

Top 5 Ways You Can Reduce the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse

Assess Risky Situations

How this is connected to sexual abuse:

Certain situations like unsupervised time with others or activities with power differences pose a higher risk for abuse than others. You can't be with your kids every minute, but you can choose the right moments to be most vigilant and prepare children for high-risk situations.

Healthy Boundaries

How this is connected to sexual abuse:

Kids who understand the importance of boundaries and why they should be respected are better able to resist abusive situations when they encounter them. They are also less likely to violate the boundaries of others. When they expect that everyone (including adults) should honor healthy boundaries, they are more empowered to alert others when something seems wrong.

Open Communication

How this is connected to sexual abuse:

Communication is key to raising kids. Do everything you can to help children feel comfortable and able to discuss what is going on in their life. Emphasize the dangers of secrecy, the benefits of open dialogue, and that they can always talk with you and feel safe to share. Helping children communicate openly will increase the likelihood they will come to you when something does happen.

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Questions to consider as I assess risk:

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How I can balance reacting and responding:

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Discuss Sexual Development

How this is connected to sexual abuse:

Kids learn about sexuality one way or the other. Take ownership of your role in helping children learn about sexual development by teaching what is appropriate in practice and principle, and where children can go with questions and confirmations about what they are experiencing as they mature.

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Emotional Well-Being

How this is connected to sexual abuse:

Children with healthy self-esteem and who can manage their emotions are less vulnerable to abusive situations. They can quickly navigate away from settings and behaviors that may put them at risk. As you provide supportive spaces where children can address loneliness and insecurity, you are decreasing your child's vulnerability to abuse.

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What to teach:

How to teach:

SOMETHING I WILL DO TO HELP REDUCE THE RISK OF ABUSE IS: