to identify. They come from all walks of life. Often they have a position of status - they go to church, hold regular jobs, and are active in the community. Child molesters are sometimes very skilled at controlling children through giving excessive attention, gifts, and money.

Child molesters use their skills on parents and other adults, disguising their abusive behaviour behind friendship and care for the children.

Working with Other People's Children How to Protect Yourself

Society has become very sensitive to ensuring the safety of children. There are numerous examples of adults abusing the trust children placed in them. As a result, educators and others who work with children sometimes worry that well intentioned actions of caring and concern could be misinterpreted. You can help to protect yourself from false accusations and misunderstandings by remaining above suspicion.

Here are a few tips for adults and teens who work with children:

- ◆ don't play favourites - show a similar level of affection to all of the children in your care. One test of this: if you're comfortable with others watching your interaction with children, you are probably okay.
- ◆ touch children in safe places - never touch children on the private places of their bodies. The back of the head and

the shoulders are acceptable. The buttocks, the breasts, the thighs, and the groin are unacceptable. Aggressive wrestling and tickling can put you at risk of inappropriate contact. Comfort for sad children can be shown by placing your arm on a shoulder and giving a gentle squeeze from the side. Allow children to back away from your well intentioned affection.

- ◆ take care in providing first aid - involve a member of the same sex as any child requiring attention, if possible. Otherwise, have another person present. Unless absolutely necessary, leave examination of private places to health care professionals. Don't force children to remove clothing for an examination.
- ◆ stay in view of others - if you need to speak to a child alone, remove yourselves the necessary distance and remain in the view of others.
- ◆ respect privacy - give children privacy when changing, taking showers, using the washroom, and sleeping. Be careful not to expose yourself. Do not condone such activities as swimming naked or any other sexual activities.
- ◆ avoid sexual talk - do not tell sexual jokes or behave with children in a way that promotes promiscuity or the acceptance of sexually explicit material.
- ◆ supervise responsibly - do not permit abusive youth peer activities (initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, and bullying).
- ◆ know the special needs of the children - ask parents on a regular basis to inform you of any medical needs or conditions (such as medication for hyperactivity). Stressful situations at home or school can also affect children's behaviour.
- ◆ provide adequate supervision - maintain appropriate adult to youth ratios for the activities and the age group. Ensure that those responsible for supervision have the skills for their role.
- ◆ use appropriate approaches to discipline - be fair, consistent and reasonable in consequences for inappropriate behaviour. Take steps to prevent situations from arising through proper planning, adequate supervision and clear communication of expectations. Stop inappropriate behaviour early. Use of physical discipline or force could lead to charges of assault or abuse.
- ◆ be alert to children at risk - know the symptoms of possible abuse and be approachable to children in need. You have a duty to report suspected abuse.

How Scouts Canada Selects Leaders

Scouts Canada knows the importance of selecting the right volunteer to lead activities for your children. That's why leaders undergo a detailed selection and training process. This process includes:

- ◆ an interview
 - ◆ reference checks
 - ◆ a Police Record Check
 - ◆ orientation/training
 - ◆ coaching and mentoring
 - ◆ ongoing evaluation
- Completed prior to working with youth

Scouting Resources

Duty of Care

Provides Scouters with direction on a number of issues related to their role in youth development, including a policy statement on our "Duty of Care" and a "Code of Conduct for Adults." (available on Scouts Canada's web site, through council offices and in leaders' handbooks.)

Volunteer Recruitment and Development Handbook

Recruiters are provided information on how to set up and conduct interviews and reference checks to improve their effectiveness at selecting appropriate volunteers.

Scouting's Volunteer Development

All leaders who participate in Scouting's leader development program (Woodbadge 1) receive information in the recognition and reporting of suspected child abuse.

Other Resources

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk,

by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish. New York: Avon Books

Raising Safe Kids in an Unsafe World

by Jan Wagner. New York: Avon Books

<http://www.yellodyno.com/>

Scouts Canada's Website

<http://www.scouts.ca>

Screening Handbook

Protecting Clients, Staff, and the Community

Published by Volunteer Canada to educate organizations recruiting volunteers to work in positions of trust.
email: volunteer.canada@sympatico.ca

Sexual Abuse Information Series

Published by Vancouver-Richmond Incest and Sexual Abuse Centre. A series of booklets to help young victims on issues of identifying, reporting and dealing with sexual abuse. Call Health Canada 1-800-267-1291.

Also, contact your local Children's Aid, Child and Family Services office, community policing officer or your family doctor for additional resources and professional assistance.

Section II ***Information for Youth***

The Child's Bill of Rights, on page 14, outlines some specific ways children can protect themselves. Discuss these rights with your children, and review the Basic Rules of Safety for Children. These could provide the information that your children need to help them respond to the situations in the exercises.

Basic Rules of Safety for Children

Beaver and Cub age children benefit from having concrete safety rules. However, traditional cautions about "strangers" aren't enough to protect our children. Children have different ideas than adults do about who a stranger might be. In addition, a person who harms children is usually someone they know. It might be more helpful to teach your children to recognize possibly threatening situations or actions.

Discuss the following safety rules with your children at a pace they can handle. Point out the rules as the situations arise:

- ◆ If you are in a public place and get separated from your parents (or the people in charge of you), don't wander around looking for them. Go to a police officer, a checkout counter, the security office, or the lost-and-found area and quickly tell someone in charge that you have been separated from your parents and need help.
- ◆ Ask parent's permission before going away or accepting rides.
- ◆ Ask parents before accepting gifts from strangers.
- ◆ Adults and older youths who are not in your family and who need help (such as finding an address or locating a lost pet) should not ask children for help; they should ask other adults.

- ◆ Use the buddy system. Try not to go any place alone.
- ◆ Ask your parent's permission before going into someone else's home.
- ◆ No one should ask you to keep a special secret when someone has been scared or hurt by the secret. If this happens, tell your parent or teacher.
- ◆ If someone insists on taking your picture or videotaping you without permission, tell your parent or teacher.
- ◆ No one should touch you in ways or places that make you feel bad. You should not touch anyone else in ways that will make them feel bad. You should ask an adult you trust questions whenever you are mixed up about someone's touch or behaviour.
- ◆ You have the right to say "No!" to anyone who tries to take you somewhere, touch you, or make you feel uncomfortable in any way.
- ◆ Keep a safe distance (3 steps) from adults you don't know.
- ◆ Never let a stranger into the house, even if he/she claims to be a repair person or that a parent sent them.
- ◆ Stay alert and walk tall when out in public.
- ◆ If grabbed, YELL "HELP", BREAK AWAY, RUN!!!
- ◆ Tell your parents about the new people you meet each day.

These are some simple safety rules that can be approached in the same non-frightening manner in which you tell your children not to play with fire. They emphasize situations common to many child molestation cases.

Child's Bill of Rights

When feeling threatened, you have the right to:

- ◆ Trust your instincts or feelings.
- ◆ Expect privacy.
- ◆ Say no to unwanted touching or affection.
- ◆ Say no to an adult's inappropriate demands and requests.
- ◆ Withhold information that could jeopardize your safety.
- ◆ Refuse gifts.
- ◆ Be rude or unhelpful if the situation warrants.
- ◆ Run, scream, and make a scene.
- ◆ Break away from unwanted advances.
- ◆ Ask for help.

Things Children Should Know

- ◆ your full name and the name of parents
- ◆ your complete phone number, street address or postal code

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- ◆ know how to make a collect call and how to call police
 - ◆ know how to identify safe places to go for help: (Block Parents, store personnel, police, security, trusted adults)
 - ◆ body parts and what is private (area covered by swimsuit)
 - ◆ common tricks used by molesters
(See situations and suggested actions for each in Section II)
 - ◆ the difference between good and bad secrets

Personal Protection Rules for Computer On-line Services

When you're on-line, you are in a public place, among thousands of people who are on-line at the same time. Be safe by following these personal protection rules and you'll have fun:

- ◆ Keep on-line chats with strangers to public places, not in e-mail.
- ◆ Don't tell anyone on-line your last name, address, phone numbers at home or school, your parents' workplaces, or the name or location of your school unless you have your parent's permission first. Never give your password to anyone but a parent or other adult in your family.
- ◆ If someone sends you e-mail with sayings that make you feel uncomfortable, trust your feelings. You are probably right to be watchful. Don't reply. Tell a parent what happened.
- ◆ If somebody tells you to keep your on-line messages secret, tell a parent.
- ◆ Be careful whom you talk to. Anyone who starts talking about subjects that make you feel uncomfortable is probably an adult posing as a kid.
- ◆ Pay attention if someone tells you things that don't fit together. An on-line friend may say she is 12, and a day later will say she is 14. That means the person is lying and may be an adult posing as a kid.
- ◆ Unless you talk to a parent about it first, never talk to a person you only know on-line by phone. If someone asks you to call-even if it's collect or a toll-free, 800 number that's a warning.
- ◆ Never agree to meet someone you only know on-line any place off-line, in the real world.
- ◆ Watch out if someone on-line starts talking about hacking, or breaking onto other peoples' or companies' computer systems; phreaking (the "ph" sounds like an "f"), the illegal use of long-distance services or cellular phones; or viruses, on-line programs that destroy or damage data when other people download them onto their computers.
- ◆ Promise your parent or an adult family member and yourself that you will honour any rules about how much time

◇ you are allowed to spend on-line and what you do and where you go while you are there.

Being a Good Wolf Cub

When children join the Wolf Cub program, they assume a duty to be faithful to the rules of Scouting. These rules are represented in the Wolf Cub Promise, Law of the Pack, and Wolf Cub motto. The rules of Scouting don't require Cubs to put themselves in possibly dangerous situations. We actually want members to "be prepared" and to "do their best" to avoid these situations.

We hope that you will discuss these rules with your Wolf Cubs. Be sure they know not to risk their safety to follow the rules of Wolf Cubs.

Scouting's Principles

The Cub Promise includes the phrase "To do a good turn for somebody every day". This means that Cubs should be willing to do things for others, but only when their parents have given permission and know where they are and who they're with. Cubs should not do anything dangerous. The Law of the Pack includes the phrase, "The Cub respects the Old Wolf." The Old Wolf is a good leader and should never ask you to do something that you feel bad about. If the Old Wolf, who might be a teacher, coach, or other youth leader, ever asks you to do something you think is bad, as a Cub you have the right to say "No!" and tell your parents or another adult you trust.

What If...

In this activity the parent describes situations that children should recognize as possibly dangerous. Once the parent describes a situation, children tell or show what they would do if ever faced with a similar situation. After each situation, some possible responses are listed.

You might already have set rules for some of these situations. Don't change your rules in response to the exercise unless there is new information that you have not previously considered. You should also feel free to reword the situation if that helps your children understand the situation better.

Situations and Suggested Actions for Each

What if you are home alone, the telephone rings, and a voice on the other end asks if your parents are home? What would you do?

- ◆ Tell the caller your parents are busy and cannot come to the phone.
- ◆ Take a message and the phone number of the caller.
- ◆ If the message needs an immediate response, call your parent.
- ◆ Don't tell the caller you are home alone.
- ◆ Let the answering machine answer and don't pick up the phone until you are sure who the caller is.

What if an adult invites you on a camping trip and suggests that you allow him to take your picture when you are not wearing clothes? What would you do?

- ◆ Tell that person you don't want to have your picture taken without clothes.
- ◆ If possible, get away from that person immediately.
- ◆ When you return home, tell your parents what happened.
- ◆ Be very careful around that person in the future, and be sure to tell your parents anything that bothers you about that person.

What if neighbours come to you and says that your parent is sick and you must go with them? These neighbours aren't people you have been told it's okay to go with. What would you do?

- ◆ If you're at school, ask the principal or your teacher to help you make sure your parent really sent these people for you.
- ◆ If you're at home or somewhere else, call the emergency number your parents gave you (such as their work, or a close relative) to make sure your parents sent this person.

What if you are in a public washroom and someone tries to touch you in ways or places that make you feel uncomfortable? What would you do?

- ◆ Yell "STOP THAT" as loudly as you can.
- ◆ Run out of the room as quickly as possible.
- ◆ Tell your parent, a police officer, security guard, or other adult (such as your teacher) what happened.
- ◆ If the person tries to take you away, yell, "This is not my parent!" BREAK AWAY. RUN.

What if you are walking to school in the rain and a car stops and the driver asks if you want a ride? What would you do?

- ◆ Stay away from the car. You don't need to get close to the car to answer.
- ◆ Unless you have your parent's permission to ride with the person, say "No, thank you." If the driver keeps asking, say "No!," then get away.
- ◆ Tell your teacher when you get to school and tell your parent when you get home.

What if you are playing on the playground and an adult comes up to you and asks you to help find her lost puppy? What would you do?

- ◆ If you do not know the person, stay away and tell a teacher or other adult you trust.
- ◆ Adults should ask other adults for help. Before you help that person, you must get your parent's permission.
- ◆ Tell your parents what happened.

◇ *What if you are walking down the street and an elderly neighbour tells you that you'll get a quarter to help carry groceries? The person asks you to come into his house. What would you do?*

- ◆ Get permission first.
- ◆ Do not ever go into anyone else's house without your parent's permission.
- ◆ Tell your parents about the person.

What if an older child you know invites you to play a game, and to pretend that she is the doctor and you are the child tells you to take off all of your clothes so that the "doctor" can examine the "patient." What would you do?

- ◆ Keep your clothes on.
- ◆ If she persists, say "NO!," then yell and get away.
- ◆ Tell your parent.

Other Youth Protection Activities

My Safety Notebook

This exercise will help your children avoid situations that could lead to abuse. The safety notebook can be a loose-leaf notebook or loose pages stapled together with a home-made cover. This safety notebook gives your children a place to list emergency telephone numbers, including parents' work numbers and a neighbour or friend's number to call when parents are unavailable. In addition, your children can list the safety rules that you have discussed with them. Encourage your children to decorate each page with pictures and drawings that illustrate some of the rules. They may also want to list other kinds of safety guidelines, such as rules for bicycle safety.

"My Safety Notebook" is intended to be a fun activity for getting across some serious concerns. It's a personalized reference that can reassure your children that they know how to respond when confronted by a potentially dangerous situation.

Plays and Skits

Sometimes children enjoy creating a script for a play or skit that will dramatize their understanding of the safety rules. The skit could then be presented to other children as a service project. You can guide the creation of the script so that the situations reflect an understanding of the rules and give an opportunity for practising the skills. Children need to feel that they can protect themselves. Practising Youth Protection strategies will help children learn and apply them when necessary.

Family Meeting

Children must feel comfortable telling their parents about any abusive problems or experiences. Studies show that more than half of all child abuse incidents are never reported because the victims are too afraid or too confused to report their experiences. Your children need to be allowed to talk freely about their likes and dislikes, their friends, and their true feelings. You can create

open communication through family meetings where safety issues can be talked about by the entire family. Some of the activities suggested here could be done in the setting of a family meeting.

Being a Good Scout

When children join Scouts, they assume a duty to be faithful to the rules of Scouting as represented in the Scout Promise, Scout Law, and Scout motto.

Scouting's rules don't require Scouts to put themselves in possibly dangerous situations. In fact, we want Scouts to "be prepared" and to "do their best" to avoid these situations. We hope that you'll discuss these rules with your Scouts and be sure that they understand not to risk their safety to follow Scouting's rules.

The Scout Promise includes the phrase "To help other people at all times." The Scout Law says that "A Scout is helpful," and the Scouting slogan is "Do a Good Turn Daily." There are many people who need help, and a Scout should be willing to lend a hand when needed.

Sometimes people who really don't need help ask for it in order to create an opportunity for abuse. Scouts should be very familiar with safety rules so they can recognize situations to be wary of.

For example:

- ◆ It is one thing to stand on the sidewalk away from a car to give directions. It's something else to get in the car with someone to show them the way. Scouts should never get into a car without their parent's permission.
- ◆ It may be okay for Scouts to help carry groceries to a person's house, but they should never enter the house without permission from their parents.

The "Three Rs" of Youth Protection

- ◆ Recognize that anyone could be a child molester and be aware of situations that could lead to abuse.
- ◆ Resist advances made by child molesters to avoid being abused.
- ◆ Report any molestation or attempted molestation to parents or trusted adults.

Practising the "Three Rs" of Youth Protection

The following stories will help your children understand how to use the "three Rs" of Youth Protection. These situations may make you feel uncomfortable. However, if children are going to learn about sexual abuse, they must be able to identify and discuss specific acts.

Jane's Story

I'm a 12-year-old girl in the seventh grade at my junior high school. Every afternoon after school, I go to a recreation centre until my mom gets home from work. One of the guys who works at the centre has been spending a lot of time with me lately. He's really nice, and he told me that he would teach me how to wrestle. He said wrestling would be a good sport for me because it has different weight classes. I would be wrestling other kids my own size. I've got to admit that I like to wrestle. But there's something bothering me. This guy wants me to come to the centre on Sunday when no one else is there. He said that we would have the place to ourselves, and he could really teach me a lot. I'd like to, but I've been noticing that when he's teaching me, he holds me down and sometimes touches my breasts. He makes like it's a real funny joke, but I'm not so sure that I like it.

What is risky about this situation?

- ◆ History of unwanted touching of private parts.
- ◆ Touching will probably become more serious if allowed to continue.
- ◆ Individual coaching on Sunday would put Jane alone at the centre with a possible molester.

How would you resist?

- ◆ Tell the person to stop grabbing you and do not wrestle with him any longer.
- ◆ Make sure that you are not alone with him. If he grabs you, yell "Stop that!" loud enough so that everyone will hear.

How would you report this situation?

- ◆ Tell the individual's supervisor and ask that someone else help you with wrestling.
- ◆ Ask your parents to file a report with the police. What he is doing is abuse and it is illegal.

Maria's Story

I'm a 13-year-old girl with a problem – my 17-year-old aunt, Gail. Gail stays with me when my parents go out of town. The last time, she started to act really strange. She wouldn't let me out of her sight. Even when I took a shower, she insisted that I keep the bathroom door open. When I turned around, Gail was taking a picture of me in the shower. She told me there wasn't any film in the camera and that it was a joke. I don't think it was funny, though. On the last night she was there, she told me to come into her bedroom and watch TV with her. It wasn't TV – it was sex stuff. She told me not to tell anyone because if I did she would be in trouble and so would I.

Does the fact that Gail is a member of Maria's family and only 17 years old mean that she could not be a possible child molester?

- ◆ Remember that a child molester could be anyone. Most are family members or someone else the child knows.
- ◆ Many child molesters begin molesting others when they are teenagers.

Does the fact that Gail has not touched Maria mean that sexual abuse did not happen?

- ◆ Gail violated Maria's privacy by taking a picture that Maria did not want taken - this is one form of abuse.
- ◆ Showing Maria pornographic videos is a form of sexual abuse and is usually a forerunner of sexual contact.

Should Maria get into trouble if she tells on Gail?

- ◆ Maria should not be blamed. She did nothing wrong.
- ◆ Anytime that sexual abuse occurs, the abuser is the one who is responsible.

Steven's Story

My name is Steven. I go to junior high school and get pretty good grades, so I'm not stupid. But the other day something happened that made me feel really dumb. A group of guys decided that they wanted to start a secret club. Only a few kids would be able to join their club. It was a fun thing, and the only way that you could join was to be asked by one of the members of the club. Well, one of my friends belonged and asked me to join. I was really flattered, and I really wanted to join. He told me that the club was meeting in one of the storage buildings on campus and that we could get high and have some fun - then he grabbed my crotch and laughed.

What do you suppose Steven's friend meant when he said, "We could get high and have some fun," and then grabbed Steven's crotch?

- ◆ Secret clubs are often used by child molesters to gain access to unsuspecting boys.
- ◆ Using drugs and alcohol to lower resistance to sexual abuse also is quite common.

Suppose that Steven went to the club meeting and ended up being sexually molested by one of the other guys there. How do you think he would feel?

- ◆ A lot of boys feel very embarrassed when they realize that they have been fooled. Often they are afraid that others will think that they are homosexual if they have been sexually abused by another guy.
- ◆ Embarrassment might cause Steven and other boys in his situation to not report their abuse.

◇

We hope that you found this booklet useful in dealing with the difficult topic of child abuse. Remember: a self-confident child who can trust their instincts is a safer child. Take an active interest in your children's activities. Get involved! Be sure to know the adults who are working with your children. Positive, healthy role models will re-enforce your teachings.

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