



How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide

Our children are often faced with choices that affect their development and safety. As parents, we can do our best to provide education and guidance to prepare our children to make the best decisions. One way we do this is to talk with our children. Some subjects are easy to discuss with our children—sports, their grades in school, their friends, and many other features of our daily lives. Other things are more difficult for us to discuss, including child abuse—especially child sexual abuse.

Although discussing child abuse with your children may be difficult for you, it is very important. Perhaps the most important step parents can take to protect their children from abuse is to have open communication in the home. Research has shown that children whose parents talk to them about preventing abuse are more effective at fending off assaults. Your role is very important.

More than three million reports of child abuse are received each year, including half a million reports of *child sexual abuse*. As a major youth-serving organization, the Boy Scouts of America has a unique opportunity to help protect the youth of our nation. This booklet is designed to give you essential information that should help you teach your children how to protect themselves.

If your son is a new Boy Scout, this might be the first time that you have seen this *Parent's Guide*. If you have other sons in Scouting, or if your son has advanced in Boy Scouting, we hope that you are familiar with this guide and have discussed its contents with your children. In either case, we encourage you to make this information part of a continuing family effort that reinforces the concepts included in this guidebook.

We do not expect that your son will become a victim of child abuse. It is extremely important, however, that if he is ever confronted with an abusive situation, he will know that there are adults in his life who will listen and respond in a supportive manner. The purpose of this booklet is to help you and your son establish, or reinforce, open communication on this sensitive topic.

Using This Booklet

This booklet is divided into two sections. The first section is for your information. It contains information about child abuse and provides some tips to help parents talk with their Boy Scout-age sons about child abuse. The second section is for you to share with your son. Some of the activities listed in the second section are requirements your son needs your help to complete before he can join his Boy Scout troop.

Youth Protection Troop Joining Requirement: For your son to join a Boy Scout troop, he must complete the exercises included in Section II of this pamphlet.

It is important that you read the entire booklet before you and your son do any of the exercises together. You might be tempted to hand this booklet to your son and tell him to read it. We urge you to resist this temptation. Your son needs to know that he can openly discuss difficult topics with you.

- [Section I - Information for Parents](#)
- [Section II - Information for Youth](#)

[Guide to Safe Scouting - Contents](#)

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