

FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

EMPOWERING OUR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES AGAINST SEXUAL ABUSE

EDUCATE AND EMPOWER

- ✔ **Promote an open door policy** during the day. Encourage your child or teen to spend time outside of their room, but respect their need for privacy or rest, too.
- ✔ **Lead by example.** Teach the value of consent and the importance of respecting when someone says “no” or “stop.”
- ✔ **Be a family with no “secrets”** and teach that surprises are kept a short time and are fun.
- ✔ **Be supportive** and let your child know that abuse is never their fault.
- ✔ **Be vigilant.** Let your children know to be wary of and tell you if
 - ⊙ Someone offers them a gift for no reason.
 - ⊙ Someone touches, hugs, talks about private parts, or makes them feel uncomfortable.
 - ⊙ Someone asks your child to go somewhere without first asking for your permission.
 - ⊙ Someone scares or bribes them into doing something against body safety rules.
 - ⊙ Someone seems quick or eager to become friendly or close to your children (or to you).



SCHOOL, SPORTS, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

- ✔ It is very likely that there are adults or older children with whom your child will interact frequently. Listen when your child talks about them, and ask open-ended questions to gain a sense of your child’s comfort level with others.
- ✔ Inquire about employee and volunteer screening and abuse-prevention training for staff coaching or facilitating activities.
- ✔ To help minimize opportunities for abuse, avoid activities in which your child may be alone with an adult or older juvenile.
- ✔ Take time to introduce yourself and know the parents/caregivers of your children’s friends.
- ✔ Share family rules with others, such as teaching personal boundaries, the right to say no, and not having secrets.
- ✔ Ensure your child knows and feels comfortable to talk to you if
 - ⊙ There seems to be a “favorite” student or teammate.
 - ⊙ An adult is engaging in private communication via email/text/social media with students or teammates.

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INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- ✔ Keep computers/laptops, smart phones, tablets, and other electronics in common areas and out of bedrooms.
- ✔ Monitor cell phone and texting, and periodically review your child's browsing history.
- ✔ Discuss the dangers of communicating online, sharing photos, and sharing personal information.
- ✔ Keep in mind that Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and even Pinterest are not free of pornography and that they present an opportunity for exploitation and trafficking.

ROCK THE TALK

- ✔ Engage in open, loving communication, and provide factual information about your children's bodies, their personal rights, and body safety rules.
- ✔ Encourage your children to talk with you if someone tricks or threatens them into doing something that makes them uncomfortable.
- ✔ Never threaten to hurt someone who may pose a risk to your child, since it may keep your child from disclosing or talking to you.
- ✔ Do not assume that your child knows what constitutes appropriate sexual behavior. Discuss respect, consent, age-appropriate sexual conduct, and promote positive healthy relationships.

FREEDOM
 **HOUSE**

Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services

(800) 474-6031 | www.freedomhouseillinois.org

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