



Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault

24 Hour Crisis Line
MO (816) 531- 0233
KS (913) 642-0233
www.mocsa.org

Protecting and Supporting Children: *Steps to Reduce the Risk of Abuse*

Sexual abuse occurs more often than we would like to think; **one in four girls** and **one in six boys** will be sexually abused before their eighteenth birthday. **Adults are responsible for and essential to preventing sexual abuse.**

- **Increase warm interactions with children.** Help to build their voices and gain confidence. Listen to children when they ask for help, and assure them you are there to support them.
- **Communicate with your children.** Continue to talk to your child(ren) about his/her thoughts and feelings. Listen to what the child tells you. Make the time to let them know you are fully present and want to listen. Remind children of safety rules for keeping their bodies safe and their right to say “no” to unsafe or unwanted touches.
- **Respect personal boundaries.** Don’t insist children hug other children or adults. Respect a child if they are not comfortable with a certain touch.
- **Some children are more at risk of sexual abuse than others.** Risk factors include, but are not limited to: parental substance abuse, childhood disability, domestic violence, poverty, etc.
- **Know the facts.** Educate yourself on the facts about sexual abuse. Know what the signs are, how to report, where to find resources, and how to support students. For more information regarding sexual abuse, visit www.mocsa.org.
- **Support the child.** If a child discloses abuse, believe him/her. You can be supportive by helping to establish trust, promoting privacy, and providing security.
- **Listen to your instincts.** If you suspect that a child is being abused, report it. Remember that you do not have to have evidence or be able to prove the abuse occurred.
- **Report abuse.** Report to the state in which the abuse occurred.
 - **National Child Abuse Hotline:** 800-422-4453
 - **Missouri:** 800-392-3738
 - **Kansas:** 800-922-5330

For more information on child sexual abuse or responding to disclosures, please visit www.mocsa.org.

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