

Sexual Abuse Prevention Tips from the Amani Center

- Don't assume that children will be able to protect themselves and tell.
- Communicate: Listen, believe, and trust what children say.
- Education: Teach your child healthy values about sexuality. If parents do not teach them the sex offender will.
- Watch for any symptoms of sexual abuse.
 - Behavioral changes: overly concerned with body, overly active, lack of energy, sleep disturbances, bed wetting, unexplained fears, refusal to go to certain places or be with certain people, excessive crying, clinginess, aggressiveness or secretiveness.
 - Physical symptoms: genital pain, bleeding, stomachaches, headaches, and other physical complaints.
 - Escape behavior: Running away, drug/alcohol use, self-harm.
 - Sexualized behavior: Sexual reactivity, sexualized behavior, teens sexual behavior
 - No negative behaviors: Some children may be protective of the offender if they have been groomed.
- Give specific information about where on their body they should not be touched or touch others.
- Let them know that people who touch children's private parts need help because they have a problem with touching.
- Remind the child that secret touching is never the child's fault. Talk to your child about ways someone might try to trick them into going along with the secret touching or not telling you that it is happening to them.
- Make sure your child know that you want them to tell you immediately if something should happen and that, despite what anyone else may tell them, they will not be in trouble.
- Get to know your child's friends and the homes in which your child plays.
- Be wary of older children or adults who want to spend a lot of time alone with your child.
- Trust your intuition: if you feel something is not right in your child's relationships, act on it.
- Almost one quarter of children are exposed to "unwanted" pornography via the internet. Use an ISP that offers screening for obscenity and pornography.