



## Talking to Children About Sexual Abuse

**W**e like to believe that sexual abuse couldn't happen to our children. However, it is a sad fact that 1 out of 3 girls and 1 out of 5 boys will be sexually abused before they reach their eighteenth birthday. In 89 percent of sexual abuse cases, the abuser is someone the child knows. We must take precautions to protect our children. Generally when abuse happens, perpetrators are alone with the children. Perpetrators can be adults, teenagers, or other children.

- ◆ Begin the conversation during a calm and quiet time with your child like during a leisurely walk or while fixing a meal together.
- ◆ Let your child know they are special and important.
- ◆ Explain which parts of the body are private. Teach your child that their body is their own and they have the right to say "NO" if someone wants to touch them in any way that makes them feel uncomfortable, afraid, or confused. Give them permission to say "NO" even if that person is an adult.
- ◆ Encourage your child to tell you if someone bothers them.
- ◆ Let them know that if someone touches them in a way that does not seem right, it is not their fault.



## If Your Child Says They Have Been Sexually Abused

- ◆ If your child is sexually abused, the most important thing that you can do is **BELIEVE YOUR CHILD**.
- ◆ **STAY CALM** and **REASSURE** your child he/she did nothing wrong. Abuse is never a child's fault.
- ◆ **LISTEN** to your child. Be careful not to make comments and judgments about the abuser. Usually, the child knows or loves the person who abused them.
- ◆ **MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD IS SAFE** from further abuse.
- ◆ **GET HELP** for both your child and yourself as soon as possible.