

Create a Family Safety Plan

If you are concerned about keeping your child safe from sexual abuse, this is your chance to create a safer environment and a support network for everyone in your family. In public health, we talk about risk factors – what puts someone at risk to sexually abuse a child. We also talk about protective factors the things a family can do to keep the family safer. Protective factors are the building blocks of your Family Safety Plan:

1. Educate Everyone in the Family:

- Understand healthy sexual development in children as well as the sexual behaviors that may be of concern to you as a parent/caregiver.
- Learn the warning signs of a child who may have been hurt by sexual abuse as well as the warning signs in an adult, adolescent or child who may be touching a child in a sexual way. Your concerns may be about non-touching behaviors as well (e.g., showing pornography to a child). For a full listing, www.stopitnow.org/warnings
- Teach children the proper names for body parts and what to do if someone tries to touch them in a sexual way. Remember to let young children know that no one has the right to touch their private parts (unless for medical reasons) and that they should not touch anyone else's private parts.

2. Open the Lines of Communication:

- Whether talking with a child, adolescent, or adult, about sexualized behaviors or your concerns, the conversation is just a beginning and not a one-time event.
- Let everyone in the family know it is OK to ask questions. It is important for adults to set the tone for everyone by talking about the range of healthy sexual behaviors and speaking up about sexual abuse.

3. Set Clear Family Boundaries:

- Talk about and set clear family boundaries with family members and with other adults who spend time around or supervise the children (e.g., if a child does not want to hug or kiss someone hello or goodbye then he or she can shake hands instead).
- If a child is not comfortable with a particular adult or older child then you or some other adult must let that person know (e.g., tell him or her that you don't want your child to sit on his/her lap).
- As a child matures, boundaries within the home may need to change as well (e.g., knock on the door before entering the room of an adolescent).

4. Get Safe Adults Involved:

- Be sure that no one in your family is isolated. Identify one or more support people for every member of the family.
- Research shows that one of the key factors in a child's resilience (ability to bounce back after stressful events) is that he/she had someone to talk with and confide in. Be a safe, responsible and consistent resource person for a child or adolescent.
- If someone is "too good to be true" then ask more questions – this friend or family member may not be a safe person for your child. Unfortunately, unconditional trust cannot protect children from harm.

5. Know your local resources and how to use them:

- List who to call for advice, information and help. National resources are listed on the Stop It Now! website at www.stopitnow.org/resources.
- Learn about the agencies in your area. Know who to call to make a report if you learn that a child has been sexually abused.

6. Care enough to reach out for help:

- If you are concerned about the sexualized behaviors in a parent, cousin, sibling, friend, or neighbor, care enough to talk with them. If you are concerned about your own thoughts and feelings towards children, help is available.
- Call the Stop It Now! helpline to learn more about the resources in your community.
- Make sure everyone knows that it's OK to talk with you about what may have already happened – that you love them and will help them.

For additional resources or for advice on developing your Family Safety Plan, call our toll-free Helpline at **1-800-CHILDREN (244-5373)** to speak with a professional in a confidential setting.



Stop It Now! Georgia

Together we can prevent the sexual abuse of children

A program of  **Prevent Child Abuse
Georgia**

1720 Peachtree St. NW, Suite 600
Atlanta, GA 30309
Office: (404) 870-6565 Fax: (404) 870-6541
Helpline: 1-800-CHILDREN (244-5373)
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www.ppageorgia.org

Use and Share the resource list at the end of this discussion guide to find basic information on child sexual abuse and for more ideas about making your community safer.

If you have general questions about child sexual abuse or need support, information, or referrals:

Prevent Child Abuse Georgia

Stop It Now! Georgia

1720 Peachtree Street NW

Suite 600

Atlanta, GA 30309

Websites: www.ppageorgia.org OR www.stopitnowga.org

Toll Free HELPLINE: 1-800-CHILDREN (244-5373)

Hours: Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 8:00pm.

Prevent Child Abuse Georgia is a statewide nonprofit with a sole mission of preventing child abuse before it happens. Stop It Now! Georgia is a program of PCA Georgia and a member of Stop It Now! International.

National Resources:

Stop It Now!

351 Pleasant St., Suite B#319

Northampton, MA 01060

Office: 413-587-3500 Fax: 413-587-3505

Email: info@stopitnow.org

Website: <http://www.stopitnow.org>

Toll-free Helpline:

1-800-CHILDREN (1-888-244-5373) GEORGIA

1-888-PREVENT (1-888-773-8368) OUTSIDE OF GA

Stop It Now!, a national nonprofit organization formed in 1992, prevents the perpetration of child sexual abuse through a public health approach emphasizing adult and community responsibility. Stop It Now!'s public policy, public education, and research programs work in collaboration with local programs in the United States (including Stop It Now! Georgia), the United Kingdom & Ireland and Australia. Stop It Now! created a national helpline for adults who are concerned about inappropriate sexualized behavior in themselves or people they know.

National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN)

300 C Street S.W., Washington, DC 20447

Office: (703) 385-7565 Fax: (703) 385-3206

Toll free: 1-800-FYI-3366 (1-800-394-3366)

Email: nccanch@calib.com

Website: <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>

A resource and clearinghouse that collects, stores, organizes and disseminates information on all aspects of child maltreatment.

If you have questions about sex offenders or sexually abusive behaviors:

The Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA)

4900 S.W. Griffith Drive, Suite 274, Beaverton, OR 97005

Office: (503) 643-1023 Fax: (503) 643-5084

Email: atsa@atsa.com Website: www.atsa.com

A national organization developing and disseminating professional standards and practices in the field of sex offender research, evaluation, and treatment. Call for a referral to a local treatment provider.

Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM)

Center for Effective Public Policy, 8403 Colesville Road, Suite 720, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Office: (301) 589-9383 Fax: (301) 589-3505

Website: www.csom.org

Provides ready access to most of the current knowledge and effective practices in the field of sex offender supervision.

The Safer Society Foundation, Inc. (SSFI)

PO Box 340, Brandon, VT 05733-0340

Office: (802) 247-3132 Fax: (802) 247-4233

Website: www.safersociety.org

Provides services and publications for treatment providers, youth with sexual behavior problems, adult offenders, their families, survivors and mandated reporters. Call for a free catalogue.

Sex Abuse Treatment Alliance (SATA)

PO Box 1191, Okemos, MI 48805-1191

Office: (517) 482-2085 or (517) 372-8207

Email: help@satasort.org, Website: www.satasort.org

Provides a network of support for abusers who are currently in treatment, a newsletter on current issues for sexual abuser, and answers general questions about sex offender treatment.

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

Charles B. Wang International Children Building,

699 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-3175

Office: (703) 274-3900 Fax: (703) 274-2220

Website: www.ncmec.org

A clearinghouse for information on missing children and the prevention of child victimization. NCMEC's website brings images and information about missing children and a wealth of child protection information to a global audience. The CyberTipline, 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) is a toll free line to report any information pertaining to the sexual exploitation of children on the web or any industry that makes use of child pornography. (Report online at www.cybertipline.com.)

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1-800-CHILDREN (244-5373)