

4. Play the "What If...Game"*

This game teaches children to strategize what they would do in a dangerous situation.

How to start the game

Ask the child "What would you do if..." and then let the child respond. The key is to let the child come up with ideas, and then reinforce good ideas with praise. This will build the child's self-confidence in handling dangerous situations. Below are some questions you might ask:

- What would you do if your bike broke down and a stranger offered you a ride home?
- What would you do if I weren't home and the telephone man came to the door to say that he wanted to fix the phone?
- What would you do if a babysitter did something to you that made you feel uncomfortable and asked you to keep it a secret?
- What would you do if someone touched you in a way that you didn't like or confused you?

Let the child come up with the answers. Encourage the child to use realistic solutions. Solutions should include getting help from a friend, telling trusted adults, saying "no", and standing up for his/her rights.

5. Learning to say "no"

"No" is a safe, strong and free word. One reason children may be reluctant to say "no" to abuse is they are taught that saying "no" is impolite or disrespectful. Adults must realize there are times when saying "no" is essential to keeping children safe. Children deserve to know that saying "no" is a good way to protect themselves and keep their rights.

6. Physical Activities*

Encourage games and organized sports not only for boys but also for girls. This will help them gain a sense of physical self-confidence in case they need to protect themselves. Discourage games in which the adult or older child says, "Hit me as hard as you can; you can't hurt me." This teaches children that they are powerless against someone bigger, which is not necessarily true. Make sure children are respected during games. For instance, if children are tickling each other, and one asks the other to stop, make sure that the game ends.

**Information from No More Secrets, by Caren Adams and Jennifer Fay*

How Can I Recognize if a Child is Abused?

Sometimes children don't tell us they have a problem, they show us. A change in a child's behavior could be the result of abuse. Some of the following changes in behavior can alert adults to the possible problems.

Abused Children Are Often	-fearful of interpersonal relationships or overly compliant -withdrawn or aggressive, hyperactive -constantly irritable or listless, detached -affectionless or overly affectionate (misconstrued as seduction)
Physical Symptoms	-bruises, burns, scars, welts, broken bones, continuing or unexplainable injuries -urinary infections (particularly in young children) -sexually transmitted diseases -chronic ailments, stomach aches, vomiting, eating disorders, -vaginal or anal soreness, bleeding, or itching
Activity and Habit Clues	-recurring nightmares -inappropriate masturbation -a child afraid to go home or to some other location, running away -delinquency -fear of being with a particular person -lying -fire setting
Age Inappropriate Behavior	-regression in behavior (an onset of thumb sucking or toileting accidents after being toilet trained) -sexually active or aware -promiscuity -bed wetting -alcohol/substance abuse -older child assaulting younger children -child takes on adult responsibilities
Educational Concerns	-extreme curiosity, imagination -academic failure -sleeping in class -inability to concentrate -sudden change in school performance
Emotional Indicators	-depression -phobias, fear of darkness, public restrooms, etc. -chronic ailments -self-inflicted injuries -injuring/killing animals -excessively fearful -lack of spontaneity, creativity

How Can I Help an Abused Child?

If a child tells you about abuse...

- Always be calm
- Believe the child
- Let the child tell the story in her/his own words
- Do not avoid embarrassing subjects
- Do not project or assume anything

Objectives

- Assess the child's safety needs
- Find out what the child wants from you
- Validate the child's feelings
- Make sure the child knows it is not her/his fault
- Tell the child that she/he has the right to be safe
- Let the child know what action will be taken

If You Suspect Child Abuse

Call the NJ Child Abuse Hotline: 1-877-NJ ABUSE
24 HRS. (1-877-652-2873)

The following information would be helpful for the State Central Registry (SCR):

- Name and address of child.
- Name and address of parents or caretaker.
- Age and sex of child.
- Nature and extent of injuries or description of abuse.



How Can I Help Children to be Safe, Strong and Free?

1. Review with your child what she/he learned in the CAP workshops by asking the following questions:

- **What three rights did you learn?**
(The rights to be Safe, Strong and Free)
- **What happens when someone tries to take these rights away?**
(You have a problem)
- **How can you protect yourself from being bullied?**
(Stand up for yourself, say "no", get away, get a friend, tell a "trusted adult")
- **What can you do to protect yourself from strangers?**
(Stay more than two arm lengths away. Don't give your name, address, email address or other personal information, don't talk to them)
- **What can you do if someone touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable?**
(Say "no", get away, find trusted adults and tell them)
- **Who can you tell if you have a problem? Who are your "trusted adults"?**
(Parents, relatives, neighbors, school staff, etc.)
- **What can you do if you see a friend in trouble?**
(Do your CAP yell, get help, tell trusted adults)

2. Talk to them about their "private parts"

Teach your child that it is okay to talk about genitals. Not naming those parts of the body conveys to children that these parts are bad and should never be mentioned. Teaching a young child words like breasts, penis, vagina and buttocks helps him or her reach a comfort level with the proper terms.

3. Teach them their personal boundaries*

Help children understand that their bodies belong to them. Teach them how to wash, dress and care for themselves. Respect their right to privacy. Give them privacy when they dress, use the toilet or wash. Knock on their door before entering their bedroom or bathroom. Respect their possessions. As you set an example of respect for them, they may realize that they have the right to be respected as well as the responsibility to respect others.

What is “CAP”?

CAP is the Child Assault Prevention project. It is a program of the International Center for Assault Prevention. Its goals are to:

- Increase the personal safety of children, and
- Make the prevention of family violence a community concern.

CAP OFFERS WORKSHOPS TO

- Children
- Parents
- Teachers, School Staff
- Community Groups

CAP workshops teach that all children deserve to be Safe, Strong and Free. Child abuse takes away those basic rights. CAP, which teaches children how to protect their rights, offers specific workshops in the following curricula:

- Early Childhood
 - ◆ Preschool
 - ◆ Kindergarten
- Elementary
- Teen
- Special Needs
- Bullying Prevention
- Cyber Empowerment
- Violence Prevention through Conflict Resolution



Helpful Resources

STATEWIDE:

- Alcohol & Drug Information Hotline - 24 Hours **800-238-2333**
- Domestic Violence - Referral/Information - 24 Hours **800-572-7233**
- Women's Referral Center - 24 Hours **800-322-8092**
Information/Referrals on all issues relating to women
- Office of Advocacy - 24 hours www.nj.gov/dcf **877-543-7864**
- Parents Anonymous - 24 Hours **800-THE KIDS 1-800-843-5437**
- Hotline for Information/Referrals
- NJ Self-Help Clearinghouse- Monday-Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm **800-367-6274**
Information on Forming and Finding Self-Help Groups Statewide
- NJ Child Assault Prevention (CAP) www.njcap.org
- NJ Helps-Services to assist families in NJ www.njhelps.org
- 2ND FLOOR - Youth Helpline **888-222-2228**

NATIONAL:

- Missing Persons Hotline - 24 Hours **800-843-5678 (1-800-THE LOST)**
- Runaway Hotline - Switchboard **800-621-4000 (1-800-RUNAWAY)**
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline **800-273-8255**
- Domestic Violence **800-799-SAFE**
- Sexual Assault Hotline **800-656-4673**
- Missing & Exploited Children **800-843-5678**

New Jersey Child Assault Prevention

Guide for Parents



New Jersey Child Assault Prevention (CAP)

200 College Drive
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856-374-5001
www.njcap.org

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*Empowering Children to be
"Safe, Strong and Free"®*