



Common Questions

Q: IS THIS SEX EDUCATION?

A: No. This is a personal safety curriculum. It is specifically designed to teach children how to keep their bodies safe from abuse. Abuse may come in the form of physical, sexual or emotional abuse. When referring to sexual abuse we use the term private parts to refer to the parts of the body covered by a bathing suit.

Q: WHAT IS THE FORMAT OF THE PLAY IT SAFE!® PROGRAM?

A: The program will be presented to each classroom independently. The children are in their own classroom with other children that they know which allows them to interact more openly. The program lasts approximately one hour. The trainer will speak with the children for about 30-40 minutes, and then the children will view an age-appropriate, 15-20 minute video.

Q: WHAT ARE THE NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE PLAY IT SAFE!® TRAINERS?

A: Trainers come from a variety of backgrounds, but are selected because of their experience plus their ability to work with children. They receive many hours of in-service training every year as well as being provided with current reading materials in the area of child sexual abuse. In addition, it is essential that they possess the ability to handle themselves properly in a crisis situation. Crisis intervention strategies with children are taught and practiced with every trainer.

Q: WILL THIS PROGRAM SCARE MY CHILD?

A: The Play It Safe!® curriculum avoids using scare tactics with children. The program is extremely positive and upbeat, and most children enjoy the approximately one hour they share with the trainer. Personal safety should be taught to children in a way similar to fire or drug safety. Children need to know what risks exist for them, but they also need to know that they are capable of handling these situations should they arise.

Q: WILL THIS MAKE MY CHILD AFRAID OF ALL TOUCH?

A: There are three types of touch emphasized in Play It Safe!® They are safe, unsafe, and confusing touch. Safe touches are the ones that make us feel loved and safe inside. Examples would include a goodnight kiss, shaking or holding someone's hand or a pat on the head. Unsafe touches leave bruises, cuts or broken bones. Finally, confusing touches occur when another person wants to look at or touch a child's private parts or wants a child to look at or touch that person's private parts. It is stressed with children that there may be times when an adult must look at their private parts--if they are hurt or need help bathing, to name a couple.

Q: DON'T CHILDREN LIE ABOUT ABUSE PROBLEMS WHEN THE IDEA IS PUT INTO THEIR HEADS?

A: A very small percentage of sexual abuse allegations are false. Most experts agree that less than 2% are actually untrue. Experts trained in child abuse investigations can distinguish between the true cases of child sexual abuse and the false ones. Always remember, children cannot lie about behavior that they do not know or understand.



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Q: CAN I WATCH THE PRESENTATION WITH MY CHILD?

A: We highly encourage parents to come and observe the program. We do suggest that you observe a classroom other than your child's. Children sometimes have unusual responses when their parents are in the room with them. Some children might be intimidated and other children may take it as an opportunity to act out. Please arrange the scheduling details with the school.

Q: SHOULD I FOLLOW THIS PROGRAM UP WITH TRAINING AT HOME?

A: Great idea! Child abuse prevention is not accomplished in one hour. It is important that you continue these discussions with your child. Let your child know that you are willing to discuss these sensitive topics whenever they show an interest.

Q: IF MY CHILD HAS BEEN ABUSED, SHOULD THEY STILL BE ALLOWED TO SEE THE PROGRAM?

A: Children of abuse often feel "different" from other children. If you keep your child out of the program you are simply reinforcing that myth. Prevention programs can also be therapeutic for children. The child is reminded that the abuse was not their fault and that they are not alone in this struggle.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE SHOULD A CHILD "DISCLOSE" AN ABUSE SITUATION?

A: Our program teaches children that they should tell a trusted adult if someone is touching or has touched them in an unsafe or confusing way. Those adults are identified as parents, teachers, counselors, grandparents, etc. If a child chooses to disclose to a trainer, the trainer first acknowledges the child's outcry. If abuse is suspected, the trainer advises the child that she/he will follow up with someone whose job it is to keep kids safe. We are not an investigative agency. Consequently, we adhere firmly to Texas state law as outlined in the family code which mandates that such disclosures be reported to Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement. The agencies will decide if an investigation is warranted. Any further questions regarding these cases should be directed to the above organizations.

Q: WHAT OTHER SERVICES DOES YOUR AGENCY PROVIDE?

A: The Women's Center of Tarrant County Rape Crisis And Victim Services Program provides a host of services for victims and their families. Counseling is available for children of sexual abuse. Support groups are also available for parents and significant others. We serve women, men and children of both genders.