LEARN THE FACTS

- Child sexual abuse is any sexual act between an adult and a minor or between two minors when one uses power over the other.

- Child abusers often go out of their way to appear trustworthy to gain access to your child, and in most cases of abuse, children and/or families know the abuser. The majority of time, the abuser is someone the child lives with, likes or loves.

MINIMIZE OPPORTUNITY

More than 80% of sexual abuse instances occur in isolated one-adult/one-child situations.

What can I do to reduce risk and protect my child?

- Create a group situation.
- Have multiple adults supervise.
- Make it observable.
- Plan for someone to drop in or interrupt.

TALK ABOUT IT

Have age-appropriate conversations about our bodies, sex and boundaries. Abusers target children who are not able to talk about their body parts or do not have knowledge about sex.

Talk with your child openly and often.

- Use proper names for body parts, such as vagina, penis and breasts.
- Model caring for your own body and teach children how to care for theirs.
- Let children know that they have the right to make decisions about their bodies.
- Educate children that secrets can be harmful. If someone asks them to keep a secret, they should tell you or another trusted adult about it.
- Give them permission to say “no” if they do not want to touch others, or to be touched.
- Review safety and touching boundaries anytime a child is in a new situation.
**RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS**

Some child sexual behaviors indicate more than harmless curiosity and are considered behavior problems. These behaviors may pose a risk to the safety and wellbeing of the child and other children:

- Physical signs of sexual abuse are not common, although redness, rashes/swelling in the genital area, urinary tract infections, chronic stomach pain or headaches, may occur.
- Emotional signals are more common. From “too perfect” behavior, to withdrawal and depression, to unexplained anger and rebellion.
- Sexual behavior and language that are not age-appropriate can be a red flag.
- Sudden extreme behavior changes and/or secretive behavior may be cause for concern.
- Some children may have no signs whatsoever.

**REACT RESPONSIBLY**

Understand how to respond to risky behaviors and suspicions or reports of sexual abuse.

If you suspect a child is being sexually abused call the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect 24-hour Hotline 1-800-392-3738. If a child tells you he or she has been sexually abused, remain calm, avoid asking multiple questions and call Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. In case of emergency call 911.

It is an adult responsibility to protect kids.

**COMMUNITY RESOURCES for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Missouri**

- Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline 800-392-3738
- **HELPLINES**
  - National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-7233
  - National Sexual Assault Hotline (RAINN) 800-656-4673
  - ParentLink 800-552-8522 En Espanol 888-460-0008
  - School Violence Hotline 866-748-7047
  - CyberTipline (NCMEC) 800-THE-LOST
- **LEGAL RESOURCES**
  - Missouri Bar Association 573-635-4128
- **VICTIM ADVOCACY**
  - Network of Child Advocacy Centers missourikidsfirst.org
  - Advocates for Victims of Crimes ago.mo.gov
- **RESOURCES FOR HEALING**
  - Mental Health Services missouri.networkofcare.org
- **WEBSITES: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND TRAUMA**
  - Darkness to Light darkness2light.org
  - National Children’s Alliance nationalchildrensalliance.org
  - Child Welfare Information Gateway childwelfare.gov
  - National Child Traumatic Stress Network nctsnet.org
  - Prevent Child Abuse America preventchildabuse.org

Making proactive choices, even when it makes us uncomfortable, and supporting each other are the foundation of preventing child sexual abuse.