

Protecting Your Children

A Parent's Guide





A Scouts Australia Publication

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**Protecting
Your Children**
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We hope that you find this booklet useful in dealing with the difficult topic of child abuse.

Remember: a self confident child who can trust their instincts is a safer child. Take an active interest in your children's activities. Get involved! Be sure to know the adults who are working with your children. Positive, healthy role models will re-inforce your teachings.

This booklet has been prepared by Scouts Australia in collaboration with Scouts Canada as part of Scouting's continuing focus on the development and protection of young people. It is designed as a source of general information and to provide guidelines only. Readers should consult with legal counsel prior to taking any action based upon this booklet to ensure that these guidelines and those actions comply with the law in their local jurisdiction. Scouts Australia disclaims any responsibility for any action or inaction taken or not taken as a result of the information contained in this booklet.

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Protecting Your Children

Introduction

Children are often faced with choices that affect their development and safety.

As parents, we must do our best to provide education and guidance to prepare our children to make the best decisions. Talking with our children is a great start. Some subjects are easy to discuss – sports, their grades in school, their friends, and many other features of our daily lives. Other topics, like child abuse and especially sexual abuse, are more difficult.

Discussing child abuse with your children is difficult but very important. Open communication in the home is perhaps the most important step you can take to protect your children from abuse. Research shows that children whose parents talk to them about preventing abuse are more effective at fending off assaults. Your role as a parent is very important.

During 2001, in just one state alone, over 140,000 people telephoned that state's Child Abuse Help Line. One in 170 Australian children under 9 years of age is confirmed as a victim of abuse and neglect. Our children need our help. Good self-esteem and self confidence are very important in a child's ability to prevent, avoid and report abusive situations.

As a major youth-serving organisation, Scouts Australia has a unique opportunity to help protect youth. This booklet will help you teach your children how to protect themselves. It will help you and your children establish open communication on this sensitive topic. This booklet covers four types of child abuse, with a main focus on preventing sexual and physical abuse. It is not expected that your children will be victims of child abuse. It's

extremely important, however, that if your children are ever confronted with an abusive situation, they'll know that there are adults who will listen and offer support.

Using This Booklet

This booklet is divided into four sections. The first section contains general information about child abuse. It will help you talk about child abuse with your children. The second section contains information to assist in preventing child abuse. The third section discusses safety issues for parents to share with their children aged 8 to 15. This section also contains some optional activities to work through with your children. Parents of children of Joey Scout age should introduce the scenarios and discussion as their child's understanding develops. The fourth section provides useful information for those working with young children. Notes on Scouts Australia's selection process for Leaders are found at the back of this book.

It is suggested you read the entire booklet before you and your children do any of the exercises together. Once you are comfortable with the topics in this booklet, you'll be able to present the information in ways they can understand. Feel free to reword an exercise in order to help your children gain a better understanding.

SECTION I: *Child Abuse*

What is Child Abuse?

An abused or neglected child is one who is harmed, or threatened with physical or mental harm, or from whom the necessities of life are withheld. There are several forms of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect. Power and control are central themes to all types of abuse.

Child abuse and neglect are serious problems for our society. Within Australia, the majority of sexual assaults reported to the police were against children under 18 years of age. The number of physical assaults on under age children is also of concern.

Here are brief, non-legal descriptions of each form of abuse.

Neglect

A child is considered to be neglected if the persons this child depends on do not provide food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, and supervision. Parents/caregivers have a legal obligation to ensure proper care and supervision for their children. When children are properly supervised, there is less risk of physical or sexual assault.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes the broad range of physical force which results in non-accidental injury, and often stems from bullying or unreasonable punishment that is too harsh for the child. Physical abuse injuries can include bruises, broken bones, burns, and abrasions. Children experience minor injuries as a normal part of childhood, usually in predictable places such as the shins, knees, and elbows. When the injuries are in soft-tissue areas on the abdomen or back, or don't seem to be typical childhood

injuries, physical abuse becomes a possibility. Injuries don't need to be visible to be considered abuse.

Children have rights under the law and must be protected. Even allowing for cultural standards and views on discipline, injuring a child is not acceptable and must be stopped. Drinking and drug abuse by caregivers have become more common contributing factors in physical abuse cases, while sometimes a caregiver's reaction to stress can result in physical abuse.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is harder to recognise than other forms of abuse, but is just as harmful. Emotional abuse damages the children's self-esteem and, in extreme cases, can lead to developmental problems and speech disorders. Constant bullying, ridicule, rejection, blaming, threatening, isolating, name calling, or unfavourable comparisons with brothers or sisters or other children are forms of emotional abuse.

Children who suffer emotional abuse may demonstrate severe anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive or aggressive behaviour.

Emotional abuse may occur when children are made to feel inadequate if they cannot meet the unreasonably high expectations which adults demand in, for example, academic or sporting achievement. Parents may quite rightly have high expectations of their children, without being abusive.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse occurs when an adult or an older child uses authority over a child to involve them in sexual activity. The abuser might use tricks, bribes, threats, or force to persuade the child to join in sexual activity. Sexual abuse includes any activity performed for the sexual satisfaction of the abuser, including acts

ranging from exposing sex organs (exhibitionism), observing another's sex organs or sexual activity (voyeurism), to fondling and sexual assault.

Facts you should know about child sexual abuse:

- ◆ *Few sexually abused children tell anyone that they have been abused. Children are usually told by the abuser to keep the abuse secret. This could involve threats, bribes or physical force. Fortunately, with all the exposure over recent years, this situation is improving – i.e. more children do speak out.*
- ◆ *Children might feel responsible for the abuse and fear an angry reaction from their parents.*
- ◆ *Children are most likely to be sexually abused by someone they know and trust. One third of assaults are by family members, including the extended family.*

An Australian study of convicted paedophiles, who were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire, produced figures which were comparable to those found in similar overseas studies. It found:

- 52.6% of the offenders were divorced or separated and 7.7% were single.
- 44.4% of non-related offenders made friends with the parents, and often interacted socially with them. *This often means that parents and friends do not believe the victim and defend the offender.*
- 74% of victims were boys when anonymous admissions were taken into account. However the percentage, calculated on those offences admitted, at the time the offenders were before the Court was 52%.
- 75.6% of victims were aged between 9 and 16 years. 22.8% were between 5 and 8 years of age.

- 71% of parents knew that the offender was spending a lot of time alone with the child.
- 83.3% of offenders, who were directly related to the victim, committed the offence in the child's home and the majority of these victims were girls.
- 45.8% of offenders, who were not related to the victim, committed the offence in the child's home.
- Strategies used by offenders to develop the child's trust:
 - 86.7% *provided a lot of non-sexual attention.*
 - 80.0% *said nice things and were complimentary about and to the child.*
 - 73.3% *provided a lot of non-sexual touching (hugging, wrestling etc).*
 - 73.2% *said caring things to the child.*

Preteen and teenage children are especially at risk from sexual abuse. The physical and hormonal changes caused by puberty, and a child's natural curiosity about their new emotions and feelings, make these youths likely targets for child sexual abusers. The normal desire of children this age to show their independence from their parents' control increases the risk. This combination might also prevent victims from asking for their parents' help.

Sexual Abuse by Peers

An American study has shown that approximately one-third of sexual abuse is inflicted by other children. If your child tells you about initiations in which sexual activity is included, or about inappropriate behaviour or being tricked, pressured, or forced into sexual activity by other children, you need to have this activity stopped. This kind of sexual misconduct is serious and should not be ignored. The Scout Association strongly disapproves of initiations or any other inappropriate behaviour.

Children who abuse other children need professional help, as they are much more likely to respond positively to treatment when young.

Parents and others who work with children need to distinguish between normal sexual behaviour of children and abusive behaviour. As a natural part of growing up all children are curious about sexual behaviour. This behaviour is not appropriate however when it is forced, when the person who provokes the activity has more power, or when the sexual behaviour lacks consent. When parents are concerned about their children's sexual behaviour, they should discuss these concerns with their children.

Sexual Abuse by Adults

Adults who perpetrate sexual abuse on children often use their positions of power or trust to gain access to children and to conceal their activity. Your children's awareness of an abuser's tactics is their best defence. Tell your children that they can trust you to respond to their concerns about sexual advances or assaults. This will help to prevent more serious situations. Other prevention tips include:

- be alert to adults who take an overt interest in children
- be in the habit of asking your children what they did while they were away at school, day-care or camp
- take time to listen, but don't jump to conclusions
- discuss what to do if your child is threatened to keep a secret
- know who your children spend time with
- know how adults are chosen for positions of trust over your children (day-care, leaders, instructors, coaches)
- introduce yourself to adults who work with your children.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

The clearest sign that children have been sexually abused is their statement that they were, however children often do not tell about their abuse, so parents should be alert for other signs.

These are some signs to watch for:

- hints, indirect messages – refusing to go to a friend's or relative's home for no apparent reason, for example, "*I just don't like him anymore*"
- seductive or provocative behaviour – acting out adult sexual behaviour or using sexual language a child his/her age is unlikely to know
- physical symptoms – irritation of genital or anal areas.

The following are common signs that children are upset. If present for more than a few days, these signs could indicate that something is wrong and your child needs parental support and help. They might also be signs that your child is being sexually abused.

- *Self-destructive behaviour* – using alcohol or drugs, deliberately harming themselves, running away, attempting suicide, or sexual recklessness or promiscuity.
- *Unhappiness* – undue anxiety and crying, sleep disturbances, or loss of appetite.
- *Regression* – behaving like a younger child, thumb sucking, or bed-wetting.
- *Difficulty at school* – sudden drops in grades, behavioural problems, or truancy.

These signs are not an absolute signal of sexual abuse however, if they persist, your children need your help for whatever is bothering them.

When a Child Tells You About Abuse.

If your child becomes a victim of abuse, your first reaction can be very important in helping them through the ordeal.

The following guidelines may help you:

- Don't panic or overreact to the information your child tells you.
- Don't criticise your child or tell your child they misunderstood what happened.
- Do respect your child's privacy and take them to a place where you can talk without interruptions or distractions.
- Do reassure your child that they are not to blame for what happened. Tell them you appreciate being told about the incident and will help to make sure that it won't happen again.
- Do encourage your child to tell the proper authorities what happened, but try to avoid repeated stressful interviews.
- Do consult your family doctor or other child abuse authority about the need for medical care or counselling for your child.

You should show real concern, but NOT alarm or anger, when questioning your child about possible sexual abuse.

Finally, if your child has been sexually abused, do not blame yourself or your child. People who victimise children are not easy to identify. They come from all walks of life. Often they have a position of status – they go to church, have regular jobs, and are active in the community. Child molesters are sometimes very skilled at controlling children through giving excessive attention, gifts, and money.

Child molesters use their skills on parents and other adults, disguising their abusive behaviour behind friendship and care for the children.

SECTION 2: *Preventing Child Abuse*

Preventing Abuse in the Family

Few parents mean to abuse their children. When parents take time out to control themselves before they grab hold of their child, everybody wins.

Sometimes, children who are considered 'difficult' may require medical care. Parents often fail to recognise, or refuse to recognise that the child has a medical problem. Failure to seek appropriate professional help, however, when a child has severe emotional problems could be considered neglect. Situations such as conflicts in a family are also problems that require attention.

The following tips on communicating with children, both about the sensitive topic of child abuse and in general, plus the tips on how to keep calm, may be sufficient support for some people. Parents and caregivers who require additional assistance should not hesitate to seek professional help through the broad range of sources available, including support groups, social workers, physicians, agencies, and other resources.

How to Communicate with Children

Communicating with children isn't easy, especially for difficult subjects like child abuse. Good communication with children will establish trust and help to reduce stress in your relationship. It's hard, but not impossible, especially if you keep these tips in mind:

- *Establish rapport.* Rapport comes from friendly, honest, face-to-face adult/child relations. Welcome children's suggestions. Laugh at their jokes. Downplay the lectures.
- *Teach decision-making.* Allow your children to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Confidence in making simple

decisions in their lives will help to prepare them for the more difficult choices they will face on their own. Foster a sense of responsibility for decisions and an understanding of consequences. Encourage your child to explain the reasons for their choices, to assist them in developing their understanding of values. Offering choices between two desired actions can also reduce the number of commands you give.

- *Whenever possible, join the group your child joins* – or at least work closely with it. Sign up as a Leader in your children’s Cub Scout pack or Scout troop. This lets you have fun together. It also puts you in a position to help choose the other Leaders, stress the values important to you, and influence the program.
- *Use peer pressure.* Use the influence of a group of children on other children to help get your message across. A street gang, school group, sporting team, or Scout troop can turn a youth on (or off). Guide the majority – or the influential minority – toward the right attitudes and actions. They will then begin working on other children.
- *Explain consequences.* Explain how your child’s actions, such as ignoring family rules, affects you. For example: “*When you stay out past the agreed time, I worry about your safety*”.
- *Listen for the hidden needs and feelings.* Ask clarifying questions without being confrontational to discover why your child has changed patterns or is avoiding people or places.
- *Teach openness.* Explain the difference between good secrets, such as a surprise party, and secrets that make you feel bad.
- *Be the adult.* Children expect their parent’s decisions to be fair, just and consistent. Create reasonable limits and stick to

them. Be aware of the capabilities of your children as they develop. Admit your own mistakes. Nobody is perfect.

- *Walk the walk, talk the talk.* Be careful not to expect more from your children than they can expect from you.
- *Help children solve their own problems.* Use questions to help your children identify issues and appropriate alternatives.
- *Share your strategies.* Children often experience similar challenges to their parents. Share how you have overcome challenges like dealing with frustration, failure, fear, stress, loss, and even success.
- *Think long-term.* In the heat of an issue or situation consider the long-term impact on the relationship. Are you really willing to risk everything you have invested in your children over this issue, or can you put the discussion in perspective as another challenge in your journey together?
- *Smile, even if you don't feel like it.* Your body language speaks louder than your words and how you say them. Smiling can also help you to gain perspective.



SMILE

- *Be curious.* Develop an insatiable curiosity about your children. Take a sincere interest in their views, their joys and their sorrows, their sense of failure and of success. Enjoy watching them grow up as they develop their own identity.
- *Catch your children doing something right.* Too often children only hear about what they have done wrong. Recognise even small efforts to improve and you'll provide the encouragement to try harder.
- *Provide sufficient direction.* Do your children know exactly what you mean by a clean room? Failure to follow through may mean your children don't understand your directions however, too much direction on simple tasks is demeaning. Find the balance for the situation. Check for understanding when children seem confused or lack follow through.

Keeping Calm – Tips for Parents

The next time everyday pressures build and you feel like lashing out – stop! Try any of these simple alternatives. You'll feel better ... and so will your children.

- Take a deep breath ... and another ... then remember you are an adult.
- Close your eyes and imagine you're hearing what your children are about to hear.
- Press your lips together and count to 10; or, better yet, to 20.
- Put your child in a time-out chair. (Remember this rule: One time-out minute for each year of age.)
- Put yourself in a time-out chair. Think about why you are angry: Is it your children, or are they simply convenient targets for your anger?

- Phone a friend.
- If someone can watch the children, take a walk.
- Splash cold water on your face.
- Smile until your emotion matches your expression.
- Hug a pillow.
- Turn on some music. Maybe even sing along.
- Pick up a pencil and write down as many helpful words as you can think of. Save the list.

Parents and other caregivers should think about the following questions, suggested by Douglas Besharov*, the first director of the US National Centre on Child Abuse and Neglect, regarding the methods of discipline they use.

- Is the purpose of the punishment to educate the children or to vent the parent's anger?
- Are the children capable of understanding the relationship between their behaviour and the punishment?
- Is the punishment appropriate and within the bounds of acceptable discipline?
- Is a less severe, but equally effective, punishment available?
- Is the punishment degrading, brutal, or extended beyond the limits of what the children can handle?
- If physical force is used, is it done carefully to avoid injury?

Note: Most child protection agencies view physical discipline as inappropriate.

These questions help to define the boundaries between acceptable discipline and child abuse. Other causes of child abuse inside the family might be more complex and require professional help to resolve.

Preventing Abduction and Abuse by Strangers

While strangers are the abusers in less than 20% of assaults on children, they are often the focus of prevention strategies. Here's what you can do to help protect your children.

- Don't leave your children alone in shopping centres.
- Go with your children when using public toilets.
- Keep a current photo (head and shoulders) in your wallet.
- Don't put your children's names on the outside of their clothing.
- Know where your children are at all times and visa versa.
- Closely supervise Joey Scout and Cub Scout aged children when doing door-to-door activities such as fundraising.
- Scouts should go in pairs and be advised never to enter homes.
- Teach the Three Rs of youth protection. (See Section 3)
- Discuss common situations where your children may be at risk and what to do when in danger. (See Section 3)

Talking With Your Children About Sexual Abuse

It's very difficult for some parents to talk to their children about sexual abuse.

Here are some tips to help you through this tough task.

- If you feel uncomfortable discussing sexual abuse with your children, let them know. Otherwise, they might misinterpret your anxiety, then they may not approach you when they need help. You can use a simple statement like, "I wish we

didn't have to talk about this. I'm uncomfortable because I don't like to think that this could happen to you. I want you to know that it's important and you can come to me whenever you have a question or if anybody ever tries to hurt you".

- Select words your child understands. One main concern of parents is finding words to explain sexual abuse. Most child abuse prevention experts believe that children should learn the proper names for their genitalia. However, if you are uncomfortable with using the names of body parts, use whatever terms your child understands. Help your child to be comfortable with their body. An over-emphasis on privacy can make them uncomfortable.
- Provide the opportunity for your child to practise youth protection skills. Children learn better when they can practise the skills they are taught. Practising the exercising of their rights with parents gives children confidence. (See Section 3)
- Support your children in trusting their instincts – don't make them kiss someone they feel uncomfortable with (even if they are a close family member). Confidence in their own instincts will be their greatest defence when on their own. Don't discount what they say. If a child says, "I'm scared," don't respond with "Don't be silly". Ask what they're scared of and how scared they are. Help them understand their instincts.

Many parents feel that teaching children about sexual abuse will take away their children's innocence. In fact, many children are at risk of sexual abuse because they aren't mature enough to understand why a child molester would want to look at, or otherwise violate them. This partly explains why children who

are sexually abused at a young age do not realise it until they are older. It also explains their confusion if parents or other adults overreact when told about sexual abuse.

**Adapted from Douglas J. Besharov. Recognising Child Abuse: A Guide for the Concerned. New York: Free Press, 1990.*

SECTION 3: *Safety Issues and Activities*

Scouting's Principles

Scouting provides young people with a set of basic values and principles to guide them in formulating the values they wish to follow through life. When children (or young people) join the Scouting program, they assume an obligation to be faithful to the principles of Scouting as embodied in the respective Promise, Law and motto.

The principles of Scouting do not require that children place themselves in potentially dangerous situations – quite the contrary, we want children to “be prepared” and to “do their best” to avoid these situations.

We hope that you will discuss these with your children and be sure that they understand the limitations to the requirements in consideration of the rules of safety.

Child's Bill of Rights

The Child's Bill of Rights outlines some specific ways children can protect themselves. Discuss these rights with your children, and review the basic rules of safety for children. These could provide the information that your children need to help them respond to the situations in the exercises.

When feeling threatened, you have the right to:

- Trust your instincts or feelings.
- Expect privacy.
- Say “no!” to unwanted touching or affection.
- Say “no!” to an adult's inappropriate demands and requests.
- Withhold information that could jeopardise your safety.

- Refuse gifts.
- Be rude or unhelpful if the situation warrants.
- Run, scream, and make a scene.
- Break away from unwanted advances.
- Ask for help.

Basic Rules of Safety for Children

Joey Scout and Cub Scout age children benefit from having concrete safety rules. However, traditional cautions about “strangers” aren’t enough to protect these children. Children have different ideas to adults as to who a stranger might be. In addition, a person who harms children is usually someone they know. It might be more helpful to teach your children to recognise possibly threatening situations or actions.

Discuss the following safety rules with your children at a pace they can handle. Point out the rules as the situations arise:

- If you are in a public place and become separated from your parents (or the people in charge of you), don’t wander around looking for them. Go to a police officer, a checkout counter, a security officer, or the lost-and-found area and quickly tell someone in charge that you have been separated from your parents and need help.
- Ask your parent’s permission before going away or accepting rides.
- Ask your parents before accepting gifts from other people, including strangers.
- Adults and older youths who are not in your family and who need help (such as finding an old address or locating a lost pet) should not ask children for help; they should ask other adults.

- Use the buddy system. Try not to go anywhere alone.
- Ask your parent's permission before going into someone else's home.
- No one should ask you to keep a special secret when someone has been scared or hurt by the secret. If this happens, tell your parent, teacher, or Leader.
- If someone insists on taking your picture or videotaping you without permission, tell your parent, teacher, or Leader.
- No one should touch you in ways or places that make you feel bad.

You should not touch anyone else in ways that will make them feel bad. You should ask your parents, or some other adult you trust, questions whenever you are mixed up about someone's touch or behaviour.

- You have the right to say "No!" to anyone who tries to take you somewhere, touch you, or make you feel uncomfortable in any way.
- Keep a safe distance (at least 3 steps) from adults you don't know.
- Never let a stranger into the house, even if he/she claims to be a repair person or that a parent sent them.
- Stay alert and walk tall when out in public.
- If grabbed, YELL "HELP", BREAK AWAY, RUN!!!
- Tell your parents about the new people you meet each day.

These are some simple safety rules that can be approached in the same non-frightening manner in which you tell your children not to play with fire. They emphasise situations common to many child molestation cases.

Things Children Should Know

- Their full name and the name of their parents.
- Their complete phone number, street address and postcode.
- The name of someone they can talk to, if their parents aren't available, when they need help.
- How to make a reverse charge call and how to call police.
- How to identify safe places to go for help: Safety House signs, store personnel, police, security officers, trusted adults.
- How to identify and name body parts and what is private (area covered by swimsuit).
- Common tricks used by molesters.
- The difference between good and bad secrets.

Personal Protection Rules for Children Using Computer On-line Services

When you're on-line, you are in a public place, among thousands of people who are on-line at the same time. Be safe by following these personal protection rules and you'll have fun:

- Keep on-line chats with strangers to public places, not in e-mail.
- Don't tell anyone on-line your last name, address, phone numbers at home or school, your parents' workplaces, or the name or location of your school unless you have your parent's permission first. Never give your password to anyone but a parent or other adult in your family.
- If someone sends you an e-mail with sayings that make you feel uncomfortable, trust your feelings. You are probably right to be watchful. Don't reply. Tell a parent what happened.
- If somebody tells you to keep your on-line messages secret, tell a parent.

- Be careful whom you talk to. Anyone who starts talking about subjects that make you feel uncomfortable is probably an adult posing as a child.
- Pay attention if someone tells you things that don't fit together. An on-line friend may say she is 12, and a day later will say she is 14. That means the person is lying and may be an adult posing as a child.
- Unless you talk to your parent about it first, never talk on the phone to a person you only know on-line. If someone asks you to call them – even if it's reverse charge or a toll-free, 1800 number, that's a warning.
- Never agree to meet someone you only know on-line any place off-line, in the real world.
- Watch out if someone on-line starts talking about hacking, or breaking into other peoples' or companies' computer systems; phreaking (the "ph" sounds like an "f"), which is the illegal use of long-distance services or mobile phones; or viruses (on-line programs that destroy or damage data when other people download them onto their computers).
- Promise your parent or an adult family member and yourself that you will honour any rules about how much time you are allowed to spend on-line and what you do and where you go while you are there.



Children and Young People

Today children and young people are still encouraged "to help other people". This implies that they should be willing to do

things for others that would please them, but only when their parent has given permission and knows where they are and whom they are with.

Youth leaders should follow safe practices and never ask a child to do something that the child feels bad about. Children should be made aware that if any leader, who might be a teacher, coach or youth leader, ever asks them to do something they think is inappropriate, then they have the right to say “No!”. They must be encouraged to talk to their parents about their concerns.

Sometimes people who really don't need help ask for it in order to create an opportunity for abuse. No matter what their age, children and young people should be very familiar with safety rules so that they can recognise situations to be wary of.

For example:

It is one thing to stand on the footpath away from a car to give directions. It is another to get in the car with someone to show them the way. Young people should never get into a car without their parent's permission.

It may be okay for young people to help carry groceries to a person's house, but they should never enter the house without permission from their parents.

Suggested Activities

What if ... ?

In this activity the parent describes possibly dangerous situations that children should recognise. After you describe a situation, ask your children to respond by telling and showing what they would do if ever faced with a similar situation. Following each situation, some possible responses are listed.

You might already have set rules for some of these situations. Don't change your rules in response to the exercise unless there

is new information that you have not previously considered. You should also feel free to reword the situation if that helps your children understand the situation better.

Questions To Ask Your Children:

What if you are home alone, the telephone rings, and a voice on the other end asks if your parents are home? What would you do?

- a. Tell the caller your parents are busy and cannot come to the phone.
- b. Take a message and the phone number of the caller.
- c. If the message needs an immediate response, call your parent.
- d. Don't tell the caller you are home alone.
- e. Let the answering machine answer and don't pick up the phone until you are sure who the caller is.



What if an adult invites you on a camping trip and suggests that you allow him/her to take your picture when you are not wearing clothes? What would you do?

- a. Tell that person you don't want to have your picture taken without clothes.
- b. If possible, get away from that person immediately.
- c. When you return home, tell your parents what happened.
- d. Be very careful around that person in the future, and be sure to tell your parents anything that bothers you about that person.

What if neighbours come to you and say that your parent is sick and you must go with them? These neighbours aren't people you have been told it's okay to go with. What would you do?

- a. If you're at school, ask the principal or your teacher to help you make sure your parent really sent these people for you.
- b. If you're at home or somewhere else, call the emergency number your parents gave you (such as their work, or a close relative) to make sure your parents sent this person.

What if you are in a public toilet and someone tries to touch you in ways or places that make you feel uncomfortable? What would you do?

- a. Yell "STOP THAT!" as loudly as you can.
- b. Run out of the room as quickly as possible.
- c. Tell your parent, a police officer, security guard, or other adult (such as your teacher) what happened.
- d. If the person tries to take you away, yell, "This is not my parent!" GET AWAY, RUN.

What if you are walking to school in the rain and a car stops and the driver asks you if you want a ride? What would you do?

- a. Stay away from the car. You don't need to get close to the car to answer.
- b. Unless you have your parent's permission to ride with the person, say "No, thank you." If the driver keeps asking, say "No!" then get away.
- c. Tell your teacher when you get to school and tell your parent when you get home.
- d. Try to remember as much about the car as you can – the colour, make and number, so that you can tell your teacher and parent.

What if you are playing in the playground and an adult comes up to you and asks you to help find his or her lost puppy? What would you do?

- a. If you do not know the person, stay away and tell a teacher or other adult you trust.
- b. Adults should ask other adults for help, not children. Before you help that person, you must get your parent's permission.
- c. Tell your parents what happened.

What if you are walking down the street and an elderly neighbour tells you that you'll get a dollar to help carry their groceries? The person asks you to come into his/her house. What would you do?

- a. Get permission first.
- b. Do not ever go into anyone else's house without your parent's permission
- c. Tell your parents about this person.

What if an older child you know invites you to play a game, and to pretend that he/she is the doctor and you are the patient, then tells you to take off all of your clothes so that the "doctor" can examine the "patient". What would you do?

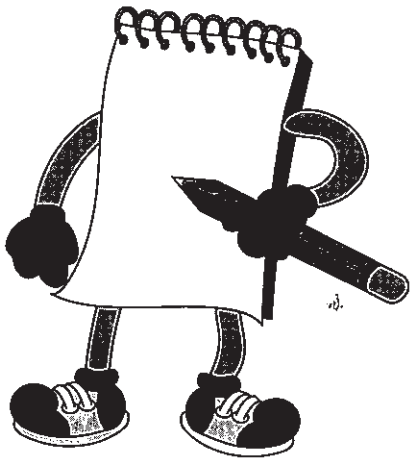
- a. Keep your clothes on.
- b. If he/she persists, say "NO!", then yell and get away.
- c. Tell your parent.

Other Youth Protection Activities

My Safety Notebook

This exercise will help your children avoid situations that could lead to abuse. The safety notebook can be a loose leaf notebook or loose pages stapled together with a home-made cover. This safety notebook gives your children a place to list emergency telephone numbers, including parents' work numbers and a

neighbour or friend's number to call when parents are unavailable. In addition, your children can list the safety rules that you have discussed with them. Encourage your children to decorate each page with pictures and drawings that illustrate some of the rules. They may also want to list other kinds of safety guidelines, such as rules for bicycle safety.



“My safety notebook” is intended to be a fun activity for getting across some serious concerns. It’s a personalised reference that can reassure your children they they know how to respond when confronted by a potentially dangerous situation.

Plays and Skits

Sometimes children enjoy creating a script for a play or skit that will dramatise their understanding of the safety rules. The skit could then be presented to other children as a fun project. You can guide the creation of the script so that the situations reflect an understanding of the rules and give an opportunity for practising the skills. Children need to feel that they can protect themselves. Practising youth protection strategies will help children learn these and apply them when necessary.

Family Meeting

Children must feel comfortable telling their parents about any abusive problems or experiences. Studies show that more than half of all child abuse incidents are never reported because the victims are too afraid or too confused to report their

experiences. Your children need to be allowed to talk freely about their likes and dislikes, their friends, and their true feelings. You can create open communication through family meetings where the entire family can talk about safety issues. Some of the activities suggested here could be done in the setting of a family meeting.

The “Three Rs” of Youth Protection

Recognise that anyone could be a child molester and be aware of the situations that could lead to abuse.

Resist unwanted and inappropriate attention. Resistance will stop most attempts at molestation.

Report any attempted molestation, including unwanted or inappropriate attention, to parents or trusted adults.

Practising the “Three Rs” of Youth Protection

The following stories will help your children understand how to use the “three Rs” of youth protection. These situations may make you feel uncomfortable. However, if children are going to be informed about sexual abuse, they must be able to identify and discuss specific acts.

Jane's Story

I'm a 12 year old girl in the seventh grade at school. Three afternoons a week, during the swimming season, my friends and I go to the swimming pool and practise our swimming style. I am in the school swimming team and keen to get some coaching. One of the maintenance men, who works at the pool, has been spending a lot of time with us lately. He's really nice and he says he used to be a top swimmer and seems to know a lot about swimming. He told me that I had potential and says he would help me with my stroke, but there's something bothering me. This man wants me to come to the pool by myself, at times when it is closed to the public and says he could really concentrate on my style and improve my times. He has offered to pick me up from school and take me home afterwards. I'd like to, but I've been noticing that he likes getting into the pool with us and fooling around. When he's teaching us, he bumps into me a lot and sometimes touches my breasts especially when he puts his arms around me to modify my stroke. He pretends it's a really funny joke, but I'm not so sure that I like it.

What is risky about this situation?

- History of unwanted touching of private parts.
- Touching will probably become more serious if allowed to continue.
- Individual coaching 'when it's quiet' and getting lifts in a car by herself would put Jane alone at the pool with a possible molester.

How would you resist?

- Tell the person to stop grabbing you and do not play with him any longer.
- Make sure that you are not alone with him.
- If he grabs you, yell "Stop that!" loud enough that everyone will hear.

How would you report this situation?

- Tell some adult, the pool manager or your teacher and, of course, your parents.
- Ask your parents to file a report with the police. What he is doing is abuse and it is illegal.

Maria's Story

I'm a 13-year-old girl with a problem – my 17-year-old aunt, Gail. Gail stays with me when my parents go out of town. The last time, she started to act really strange. She wouldn't let me out of her sight. Even when I took a shower, she insisted that I keep the bathroom door open. When I turned around, Gail was taking a picture of me in the shower. She told me there wasn't any film in the camera and that it was a joke. I didn't think it was funny, though. On the last night she was there, she told me to come into her bedroom and watch TV with her. It wasn't nice. She told me not to tell anyone because if I did she would be trouble and so would I.

Does the fact that Gail is a member of Maria's family and only 17 years old mean that she could not be a possible child molester?

- Remember that a child molester could be anyone. Most are family members or someone the child knows.
- Many child molesters begin molesting others when they are teenagers.

Does the fact that Gail has not touched Maria mean that sexual abuse did not happen?

- Gail violated Maria's privacy by taking a picture that Maria did not want taken – this is one form of abuse
- Showing Maria pornographic videos is a form of sexual abuse and is usually a forerunner of sexually abuse.

Should Maria get into trouble if she tells on Gail?

- Maria should not be blamed. She did nothing wrong.
- Anytime that sexual abuse occurs, the abuser is the one who is responsible.

Steven's Story

My name is Steven. I am in year 10 at school and get pretty good grades, so I'm not stupid. However, the other day something happened that made me feel pretty dumb. A group of boys decided that they wanted to start a secret club. Only a few kids would be able to join their club. It was a fun thing and the only way that you could join was to be asked by one of the members of the club. Well, one of my friends belonged and asked me to join. I was really flattered, and I really wanted to join. He told me that the club was meeting in one of the storage sheds and that we could get high and have some fun – then he grabbed my crotch and laughed.

What do you suppose Steven's friend meant when he said, "We could get high and have some fun", and then grabbed Steven's crotch?

- Child molesters often use secret clubs to gain access to unsuspecting boys.
- Using drugs or alcohol to lower resistance to sexual abuse also is quite common.

Suppose that Steven went to the club meeting and ended up being sexually molested by one of the other people there. How do you think he would feel?

- A lot of boys feel very embarrassed when they realise that they have been fooled. Often they are afraid that others will think that they are homosexual if another male has sexually abused them.
- Embarrassment might cause Steven and other boys in his situation to not report their abuse.

SECTION 4: *Working with Children*

Working With Other People's Children: How to protect yourself

In the past many children were too trusting and, as a result, were easy prey to the undesirable element within the community, even those they thought they could trust.

Over recent years there has been a shift toward encouraging people to be more cautious and even suspicious of certain actions by others. This has meant that some might now view quite innocent actions and situations with some suspicion.

Today, teachers, police, youth workers and all others have to abide by new codes of conduct, to ensure their behaviour doesn't cause concern in children and in fact encourages a feeling of safety when they are around. Scouts Australia is very proactive in this regard and has strict policies and a code of conduct in place and acts on all reported incidents of abuse.

Following the tips below will not only provide additional security for our young, and serve to protect the adults from false accusations of abuse, but also encourage a sense of safety and security in both young people and adults alike.

Tips For Adults and Teens Who Work With Children

- Don't play favourites – show a similar level of affection to all of the children in your care. One test of this: if you're comfortable with others watching your interaction with children, you are probably okay.
- Touch children only in safe places – never touch children on the private places of their bodies. The back of the head and

the shoulders are acceptable. The buttocks, the breasts, the thighs, and the groin are unacceptable. Aggressive wrestling and tickling can put you at risk of inappropriate contact. Placing your arm on a shoulder and giving a gentle squeeze from the side can show comfort for a sad child. Allow children to back away from your well-intentioned affection.

- Take care when providing first aid – involve a member of the same sex for any child requiring attention, whenever possible. Otherwise, have another person present.⁴ Unless absolutely necessary, leave examination of private places to health care professionals.
- Don't force children to remove clothing for an examination.
- Stay in view of others – if you need to speak to a child alone, move with them to the appropriate distance and remain in the view of others. Respect privacy – give children privacy when changing and taking showers, using the toilet, and sleeping.
- Be careful not to expose yourself. Do not condone activities such as swimming naked or any sexual activities.
- Avoid sexual talk – do not tell sexual jokes or behave with children in a way that promotes promiscuity or the acceptance of sexually explicit material.
- Supervise responsibly – do not permit abusive activities (initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, and bullying are not tolerated by Scouts Australia).
- Know the special needs of the children – ask parents on a regular basis to inform you of any medical needs or conditions (such as medication for hyperactivity). Stressful situations at home or school can also affect a child's behaviour.

- Provide adequate supervision – maintain appropriate adult to youth ratios for the activities and the age group.
- Ensure that those responsible for supervision have the skills for their role.

Use appropriate approaches to discipline – be fair, consistent, firm and reasonable in consequences for inappropriate behaviour.

Take steps to prevent situations from arising through proper planning, adequate supervision and clear communication of expectations. Stop inappropriate behaviour early.

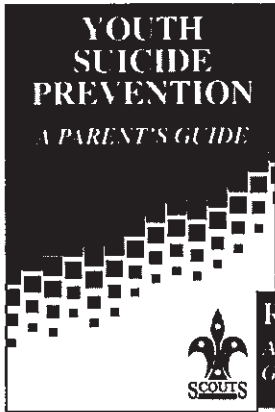
Use of physical discipline or force could lead to charges of assault or abuse. Be alert to children at risk – know the symptoms of possible abuse and be approachable to children in need. You have a duty to report suspected abuse.

PARENT'S GUIDE SERIES

Scouts Australia has taken the initiative in a number of community concerns and developed a series of small publications to assist and support young people and their families. These titles, as listed below, are available from Scouts Australia.

Email: scouts.sales@scouts.com.au

Phone: (02) 9748 2733



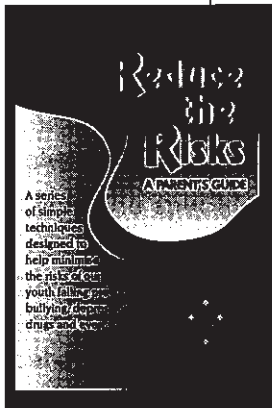
Youth Suicide Prevention

- Comments by a teenager
- Facts and Myths
- Risk Factors
- Protective Factors
- Suicide Prevention
- National Resources



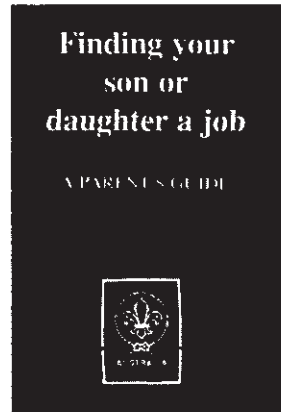
Relationships

- Communication
- Turbulent times
- Adolescence
- Re-learning
- Time Out



Reduce The Risks

A series of simple techniques designed to help minimise the risks of our youth falling prey to bullying, depression, drugs and even suicide.



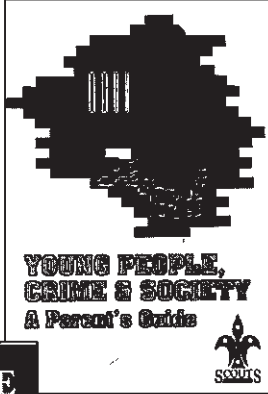
Finding Your Son or Daughter a Job

- How to Communicate with young people
- Starting Points
- Financial Help
- Part-time Training
- What Can You Do?
- Bullseye Charts on Work Opportunities



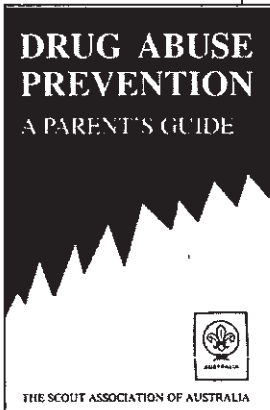
Raising Resilient Young People

- The Ageing & Raging Parent
- The Worried Parent
- The Fearful Parent
- Raising Real People



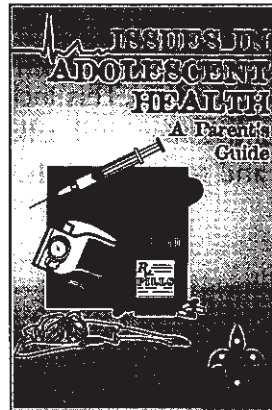
Young People, Crime & Society

- Media views on Youth Crime
- Serious Juvenile Crime
- Young offenders
- Conflict
- How to deal with offenders
- Prevention of Youth Crime



Drug Abuse Prevention

- Youth Protection
- Signs of Drug Use
- Things Parents Should Know About Drugs
- How to Communicate
- Scouting's Role
- National Resources



Issues in Adolescent Health

- Onset of Adolescence
- Smoking
- Marijuana
- Alcohol
- Sun Exposure
- Hard Drugs
- Teenage Sexuality

How Scouts Australia Selects Leaders

Scouts Australia knows the importance of selecting the right adult volunteer to lead activities for your children. That's why Leaders undergo a detailed selection and training process. This process includes:

- ◆ Interview by a responsible manager and/or personnel committee
- ◆ A police check
- ◆ Reference checks
- ◆ An orientation and probation period
- ◆ Initial training and mentoring
- ◆ Ongoing training and evaluation

Scouting's Leader Training Program

Scouts Australia requires adults to complete Introductory, Basic and Advanced Adult Training in Planning, Preparation and Relationships between young people, young people and adults and between adults. This includes Child Development and Youth Programs, listening and talking with young people, as well as practical and technical skills.

Mission Statement

The mission of Scouting is to contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society.

**SCOUTS AUSTRALIA HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE
POLICY FOR ALL OFFENCES INVOLVING ANY
FORM OF ASSAULT ON CHILDREN**

Any suspicions or allegations of abuse should be made to the Chief Executive Officer of Scouts Australia's Head Office in your State or Territory or to National Headquarters.

Your State contact number is:

Australian Capital Territory:	(02) 6282 5211
New South Wales	(02) 9735 9000
Northern Territory	(08) 8948 0994
Queensland	(07) 3870 7000
South Australia	(08) 8130 6000
Tasmania	(03) 6229 9385
Victoria	(03) 8543 9800
Western Australia	(08) 9321 2814
National Headquarters	(02) 9413 1133

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Warwick Bateman has extensive experience in the areas of Behavioural Science and Adolescent Behaviour.

Warwick's expertise and dedication to youth has been recognised in a number of ways. He was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia, named Citizen of the Year by Willoughby City; named a Paul Harris Fellow and then a Sapphire Paul Harris Fellow by Rotary International and he holds the Scouts Association Medal of Merit and Bar.

He represented Australia at the Commonwealth Secretariat Workshops, in New Guinea, where the focus was helping young people develop in emerging nations.

Warwick has spent over 17 years as a Consultant to the Church of England Home Mission Society, Court Chaplains Department. He provided psychotherapy support to those passing through the court system. In addition, he served as the Consultant to the Charlton Homes for Boys and a member of their management committee.

For over 25 years, Warwick has been involved in the structure and conduct of the Rotary Youth Leadership Award Seminars for youth leaders aged 18 to 25 years. His expertise has been recognised by Rotary International, in his appointment to an International Rotary Committee that looks at leadership seminars throughout the Rotary world.

Warwick has been a member of the Scout Movement since he was a Cub. He has served for 39 years as a Leader and is currently Branch Commissioner in NSW.



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