



## Empowering Teens to Protect Themselves

It is important to keep talking with your children even as they get older and more independent. Teens may begin staying out late, partying, dating, using social networking websites, and even drinking. As an adult, you can help your teen stay safe by talking openly about sex and sexual abuse. Let your teen know:

- Clear communication in dating is essential for a healthy relationship.
- Drugs and alcohol can put them at risk for sexual abuse.
- Anyone who does not respect sexual limits is an unsafe person. Talk to your teen about partners who don't listen, act jealous or possessive and don't respect a "no" to sexual activity.

**Adolescents are usually sexually assaulted by someone they know.**

Keep the lines of communication with your teen open and supportive. This will encourage your teen to share what is going on in their life and what may be bothering them, including sexual abuse.

## Ensuring Teens are Respectful

It may be difficult to accept that your own teen could hurt someone else and may be a perpetrator of sexual abuse, but unfortunately this does occur. It is critical for your teen to know:

- Sexual activity without consent is a crime.
- To always listen to and respect a "no" when a partner or date does not want to engage in sexual activity.
- No matter what a person is wearing or doing, no one deserves to be sexually harassed or abused.

The Sex Abuse Treatment Center offers educational services to help prevent sexual abuse. Visit our web site for information on our prevention programs.



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Funds for this brochure were provided by the State of Hawaii, Department of the Attorney General—Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division.

# Let's Talk with our Kids:

## Sexual Abuse Prevention





## What Should I Know?

**Those who sexually abuse children are usually related to the child or have a close, trusting relationship with the child.**

Offenders can be family members, neighbors, babysitters, youth organization staff, clergy, teachers, coaches or others in contact with children.

**Children are usually manipulated and tricked into sexual abuse. Sex offenders build “special relationships” with children and often are overly interested in things or activities involving children.**

Offenders often give children special attention, take them to “secret” places and provide them with gifts and physical affection. An offender can make a child feel extra special and good. Physical force is rarely used to engage a child in sexual activity.

**Most children don’t tell others about the sexual abuse.**

Offenders often threaten children to keep the abuse a secret. Some children fear they will not be believed if they tell or may feel too afraid or ashamed to tell.

**Online activity can sometimes put children at risk for sexual abuse.**

Sex offenders hide their true identity and use the internet to develop relationships with children.

## Protecting Our Children

Children are vulnerable to sexual abuse simply because they trust adults and seek their approval. We teach children to obey and respect adults, yet unfortunately some adults take advantage of the obedient and trusting nature of children. That is why protecting our children is so important.

You can take steps to reduce a child’s risk of sexual abuse. **Education and communication are the best safeguards to protect children.**

## What Is Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse is sexual activity between an adult and a child or between two minors if there is a significant age difference or imbalance of power between the minors. It can include a range of activities such as sexualized talk, sexual touching, exposure to genitals, rape and involvement in pornography.



## How Can I Keep My Child Safe?

- Talk with your child about safe and unsafe touching. Practice what you want to say so that you will feel comfortable with the topic.
- Let your child know it is okay to say “no” to unsafe showing or touching of private parts, and practice saying “no” with your child.
- Tell your child to let you know if someone asks them to keep a secret about touching.
- Teach your child to trust their gut feelings. If something feels wrong or uncomfortable, leave and get help.
- Set safety guidelines for internet use and monitor online activity.
- Whenever possible, supervise your child’s activities—sports and church activities, camping trips, music/dance lessons and other community or school activities.
- Routinely check in with your child to be aware of their feelings toward specific adults or older children in their lives.
- Encourage your child to talk with you about anything that bothers them, including unsafe touching. Believe your child. Your child is never to blame.

Call the Sex Abuse Treatment Center at 535-7600 to request a “Let’s Talk About Touching” coloring and activity book. Visit our website ([www.satchawaii.com](http://www.satchawaii.com)) for more information about child sexual abuse.

THE SEX ABUSE TREATMENT CENTER

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