

## Signs of Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse of a child can take place within the family - by a parent, step-parent, sibling or other relative; or outside the home - for example by a friend, neighbor, child-care person, teacher or random molester.

However when the sexual abuse has occurred the child develops a variety of distressing feelings and thoughts. Often there are no physical signs of child abuse, or signs that only a physician can detect.

The behavior of sexually abused children may include:

- Unusual interest in or avoidance of all things of a sexual nature
- Sleep problems, nightmares
- Depression or withdrawal from family, friends
- Sexual promiscuity, pregnancy at an early age
- Refusal to go to school, delinquency
- Anxiety, suicidal behavior
- Eating disorders
- Low self-esteem
- Physical complaints
- Aspects of sexual molestation in drawings, games, fantasies
- Unusual aggressiveness
- Secretiveness and other severe behavior changes

If a child trusts you enough to tell you about ABUSE....

### DO...

Keep calm  
Believe the child  
Give positive messages  
Be responsible and . .  
Report the incident

### DON'T...

Panic or overreact  
Pressure the child  
Confront the offender or . .  
Blame the child

### REPORT SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

Anytime you suspect that a child may have been physically or sexually abused you should report these suspicions to the appropriate authorities.

If A Child Has:

- Physical/medical indicators of abuse
- Disclosed abuse to you
- Demonstrated behavioral signs of abuse

Or you have other reasons to believe that the child has been abused:

### BE RESPONSIBLE

Report Your Suspicions to:  
NYS Child Abuse and  
Maltreatment Register

**1-800-342-3720**

## ***PROTECTING YOUR CHILD AGAINST ABUSE AND VICTIMIZATION***



*This guide is to help parents protect their children from becoming one of the millions of American children who are abused or victimized either emotionally or physically each year. In this guide you will find information on prevention, recognition and reporting.*

Produced by:  
Broome County Family Violence  
Prevention Council  
(607) 778-2153  
[www.gobroomecounty.com/fvpc](http://www.gobroomecounty.com/fvpc)

## The First Step to Protecting Your Child is Communication and Education:

1. Have family discussions often. Talk about violence.
2. Encourage your child to talk openly.
3. Be patient and listen to what your child says when he or she is upset. Do not interrupt. Sense the feelings behind the words.
4. Establish family rules about personal safety and repeat them often.
5. Include touching rules when you discuss other types of safety.
6. Teach your children that it is ok to say **no**.
7. Play the “What If” game.

### The “What If” Game

One way to help children protect themselves is to practice responses to potentially dangerous situations.

Q: “What if something was bothering you and you didn’t know what to do about it? Who might be able to help you?”

A. Parents, teachers, relative, school nurse, police officer, clergy.

Q. “What if someone touched you in a way you didn’t like and offered you a candy bar, a new doll or something else you really wanted to keep a secret?”

A. Say “NO” then tell someone.

Q. “What if someone is tickling you and it starts to hurt.”

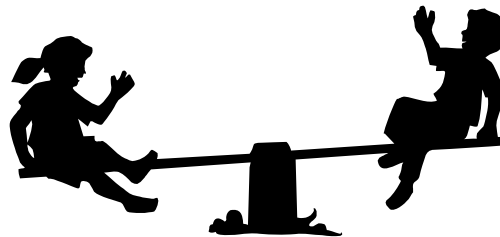
A. Tell them to stop. If they won’t stop, call for help.

## Personal Safety

Ten Things to Teach Your Child to Help Protect Them from Being Victimized by Adults.

1. Know who they are and where they live.
2. Know what to do when lost in a store.
3. Children must be able to identify their own body parts.
4. Always check with parents first before accepting a gift or a ride.
5. Children must trust their inner voice – if something doesn’t feel right they must tell an adult.
6. Don’t be too polite. Don’t teach your children to do everything an adult says.
7. Have a “no secrets” rule.
8. Say “NO” and tell someone when touch is not ok.
9. Do not give out personal information on the Internet.
10. Take action and get help. Teach your child to take action when they are uncomfortable or when they have a “yucky” feeling about something.

( Source: NYS – Office of Children & Family Services )



Internet sites for both kids and parents.  
[www.usdoj.gov/kidspage](http://www.usdoj.gov/kidspage)  
[www.McGruff.org](http://www.McGruff.org)  
[www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov)

## BULLYING

Children can be victimized by other children as well, typically in the form of bullying. Bullying means repeatedly picking on or hurting another person physically, verbally or emotionally.

### *5 Things to Teach Your Child to Help Protect Them from Being Victimized by Bullies:*

1. Tell your child to stick with a group.
2. Don’t fight back or seek revenge.
3. Report all bullying incidents.
4. Be assertive and confident.
5. Get involved in group activities.

## WARNING SIGNS

If your child is being bullied he/she may:

1. Seem quiet or depressed.
2. Have bruises or injuries.
3. Come home with missing or damaged belongings.
4. Feel lonely.
5. Ask for extra lunch money or supplies.
6. Lose interest in school, does not want to attend school.

(Source: Prevent Child Abuse America)