

8 ways to make your home safe

1 Establish house rules. Make simple rules for your child. Start with a few “things we do and don’t do.” Discuss them with your child.

2 Discipline with short time-outs. If a rule is broken, discipline with a time-out – a short, quiet time alone without play.

3 Take five. When tensions and anger rise – in you or your child – take five. Take five minutes to cool down and to ask yourself, “Where is my anger coming from?” Identify the real problem, then find the right solution.

4 Interview your baby sitters. Check out every baby sitter. Meet them before you hire them. Let your child meet them too. If your child is uncomfortable, don’t hire that person. Set clear rules for bedtime and discipline. Do not permit baby sitters to bathe your children.

5 Never strike in anger. Hitting your child never helps and always does more damage. Never strike your child in anger.

6 No yelling allowed. Words hurt, too. Never yell at your children in anger. Do not put down your children. If they break a rule, tell them what they did wrong and why that makes you angry. Be angry at what they did, NOT at who they are.

7 Get away. When you feel frustrated, angry or overwhelmed, vent your feelings positively – away from your children. Call a friend over or leave your children with someone trustworthy. Get out. Exercise. Do not stay alone with your children when you are overwhelmed. Get help.

8 Call a counselor. Many people who abuse children were once victims of abuse themselves and have never worked through their feelings about being abused. Have you ever been abused? If so, call a professional counselor about it. The more you understand about yourself, the better you’ll be able to help your child.

5 ways to give your child trust

1 Listen up. Let your child talk. Ask, “How does that make you feel?” Allow your child to openly express ideas, feelings, and worries. Listen. Do not lecture.

Be available. Encourage your child to express feelings creatively by keeping a journal or drawing a picture.

2 Be consistent. Establish a reliable routine. A clear and consistent routine helps a child feel safe and secure. Clear-cut rules help a child learn what is right and wrong. Be consistent!



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24 ways

you can prevent child abuse

Definitions for child abuse vary. But, in simplest terms, child abuse is hurting a child ... not by accident. There are four kinds of child abuse. Physical: hurt by striking or force. Sexual: hurt by sexual touching and exploiting privacy. Emotional: hurt by putting down and destroying self-esteem. Neglect: hurt by ignoring basic needs. Make your home a place where kids say: “I feel safe and secure!”



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3 Let your “no” be no. If you say “no” to your child, make sure your child understands the rule. Then act firmly and safely upon the rule when it is challenged. Do not yell. Your child wants to know that your “no” means no.

4 No secrets. Tell your child it is never good to keep a secret that feels bad or confusing.

5 Use the right words. Help children talk comfortably about their bodies. Use the proper words for sex organs – e.g., penis and vagina. Teach children that sex is normal – not dirty or secret. Give older children clear rules about sexual behavior.

6 ways to give your child independence

1 Say “no” to drugs. Forbid the use of illegal substances in your home. Alcohol and drug abuse increases child abuse dramatically. If you, a relative or a friend are dependent upon chemical substances, get help today – for your sake and the safety of your children.

2 Take a stress check. Make an agreement with a close friend to check your stress regularly. Agree to watch each other’s children when you need a break.

3 Say “yes” to no. Give your children permission to say “no” to anyone who asks them to do something they know or feel is wrong. Teach them to say “no” emphatically, then to go tell another adult.

4 Private space. Give your children a place to be alone and to call their own. Respect their privacy, particularly their physical privacy.

5 Teach respect. Teach your children to respect the rights, bodies and properties of other people.

6 Ask yourself. Take an honest look in the mirror and ask yourself: Are you in constant battle with your kids? Do you find yourself wanting to hit your children? Do you think your children are acting out to spite you? Do you sometimes have sexual thoughts about your child or any child? If so, talk with someone before these feelings get the better of you. Call a minister, a friend, or a professional counselor. Help is available.

5 ways to give your child self-esteem

1 Speak love. Say “I love you” and “You’re important and special to me.” Praise talents. Don’t use sarcasm or kidding to point out weaknesses. Be positive and affirming.

2 A hug a day. Kids need to feel your love through positive physical touch – by holding hands, an arm around the shoulder or a simple hug.

3 Quality time is quantity time. Love is something you do – so do more with your child. Spend more time doing things your child enjoys. Turn off the television. Do activities as a family. Eat dinner together at least three times a week.

4 Take their place. Put yourself in your child’s place and ask:

- “Is what I’ve said or done building my child up or putting my child down?”
- “Is what I’ve said or done really for my needs or the needs of my child?”

5 Go with your gut. If someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable, go with your gut. Teach your children to trust their instincts, too – by listening to them and respecting what they feel. ●

