



CHILDHELP NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
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www.speakupbesafe.org
www.childhelp.org

Dear Parents & Caregivers,

Your child's class will be participating in a very important program called Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe that teaches children and teenagers about personal safety. During two 45-minute sessions, a trained facilitator will present research-based, age-appropriate lessons to help students learn the skills to prevent or interrupt cycles of neglect, bullying and child abuse - physical, emotional and sexual. The Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe curriculum includes information for students, parents, teachers, and communities to reinforce important safety rules.

As your child is getting older, personal safety is becoming more of a shared responsibility between adults and adolescents. The lessons focus on helping adolescents identify safe adults in their lives and learn five safety principles:

- 1. I decide what to do with my body.
2. It's okay to ask for help to keep yourself and others safe.
3. I have choices.
4. Tell someone in authority.
5. Abuse is never my fault.

There is important information attached to this letter about child abuse and tips on how you can keep your student safe. Your student will also bring information home after the Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe lesson so you can learn together.

The program is voluntary, which means that you do not have to allow your child to participate, or you may take your child out of the program at any time. Please sign and return the bottom of this letter only if you DO NOT want your student to participate. If we do not receive the form, we will assume your student has permission to be included in the lessons. If you have questions about the program or this form, please contact your student's teacher.

Visit www.childhelp.org/SpeakUpBeSafe or call 1-800-4-A-CHILD for more information. Thank you for helping build a strong safety net for our children and teenagers!

Sign and return slip to school if you do not want your student to participate.

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No, I do not want my student to participate in the Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe program.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Top Five Things to Know about Child Abuse

1. There are four main types of child abuse - physical, emotional, sexual, and neglect. Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe covers these topics, as well as bullying and cyberbullying, in age-appropriate and interactive lessons with trained facilitators.
2. 90% of child sexual abuse victims know the person who has abused them; 68% are abused by family members.
3. Child abuse can happen to children of any race, background, income level, culture, or religion. Child abuse happens to boys and girls of all ages.
4. Child abuse hurts children in many ways.
  - a. TODAY - children and teenagers who are abused can have a hard time succeeding in school and with their friends, and they are at higher risk of being abused again.
  - b. TOMORROW - when abused children and teenagers grow up, they are at higher risk for drug and alcohol abuse, risky sexual behavior, unhealthy relationships, and mental health problems.
5. It can be hard to detect abuse just by looking at a child or teen or observing his or her behavior. Some children will not show any signs of abuse. Signs of abuse are not always visible on a child's body.

Many cases of child abuse are never reported. Adults can help to change this fact and prevent child abuse.

## Five Things You Can Do to Keep Children and Teenagers Safe

1. Talk to your child - Let your child know that you want him or her to talk to you, and that you will listen and believe what your child tells you. To get the conversation started, ask your child what he or she has learned in the Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe lessons.
2. Pay attention and ask questions - Adults have a right to ask about what is going on with their children when they are with other people. Learn more about who is around and what is going on when your child is at friends' houses, at a club or afterschool program, or with any other adult. If something doesn't seem right, trust yourself and investigate!
3. Follow up - If your child tells you something that concerns you, or if his or her behavior changes, ask questions to learn more. Your questions will show that you care and will help your child talk to you in the future.
4. Take action - If your child tells you about abuse that has happened to him or her or another child, praise the child for telling. Taking action right away is very important. If you are not sure if abuse has happened, call a professional whose job it is to figure this out. The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4-A-CHILD is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is a confidential, anonymous hotline that can help you figure out your next steps to keep your child safe. It is better to get help than to wait until something happens again.
5. Build your own safety network - Talk to teachers, other parents, and people in your community about how you can support each other and work to make sure that all children and teens are safe.