

APRIL

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The goal is to spread knowledge about sexual violence and how prevent it.

- Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual contact or threats. This includes rape, incest, partner or date rape, attempted rape, molestation and child sexual abuse.
- It is estimated that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will have experienced an episode of sexual abuse while younger than 18 years. The numbers may be falsely low because of underreporting.¹
- Only 6% of rapists will ever spend time in jail.²
- Those who sexually assault can be friends, acquaintances, family members or strangers. In up to 90% of child molestation cases, children are molested by someone they know.³



Here are some ways you can protect your child from sexual assault:

- Talking openly and directly about sexuality and abuse in age-appropriate terms teaches children that it is okay to talk to you when they have questions.
- Knowledge is power. Teach your children about their bodies; give them the correct names to use when describing their private parts so that they have the language to ask questions and express concerns about those body parts. Emphasize that those parts are private.
- Teach your children that they have the right to say NO to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touch or actions by others. Teach them to tell you immediately if this happens. Reassure them that you are there to help and that sexual abuse is *never* their fault.³
- Make an effort to know the people with whom your child is spending time and be involved in their activities.
- Make sure you know where each of your children is at all times and never leave children unattended in an automobile, whether it is running or not.
- Stress to your child that he or she should feel comfortable telling you anything, especially if it involves another adult. Also, sexual abuse should never be a "secret" and that they will not get in trouble by telling you this kind of secret.
- Listen to your children. Pay attention if they tell you that they do not want to be with someone or go somewhere. This may be an indication of more than a personality conflict or lack of interest in the activity or event.

The National Sexual Assault Hotline provides support, answers to questions about medical issues and the justice system, referral to support in your area and counsel for family and friends of victims.

If you or someone you know has suffered from rape, abuse or incest you can talk to someone online at <http://www.rainn.org/> or 1.800.656.HOPE

¹ Botash, Ann, MD, *Pediatric Annual*, May, 1997

² <http://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/reporting-rates>

³ <http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov/protect.aspx>

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