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May 2012

Stewards of Children® Participants...Never Stop Learning!

You are receiving these emails because you have attended a Stewards of Children training. We want to continue to provide helpful information, tips, stories in the news, trainings, and other valuable resources to help expand your awareness and strengthen your role as a steward of children. Without ongoing education and dialogue in our community, it is impossible to move forward and end this epidemic.

After each Stewards of Children training we review the evaluations and appreciate your comments and suggestions. During one of our April trainings one participant asked that we provide a little more specific information as to how an adult should have a conversation with a child about sexual abuse.

We understand this is a very difficult topic to bring up, but remember - most importantly - children will sense if you are uncomfortable or embarrassed to have this conversation. It is important to treat talking with your children about sexual abuse just like any other conversation. Here are some suggestions we hope you find helpful.

Tips for Courage

- You may feel nervous or unsure about talking with your children. And yet, remember who you are to them. You are their mother, their father, their grandparent, their teacher, etc. For a moment, consider the faith, trust and hope your child puts in you - and claim it inside yourself. This is the foundation of your conversation.
- Consider how you want the child to experience the conversation. Do you want them to feel confident? Affirmed? Cared for? A rapport of trust and agreement? This intention will provide the spirit of the conversation - and the spirit of your conversation will be a large part of what your child remembers. The child will remember most how he or she felt in the conversation.
- Remember that you don't have to cover everything at once. In fact, it's better that sexual abuse and body safety be an ongoing dialogue.
- For older children, use TV shows, news reports, and current events as opportunities for discussion. For younger children, be creative about bath time, dressing and even play to give positive messages about bodies and boundaries.



Tips for Talking and Interacting

- Use proper names for body parts. Giving cute names for body parts can send a message to the child that you are uncomfortable talking about them. This can create anxiety in you both. Using proper names builds confidence.
- Tell children that every part of their body is good, but some parts are private. Explain that the

penis, vagina and breasts are private, and that no one should touch their private parts for no good reason or to just play a game.

- Some parents choose to ask their child for permission to bathe their private parts as a way to teach the child that he/she has some control.
- Inform your child's doctor that you are educating your child about sexual boundaries and request that he/she ask the child if it is ok to examine. Be creative about giving the child self-determination around their private body parts.
- Tell children that they should not touch others' private parts.
- Let the child know that this includes even relatives, siblings, friends, teachers, coaches etc. "Everyone should respect your body and if anyone makes you uncomfortable or hurts you, it is important to tell me. You'll never be in trouble. Even if the person threatens you, you should still tell me. You'll never be in trouble."
- Don't force your child to hug or kiss anyone when they are uncomfortable with it. While this may seem awkward with relatives and other important people, you can explain that you are teaching your child their right to their body. Offer other forms of safe touch like a handshake or a high-five.
- Tell young children to yell "stop" or "no" and to tell an adult if someone hurts or touches them in an uncomfortable way. Create an example or two and ask them to practice yelling "stop" or "no" in front of you. Be sure they know to say it like they mean it! Praise their performance. It's most likely that a child will actually do this in a situation of abuse if he or she has practiced it.
- Choose a "safe adult" in the environments that your child frequents, and tell the child who that person is. Tell the child that he or she can go to this adult with concerns when you are not available. Consider asking for the child's input about who this adult could be.

REMEMBER: *Talking to your child about sexual abuse should not just happen one time. This should be treated like any other conversation you have with your children and make sure it occurs on a regular basis.*

Information provided by Darkness to Light.

Please share this with your friends, family, and colleagues.

**Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children
Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training for Adults**

May 30th, 2012

5:30pm - 8:00pm

Noblesville Boys & Girls Club
Community Center - Board Room
150 N. 17th St.
Noblesville, IN 46060

\$15.00 per person to attend
SPACE IS LIMITED!

No Refunds will be given.
Register at www.chauciesplace.org



About Chaucie's Place

Chaucie's Place provides a neutral, child-focused environment where comprehensive, investigative forensic interviews take place for cases of alleged child sexual and physical abuse and neglect. The center's staff works to reduce trauma to children and improve the quality of evidence gathered through the use of a multidisciplinary team approach and specially trained forensic interviewers. Chaucie's Place works to generate awareness of and prevent child abuse through its education and prevention programs Body Safety and Stewards of Children.

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