

Abuse Prevention

- A** **ALWAYS** know the people who take care of your children. Make sure they have training and know how to keep your child safe. Don't leave young children alone or in charge of other children.
- B** **BELIEVE** what children tell you. Studies show children rarely make up stories about abuse. (98% of the time the child is found to be telling the truth.) They may tell about the abuse directly, tell another child or show you through their play, art or reaction to videos or books.
- U** **UNDERSTAND** the stages of child development. Children's behavior can be very frustrating and irritating. Understanding what a child is thinking and feeling can help you know how to better respond when you feel irritated.
- S** **SUPPORT** - Don't go it alone. Caring for you young children is hard work. Get the emotional and physical support you need. Watch your stress points and the times of the day when you are most likely to feel frustrated and angry.
- E** **EDUCATE** yourself on the signs of abuse

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE. The law says "anyone having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must report the case to any state or local law enforcement agency and to the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services. Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is punishable by imprisonment of up to 180 days and/or a fine of up to \$1,000" (Texas Family Code, Chapter 34)

24 HOUR CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE
1-800-252-5400

Signs of Possible Abuse

NEGLECT

- Obvious malnutrition
- Lack of personal cleanliness
- Body and hair dirty, offensive body odor
- Needs glasses, dental care or medical attention

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Frequent injuries, bruises, cuts, black eyes
- Frequent complains of pain without obvious injury, especially when child cannot explain cause
- Burns or bruises in an unusual pattern suggesting an instrument or a human bite
- Fear of going home or seeing parent
- Cigarette burns on the face, arms or palms
- Reluctance to sit down
- Complains of beating or harsh treatment
- Lack of reaction to pain
- Injuries that appear after child isn't seen for several days

SEXUAL ABUSE

- Physical signs of sexually transmitted disease
- Knowledge about sexual relations and/or engages in sexually suggestive behavior
- Reports sexual assault
- Complains of pain or itching in genital area
- Evidence of injury to the genital area
- Difficulty sitting or walking
- Extreme fear of being alone with the opposite sex

CHILDREN'S BOOK

- *The Berenstain Bear Learn About Strangers* by Stan and Jan Berenstain

ADULT BOOK

- *What To Do When Your Child's Been Molested or Abused*

