



NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION BLUE RIBBON CAMPAIGN *for parents*



Florida Abuse Hotline
1-800-96-ABUSE

Amigos For Kids® responds to the diverse needs of South Florida's abused, abandoned and less fortunate children and their families, through education, abuse prevention and community involvement.

OUR MISSION

To prevent child abuse and neglect by valuing children, strengthening families and educating communities.

WHY A BLUE RIBBON?

Blue Ribbon Campaign:

April-National Child Abuse Prevention Month

In memory of her grandson, Michael, Bonnie W. Finnie of Virginia tied a ribbon to her van's antenna. She chose blue to remind herself of the bruised body of her grandchild. We all have a role to play in building strong communities in which children are valued and supported.

GENERAL PERSONAL SAFETY MEASURES FOR CHILDREN

Teach your children about situations or actions that can be dangerous to their personal safety, such as:

- Being touched in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, regardless of who is doing the touching.
- Being touched by anyone on the parts of their body that are private or being asked to touch other's private body parts.
- Being asked to keep a secret. Secrets are different from surprises such as birthday gifts.

Practice with your children the appropriate responses to dangerous situations.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CHILD ABUSE

Some Signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained burns, cuts, bruises, or welts in the shape of an object.
- Bite marks.
- Anti-social behavior.
- Problems in school.
- Fear of adults.
- Drug or alcohol abuse.
- Self-destructive or suicidal behavior.
- Depression or poor self-image.
- Child appears frightened of parent or caregiver.

Some Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Apathy.
- Depression.
- Hostility.
- Lack of concentration.
- Eating disorders.
- Extremes in behavior, ranging from overly aggressive to overly passive.
- Delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development

Some Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Inappropriate knowledge of/or interest in sexual acts.
- Seductiveness.
- Avoidance of things related to sexuality, or rejection of one's own genitals or body.
- Nightmares and bedwetting.
- Drastic changes in appetite.
- Overcompliance or excessive aggression.
- Suicidal behavior.
- Eating disorders.
- Self-injury.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CHILD ABUSE

Some signs of Sexual Abuse

- Fear of a particular person or family member.
- Withdrawal, secretiveness, or depression.
- Pain, bleeding, redness, or swelling in anal or genital area
- Age-inappropriate sexual play with toys, self, or others
- Age-inappropriate knowledge of sex

Some signs of Neglect

- Unsuitable clothing for weather.
- Being dirty or unbathed.
- Extreme hunger; begs, steals food.
- Apparent lack of supervision.
- Unattended physical or medical problems

WHAT ARE SOME CAUSES OF CHILD ABUSE?

- General Stress.
- Stress of being a new parent.
- Dealing with a handicapped or behaviorally difficult child.
- Stress of caring for someone besides oneself.
- Personal history of being abused (childhood trauma).
- Alcohol or drug abuse.
- Marital conflict.
- Unemployment.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE ON THE INTERNET AND OTHER ELECTRONIC MEDIA

- Learn about the internet and what children are doing online.
- Encourage your child to tell you if anybody says or does something online that makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened.
- Take action if your child is being bullied online or on a cellular phone.
- For proper monitoring of what children are viewing, keep computer in open family area.
- Warn your children about the consequences of sending sexually explicit images between cell phones (sexting) or other electronic media.
- Provide your children with clear rules on what can and can't do with their phone or other electronic media.

PREVENTING CHILD ABUSE

- Never discipline your child when your anger is out of control.
- When your child tells you that he or she doesn't want to be with someone, this could be a red flag.
- Listen to them and believe what they say.
- Pay attention when someone shows greater than normal interest in your child.

GENERAL PERSONAL SAFETY MEASURES FOR CHILDREN

Caring adults should:

- Establish rules for when your children are:
 - Home alone.
 - Playing outside.
 - Answering the phone.
 - Answering a knock at the door.
 - Frightened or need to call someone.
- Teach your children when and how to use 911.
- Establish rules for your children telling you where they are at all times.
- Establish rules for leaving home and school with people other than parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Encourage your children to talk with you about their activities, friends and daily experiences. Let them know that they will be listened to and believed.
- Teach your children to say "NO" to someone if they ask them to do something wrong, or that feels uncomfortable.
- Teach your children about situations or actions that can be dangerous to their personal safety, such as:
 - Being lost in a public place.
 - Being followed by someone who tries to get them in their car, tries to offer them a treat, asks for information and/or assistance, etc.
 - Being asked to go with an unknown adult; an adult that the child does not have permission to go with.

WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Family violence is a pattern of behaviors used by one person in a relationship to control the other. It may include verbal abuse, physical abuse (hitting, pushing, shoving, etc.), sexual abuse (unwanted or forced sexual activity), and stalking. If any of these things have happened to you, you may have feelings of helplessness, fear, shame, guilt and anger.

ANYONE CAN BE A VICTIM

Regardless of their age, sex, race, culture, religion, education, employment or marital status, anyone can be a victim.

Children are adversely affected by their exposure to family violence. Although many parents believe they can hide domestic violence from their children, research suggests that 80-90% of these children are aware of the violence. Even though they may not see the abuse, they hear the screams and see the bruises on their mothers.

Children can also be injured as a direct result of domestic violence. Batterers sometimes intentionally injure children in an effort to intimidate their partners. This can include physical, emotional and sexual abuse of the children. Children are also injured – either intentionally or accidentally – during attacks on their mothers.

Infants and preschool children exposed to violence may experience developmental problems and sleep disturbances, including nightmares. School age children who witness violence may exhibit a range of problem

behaviors including depression, anxiety and violence towards peers (bullying). Adolescents who have grown up in violent homes are at risk for recreating the abuse they have seen.

IF YOU ARE BEING ABUSED, REMEMBER:

- You are not alone.
- It is not your fault.
- Help is available.

GUN SAFETY TIPS

If you keep a gun:

- Always keep it unloaded and locked up with a gun lock.
- Lock and store bullets separately.

Even if you don't own a gun:

- Talk to your children about guns.
- Ask parents of your children's friends if they have guns at home and how they're stored.



AMIGOS AT WORK

Some of our most recognized programs and initiatives include:

- Amigos Strengthens Families & Communities Program - Parenting Skills
- After School Program
- There's NO Excuse For Child Abuse!® Blue Ribbon Campaign
- Holiday Toy Drive

CHILD SAFETY PROGRAMS/INFORMATION

Emergency	911
Florida Abuse Hotline	800 962-2873
Amigos For Kids	305 279-1155
Switchboard of Miami/The Children's Trust Helpline	211
Kristi House	305 547-6800
Florida Domestic Violence Hotline	800 500-1119
Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services Coordinated Victims Assistance Center (CVAC)	305 285-5900

If you need assistance please contact any of the above numbers.

Special thanks to:



Perla Tabares Hantman, District 4
and The School Board of Miami-Dade County
Division of Student Services
Office of Academics and Transformation
Martha Z. Harris, Administrative Director
305-995-7338



Rosa Maria Plasencia, President & CEO
305 279-1155 • www.amigosforkids.org

* Information courtesy of National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information and Child Welfare Information Gateway.