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What You Can Do To Prevent Child Abuse

- Learn about child abuse and neglect.
- Be alert to the "Red Flags."
- Be prepared to make a report.
- Do something.
- Speak up.
- Support National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April.
- Advocate for services to help families.
- Ask your local television stations to have non-violent programs for children.
- Support your local Child Abuse Council.
- Support the victim.
- Find help for yourself if you are overwhelmed.
- Empower the community to respond.
- Take a child or family under your wing.
- Become a foster parent or grandparent.
- Encourage your church, social and community organizations to provide outreach to at-risk families.
- Lobby your community leaders to address the problem.
- Volunteer your time.
- Don't turn your back on a situation.
- Ask your school to provide prevention education to the children.
- Talk to your kids about personal safety and body limits.
- Be sensitive to the needs of troubled or isolated families.

If a Child Comes to You...

- Your job is to simply report what the child tells you, not to investigate the situation.
- Attempts to investigate may:
 - Tip off the perpetrator and cause them to flee or destroy evidence.
 - Cause a child to retract if they think you don't believe them.
- Reassure the child that they did the right thing by telling you and they are not to blame
- Don't promise them that you won't "tell"
- Tell the child that what you plan to do to help protect them
- Talk with the child if they need to vent - be ready to listen and be supportive
- Be respectful of the child's need for, or dislike of touching while trying to comfort them...do so with caution and only with the child's permission
- Consider helping the child get professional counseling
- Mandated Reporters are not required by law to tell the parent/caretaker that a report has been made. However, one should

keep in mind that parents/caretakers are not always the perpetrators and may not be aware that their child exhibits signs of abuse.

- Find a place to help with your feelings too.

Age Factors to Consider for Preschool Age Children

- At higher risk for serious injury.
- Stories are generally truthful.
- Don't know abuse is serious...their value of right and wrong is based on family behavior.

Age Factors to Consider for School Age and Teen Children

- More prone to self-report abuse.
- More aware of "normal" family behavior due to exposure to other families.
- Tend to be protective of substance abuse parents or caretakers - role reversal.
- Sexual abuse is often disclosed when family incest interferes with normal teenage relationships.
- Disclosure of abuse may have a "hidden agenda" such as revenge or anger towards parent or caretaker.