

# What Every Parent Should Know: Recognizing and Preventing Sexual Abuse

## Did You Know?

- \* 90% to 95% of children who are sexually abused know their abuser.
- \* 1 in 10 children will be sexually abused before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse

- Behavior changes such as: a child who is outgoing becomes introverted, a happy child becomes depressed, or an easygoing child becomes aggressive or angry.
- Direct disclosure of sexual abuse by the child.
- Falling grades.
- Preoccupation with sexual themes.
- Sexual knowledge not appropriate for the child's age.
- Sudden fear of a particular person

*There are over 42 million survivors of child sexual abuse spread across ALL socioeconomic classes. Don't make the same mistake as so many others—don't think it can't happen in my family. Please talk to your child.*

Call for more information:  
(419) 244-3053 ext. 233

## Learn to Recognize Boundary Violations:

### People who sexually abuse children:

- ⊖ Take advantage of isolated one-on-one situations
- ⊖ Are often seen gradually crossing physical boundaries
- ⊖ Use secrecy, blame, and threats to control the child
- ⊖ Go out of their way to appear trustworthy

### People who sexually abuse choose children:

- ⊖ who do not receive sufficient parental attention and supervision
- ⊖ who are socially isolated and lonely
- ⊖ who lack knowledge of their bodies and how their bodies work

People who might sexually abuse your children could be family, friends, neighbors, or authority figures in the community.

## Personal Safety for Kids:

- ☺ Open and calm parental discussion shows children they have someone who will listen if they have a problem or need help.
- ☺ Teach young children the proper names of their private parts.
- ☺ Teach your child that their body is one thing they DO NOT have to share. Children have the right to decide who touches them, and how.
- ☺ It is NOT okay for an older person to ask a child to keep a secret about private parts. If that happens, your child should tell you as soon as possible.
- ☺ If someone asks your child to do anything that makes them feel uncomfortable, they should say "no" and get away from that person. Next, they should tell you or another adult whom they trust.
- ☺ Tell your child the names of numerous adults in their community and family that they can get help from if they have a problem.
- ☺ If the first person your child "tells" does not or can not help them, tell your child that it is alright to ask someone else to help them.
- ☺ Above all, tell your child that: **SEXUAL ABUSE IS NEVER A CHILD'S FAULT!**

The best way to prevent sexual abuse is to talk to your child about sexual abuse BEFORE it happens!



## If your child discloses sexual abuse...

Remain calm and tell them you believe them, they did the right thing, and you are proud of them for telling. Call your local police or Children's Services immediately.  
Lucas County Children Services: (419) 213-2273