



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

PROTECTING OUR YOUTH



Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Packet
SANFORD-SPRINGVALE YMCA



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Did you know that April is National Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month? Statistics reveal that a shocking 700,000 children are abused in the United States each year.

While we are placing a special emphasis on this topic during the month of April, the protection of youth from abuse is our YMCA's priority every single day of the year.

The good news is that child abuse and neglect is preventable, and at our Y we have taken this to heart. We are proud to take the lead in the battle to reduce child abuse and neglect in our community.

Our Y is fully committed to doing our part to keep youth protected from abuse, and we are asking you to join us. As a community, we have an obligation to nurture our children and protect their only childhood. We must prevent child abuse and neglect to live up to this obligation.

The Sanford-Springvale YMCA pledges to the community to be a leader in this work and a place where children of all ages can go to be safe from child abuse and neglect.

Will you join this fight and pledge with us?



**PREVENTION
TOOLS:**

**COMMUNITY
RESOURCES**



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LOCAL RESOURCES: MAKING PREVENTION POSSIBLE

- **Sanford-Springvale YMCA** : 207.324.4942 | <http://sanfordymca.org/child-abuse-and-neglect-prevention>
- **Kids Free to Grow**: 207.985.5975 | kidsfreetogrow.org
- **Child Abuse Prevention Council of York County**: 207.985-5975
- **Maine Child Abuse Action Network**: mainechildwelfareadvisorypanel.com

NATIONAL RESOURCES: MAKING PREVENTION POSSIBLE

- **Children's Bureau**: acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb
- **Darkness to Light**: d2l.org
- **Stop It Now**: stopitnow.org



A SAFE PLACE TO LAND

- **Sweetser**: 1-800-434-3000 | sweetser.org/services-for-children.php
- **Maine Behavioral Healthcare**: 1-844-292-0111 | mainebehavioralhealthcare.org
- **Maine Department of Health and Human Services**: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/children.shtml>

PREVENTION

TOOLS:

RECOGNIZE

SIGNS OF

ABUSE

Child abuse is not always obvious. But by learning some of the common warning signs of abuse and neglect, you can catch the problem as early as possible and get both the child and the abuser the help that they need.

Of course, just because you spot a red flag does not automatically mean a child is being abused. It's important to dig deeper, looking for a pattern of abusive behavior and warning signs, if you notice something off.

WARNING SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE IN CHILDREN

- Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong
- Shows extremes in behavior (extremely compliant or extremely demanding; extremely passive or extremely aggressive)
- Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver
- Acts either inappropriately adult (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, thumb-sucking, throwing tantrums)

WARNING SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE IN CHILDREN

- Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts
- Is always watchful and "on alert," as if waiting for something bad to happen
- Injuries appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt
- Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home
- Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as long-sleeved shirts on hot days

WARNING SIGNS OF NEGLECT IN CHILDREN

- Clothes are ill-fitting, filthy, or inappropriate for the weather.
- Hygiene is consistently bad (unbathed, matted and unwashed hair, noticeable body odor).
- Untreated illnesses and physical injuries.
- Is frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations and environments.
- Is frequently late or missing from school.

WARNING SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE IN CHILDREN

- Trouble walking or sitting
- Displays knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to his or her age, or even seductive behavior
- Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason
- Doesn't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities
- An STD or pregnancy, especially under the age of 14
- Runs away from home



SEE SOMETHING? SAY SOMETHING.

Raising children today is different than ever before. Parents today are faced with a variety of new and different challenges that parents of past generations didn't have think about. However, this change doesn't mean that the parental support we give to one another as a community also needs to change. It truly takes a village to raise a child.

If you are in a situation where you feel a kind word, a passing smile, or offer of help would really benefit a parent or child in that moment, **ACT.** Remember as parents that we have all been there, in the grocery store with a tired child who has reached the end of their rope and is giving us a challenge while our frustrations are rising. We have been there. Smile at that parent, offer those kind words, ask if you can help. This is how a village works together to raise its children.

If you see something or hear something that makes you uneasy, that makes that voice in your head say "This isn't right", **say something.** Talk about what you saw with others. Discuss if what you saw was a difference in parenting style, or a child in need of help. Having this conversation, talking about what we see, hear, and feel in regards to the safety of a child is critical. After you talk openly about what you saw, heard, or felt, what to do next will be clear. **If you need someone to have that conversation with, the Sanford-Springvale YMCA pledges that we are here for you.**



PREVENTION

TOOLS:

BOUNDARIES

ARE

IMPORTANT!

MUST-READ TIPS FOR TEACHING KIDS ABOUT BOUNDARIES

Posted by: [Anne Calvo](#)

Educating children about the importance of personal boundaries—and empowering them to speak out when they feel violated—is essential to healthy youth development. Yet, the topic of boundaries is one that many adults shy away from.

Addressing child sexual abuse may be uncomfortable, but the truth is it's a too-common crime that we must constantly protect against:

One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused by the age of 18. ¹

About 90 percent of sexual offenders are someone the child knows, such as a family member or acquaintance. ²

The more we educate ourselves and youth about the red flags associated with child sexual abuse, the better prepared we are to prevent it. One easy but important way we can do this is by helping youth understand their personal boundaries.

Here are some tips to help start this important conversation with kids in your care and their parents:

1. Encourage parents to teach children about their bodies and name private parts so kids have appropriate vocabulary to report an injury or describe abuse.
2. Help children understand that there are three types of personal boundaries: physical, emotional, and behavioral. People who want to harm children might try to violate all three.

Physical boundaries include who can touch you, how much they can touch you, and where they can touch you.

Emotional boundaries include how close you feel to a person, how much time you spend with them, and what information you share with them.

Behavioral boundaries include the things you will do and won't do, including rules you follow.

(continued on next page)



(Boundaries: continued)



3. Children understand and appreciate rules. Be sure to teach them about their body parts and boundary rules, just as you would teach them about wearing a seat belt or refraining from biting or hitting other children.

A rule may include: "No one is allowed to touch your private parts without your parents knowing about it." or "No one should ask you to keep a secret from your parents."

If you work with youth, provide children and families with your organization's Code of Conduct so it's clearly understood what behaviors are not permitted and families understand how to report a violation.

4. Give children language for "no" if someone tries to break a rule or violate a boundary.

This may include loudly saying: "No!" or "Leave me alone." or "My body is private."

Role-play saying these phrases with children so they are comfortable, and remind them that these phrases can be used with other children as well as adults.

Children should also be taught to move away from anyone who is violating their boundaries and to report the behavior to an adult.

5. If you work with youth, make reporting suspicions or abuse as easy as possible to help protect all children. Give kids (and their parents) the names of at least two people at the Y they can talk to if they have concerns. An anonymous reporting method also helps support anyone who may feel too ashamed or embarrassed to report.

These tips were provided by Praesidium, Inc., a nationally recognized leader in abuse prevention. Through a partnership with YMCA of the USA, Praesidium works closely with YMCAs to strengthen their abuse prevention efforts and create safe environments for kids. YMCAs interested in additional tips and support can [contact Praesidium](#) directly.

Citations

1. *Adverse Childhood Experiences Study: Data and Statistics* (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2005). See also David Finkelhor *et al.* "The Lifetime Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault Assessed in Late Adolescence." *Journal of Adolescent Health*. February (2014): 1-5. Accessed March 18, 2014. 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.12.026.

2. Finkelhor, David, and Anne Shattuck. "[Characteristics of Crimes Against Juveniles.](#)" (Durham, NH: Crimes Against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire, 2012: 5.

PREVENTION

TOOLS:

**EDUCATION
STARTS EARLY**

Make sure children have the tools they need to grow up as confident individuals . Children who have strong self-esteem and are able to express themselves are better able to differentiate between “right” and “wrong” situations and are more likely to seek help from a trusted adult if needed. Children’s books are a great resource to teach youth about communication, self-expression, confidence, and appropriate physical and emotional boundaries in a language they can understand and internalize.

RECOMMENDED READING LIST:

Have You Filled A Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids

by Carol McCloud

When Sophie Gets Angry—Really, Really Angry

by Molly Bang

Personal Space Camp

by Julia Cook

My Body Belongs to Me

by Jill Starishevsky



PREVENTION

TOOLS:

ADDITIONAL

RESOURCES



Stop It Now!

Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children
TOGETHER WE CAN PREVENT THE SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

PREVENTION TOOLS

Have questions?

Need resources?

Get Help Now!

Online Help Center
<http://GetHelp.StopItNow.org>

Stop It Now! prevents the sexual abuse of children by mobilizing adults, families and communities to take actions that protect children before they are harmed.



351 Pleasant Street
Suite B-319
Northampton, MA 01060
Phone: 413.587.3500
Fax: 413.587.3505
www.StopItNow.org
info@StopItNow.org
HelpLine: 1.858.PREVENT

Create a Family Safety Plan

The guidelines below can help you create an environment to better protect your family from sexual abuse. By understanding what puts children at risk of sexual abuse, we can take actions to counter those risks. Together we can create a community safety net with information and assistance to protect children from being sexually abused.

Educate everyone in the family

- Make sure each family member knows what healthy sexual development in children is, and what sexual behaviors might be of concern.
- Learn to recognize warning signs that a child may have been sexually abused or that an adult, adolescent or child may be touching a child in a sexual way. Some abusive behaviors may not involve touching; for example showing pornography to a child is abusive, even if the child is not touched.
- Teach children the proper names for body parts and what to do if someone tries to touch them in a sexual way.
- Make sure young children know that no one has the right to touch their private parts (unless for medical reasons) and that they should not touch anyone else's private parts.

Start talking with your family about sexual abuse

- Adults need to take the lead by opening discussion about what is healthy sexual behavior and what is abusive sexual behavior.
- Talk more than once with all family members—children, teenagers and adults—about appropriate and inappropriate sexualized behaviors to ensure that they understand and remember the information.
- Let everyone in the family know they can ask questions during the discussion, or talk further about any of these issues in private, at a later time.

Set clear family boundaries

- Set clear family guidelines for personal privacy and behavior. Discuss them with all members of your family and model respecting these guidelines.
- Discuss these guidelines with any other adults who spend time around or supervise the children (e.g., if a child does not want to hug or kiss someone hello or goodbye, then he or she can shake hands instead).
- Let children know that if they are not comfortable being around a particular adult or older child, then you or another adult will let that person know this (e.g., tell him or her that you don't want your child to sit on his/her lap).
- As a child matures, boundaries may need to change (e.g., knock on the door before entering the room of an adolescent).



Stop It Now![®]

Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children

PREVENTION TOOLS

Get safe adults involved

- Identify one or more support person for each member of the family to talk to if there is a concern. Be sure that no one in your family is isolated. Research shows that having someone to talk with and confide in plays a key role in how well a child will bounce back from stressful events. Having a safe, responsible and consistent adult for a child or adolescent to turn to is critical.
- If someone is "too good to be true," ask more questions. Even a close friend or relative may not be a safe person to trust with your child.

Know your local resources and how to use them

- Learn about the agencies in your area. Know who to contact to make a report if you know or suspect that a child has been sexually abused.
- Make a list of resources you can call for advice, information and help and include the phone numbers. Start with our list of helpful resources (www.StopItNow.org/help).

Care enough to reach out for help

- If you are concerned about the sexualized behaviors in a parent, cousin, sibling or other family member, care enough to talk with them. Read our Let's Talk guidebook (www.StopItNow.org/guidebooks). If you are concerned about your own thoughts and feelings towards children, help is available (<http://GetHelp.StopItNow.org>)
- Make sure everyone knows that they can talk with you about any inappropriate behavior that may already have occurred; that you love them and will work to get them help.

