Sometimes parents have to face issues they would rather avoid.

What is Sexual Abuse?

The sexual abuse of a child occurs whenever any person (family, friend or stranger) exploits or abuses a child sexually. This includes sexual contact with children, as well as sexual exploitation, including the use of children in adult pornography. Sexual abuse includes fondling, to sexual genital contact, to intercourse, to violence, rape. In all instances of child sexual abuse, the child is being used as an object to satisfy the adult's sexual needs or desires.

"Cindy is my best friend. I play on her house a lot. Sometimes, her Daddy comes home early from work. They may watch movies or play with her dolls on the bed. Doesn't that look like fun? I didn't think so, but I said, "No."

Who Gets Sexually Abused?

Any child of any age is a potential victim of sexual abuse. Some important facts to keep in mind . . .

- Although the majority of adults do not sexually assault children, most sexual abuse occurs with an adult the child knows and trusts.
- Most sexual abuse goes unreported and undetected.
- Although we do not have exact numbers, some studies have found that one out of every four girls and one of every ten boys become victims of child sexual abuse by the age of eighteen.
- Children often keep sexual abuse a secret.

"When Mommy goes to work, I go to Mrs. Jackson's house. I wish I don't have to. Mrson says Mr. Jackson is a real nice man, but Mr. Jackson, sometimes touches me in bad ways. Sometimes he takes me out of my clothes. Sometimes he takes his pants off, too. He said "You better not tell."

Children may keep a sexual assault a secret for many reasons. They may fear repetition, blame, punishment or shame. Children may think people won't believe them. Boys are less likely to report, so about this girls. The closer the relationship of the offender to the child, the less likely it is that the child will report the incident.

How Can You Determine If Sexual Abuse Has Taken Place?

First and foremost, if your children confide that they have been sexually assaulted, believe them! Children very seldom lie about such a serious matter. Also be aware that most sexual abuse does not result in the child being violently assaulted or hurt physically. Often there is no physical evidence. a child has been molested. Fondling, involvement in child pornography and oral sex usually present no physical signs of abuse. But, if a child has been physically battered as a result of sexual abuse, the following may be signs of the occurrence:

- A discharge from the vaginal area or penis
- Injury to the genitals or anus
- Pain, itching or bleeding in the genital or anal area
- Difficulties in walking or sitting
- The discovery of a sexually transmitted disease.

Children, especially very young children, are many times unable to verbalize that they have been sexually assaulted. The following are some indicators that sexual assault may have taken place:

- Nightmares and deep disturbances
- Bedwetting
- Fear of certain places or certain people (such as a day care center or a friend)
- Loss of appetite
- Clinging to a parent more than usual
- Behaving as a younger child (such as an older child sucking his or her thumb)
- Unsophisticated changes in behavior at school, day care, or in relations with peers
- Withdrawal
- Acting out the abuse with dolls, friends, or through drawings
- Excessive masturbation

Key to mind that although these are the most common signs of sexual abuse, there may be other causes for these changes. However, sexual abuse should not be ruled out as a possibility.

What Can You Do To Prevent Sexual Abuse?

You teach your children many, many rules. You talk them to look both ways before crossing the street, what to do if they get lost, not to talk to strangers and so on. Prevention relating to sexual abuse prevention can be included in the normal teaching process. Your children need not be made afraid or suspicious of all adults in order to accomplish this. You don't even have to talk to very young children about sex if you don't want to. Simply make your children aware that if someone touches them or does anything that makes them uncomfortable, they should report it to you or another adult they trust. You can teach your children they have the right to say "NO" if asked to do something that makes them uncomfortable, even if the person who asks is a relative or close friend. Do warn your children understands. Let them know they can come to you to talk about anything that's upsetting to them. Answer any questions your children may have and be calm and matter-of-fact.

Other Things Parents Can Do To Lessen The Risk Of Sexual Abuse.

- Know where your children are and what they are doing.
- Know who is with your children. Get to know any adults or older children that have regular contact with your child.
- Check out baby sitters, babysitters or day care providers. Ask for references and then check them. Do not use child care settings which prohibit unannounced visiting. Visit your child's day care facility frequently and observe the daily activities.
- Talk with your children about the day's activities. Be observant of anything they say or do that seems out of the ordinary.

"Some kid taken me into of place and hurt me very and ouch! but sometimes I don't feel good when he makes me touch his thing. I want to tell mom, but I'm scared she's go mad."

(Detach Here)

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION PAMPHLET RECEIPT

This will acknowledge that I/WE, the parent(s) of _____ (Name of Child), have received a copy of

"Facing The Facts: A Parent's Guide to the Understanding of Child Sexual Abuse"

from the licensee or authorized representative of Catino Family Childcare (Name of Facility)

_____ Signature of Parent(s) Guardian(s)

_____ Date