

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS

PARENT GUIDE

KNOW THE SIGNS

(Seeing one or more of these signs doesn't always mean a child is being trafficked, but they may suggest the child needs help or that something concerning is happening.)

- Withdrawal
- Major mood swings
- Major changes in behavior
- Change in clothing, or dressing in provocative styles of clothing
- Unexplained gifts or sudden appearance of expensive items
- Unexplained money or the new ability to afford services
- A controlling or much older boyfriend or girlfriend, or someone who they always defer to
- Tattoos or branding
- Multiple phones or secret social media accounts
- Unexplained injuries
- Isolation from family or friends
- Acting secretive
- Use of trafficking-related language
- Skipping classes or truancy from school
- Grades start declining
- Change in school attendance, friends, vocabulary, or demeanor

By being present, listening without judgement, and teaching your child about healthy boundaries, you can help keep your child safe. Building strong, trusting relationships with your child is essential to protect them from potentially dangerous situations such as human trafficking. When kids feel safe, valued, and heard at home, they are less likely to seek relationships from those who may have harmful intentions. Below are some tips to help.

Recognize the Importance of Relationships

One of the most important relationships your child will ever have is the one they have with you. Be curious about your child's friends, boyfriends, or girlfriends, and get involved in their world.

Words Matter

Children notice not only what you say, but how you say it. The tone and words you use can make a big difference. Encourage your child to come to you even when they have made a mistake. Regular, caring conversations help build trust and keep communication open.

Be Knowledgeable About Technology and Online Safety

Talk with your child about the importance of not befriending people on social media they don't know in real life. Monitor what your child does on his or her device and create rules about where phones are used in the house. Phones should only be used in common areas. When young people are in private areas, they may take more risks than they typically would. Take away the temptation.



How To Respond If You Suspect Trafficking

If you suspect your child is being trafficked or they tell you they are being trafficked, try not to panic. Your child needs to feel safe with you and if they think you can't handle this knowledge, they may withdraw from you and your help.

1. **Remain calm.** Assure your child they did the right thing in telling you, and they are not to blame for the abuse.
2. **Believe them.** They need to know that you are on their side. Let your child tell their story if they want to, but leave the questioning to the professionals.
3. **Make sure you and your child are in a safe location away from the suspected trafficker.** If in immediate danger, call 911. Never confront the trafficker or the trafficker's family.
4. **Do not make promises about what will happen to them or the trafficker.** Instead, remind your child that you will be with them every step of the way.
5. **Most importantly, report it to law enforcement and The Department of Family and Protective Services immediately.** You can also reach out to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 (text: 233733) or browse their directory at [humantraffickinghotline.org](https://www.humantraffickinghotline.org) to find resources and help.
6. **Seek additional support and resources as needed.** Examples include medical care, trauma-focused counseling, victim services, and housing.



Taken from the Human Trafficking Toolkit