

Dear Parents and Guardians.

There are many things we should talk to our children about. Sexual assault is one of them. It is important to recognize the persons who are hurting our children have access to our children in several ways. The computer now has several sites that pop-up and introduces things to our children for the first time. Often, children are victimized by someone they know. We teach our children not to talk to strangers, “stranger danger,” but we also need to tell them that if anyone is hurting them, they can talk to us. If they tell us that someone has been touching them we should not question this. Listen and try to remain calm. The reaction we give them does make a major difference as to how they handle their own grief. It is also important to talk about good touch, bad touch. Some children do not like pats on their bottom after hitting a homerun. Self esteem can help determine if a child feels confident enough to talk about these issues.

Praise to a child is very special and can help children learn about identifying with their own feelings. Talking about this can help your child learn how to respect their bodies and form boundaries that can be healthy. Learning about self respect and how important it is to be in charge of our own bodies can help children learn about self respect as they get older. Practicing ways to say no to sexual abuse can be helpful. Allowing a child to understand that they are never blamed if they cannot say no is also important. No person, child or adult deserves to become a victim of sexual abuse for any reason, even if you cannot say no-you are not to blame. Sometimes people are so afraid their bodies are not able to react. Practicing personal boundaries can be helpful. Allowing children to give us examples of what they would do if someone were too close to them. This can even be a teacher or parent making them feel uncomfortable. This not only helps them to learn self respect, but also responsibility.

Age Appropriate Information:

This is the key to speaking to children regarding body safety. If you are able to speak to your child regarding their bodies and healthy development, the conversation might prove to be helpful for both you and your child.

When discussing body safety, please try to use terms properly so as to allow your child to understand that it is okay to discuss these issues together.

You may wish to refer to the discussion as body safety as well so as to approach the topic as a healthy and positive issue.

Children are aware of the fact that there are bad things that can happen; sometimes they just do not have enough accurate information to understand the dynamics of such issues.

It is up to the adults and parents to provide accurate information to allow children to feel comfortable asking questions or talking about such difficult matters

Where Do I Report?

Call one of the following:

- Child Protective Services/The Central Intake Office at:
1-800-797-3260
- Local, City or State Police
- Sherriff's Department
- Tribal Police, BIA Police
- FBI

What do I Need to Say When I Report?

- When you make a report you have the option to remain anonymous.
- If you report anonymously you do not give your name or your contact information.
- If you choose to give your name and contact information you are reporting confidentially. This means your name might not be released. In the event of recantation or retraction from a child, you may be questioned if there is no other viable source.
- You will need to have the child's information handy. This is inclusive of the following:
 - * The child's name, school, address at home, phone number, parent's names, the child's age. If the child has siblings it is helpful to have their names and ages.
 - * You must report what was disclosed to you or what you have observed. Report what was said to you. This is very important and it is important not to lead the child by asking questions about the abuse disclosed.