

# ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

### Teach your child:

- > Family password – in case someone is sent to pick up child
- > Create a list of five trusted adults to call about any problem
- > Buddy system – safer and more fun to stay with a friend
- > Online safety
- > It’s not okay to keep secrets from a parent
- > Correct, age-appropriate information about sex

### Challenges at this age:

Children will begin learning about sex from their peers, so it is important to give them proper understanding early on. Books may be used to help begin conversations, but it should not replace discussions. Approach the topic with concrete explanations and use proper terms. As uncomfortable as it may be, providing correct information will help them understand that they should go to their parents with their questions about sex instead of the kids on the school bus.

**Tell your children that they can tell you anything or ask about anything and you will still love them.**

### Conversation Starter:

“What do you do on the playground? Can you think of something that might happen there that would make your uh-oh feeling go off? How about if older kids showed up and started playing a game that doesn’t feel right?”

# MIDDLE SCHOOL / JUNIOR HIGH

### Teach your child:

- > Don’t put personal or emotional information online
- > Difference between a mentor vs. relationship
- > Cell phone (texting) guidelines – think before you send
- > Responsibilities and rules for being home alone
- > Respect is a basic right in all relationships

### Challenges at this age:

With the physical and emotional changes your child faces at this age, many conflicts may arise. This is the age where perpetrators attempt to use the attention and affection lure both online and in person. This lure involves the adult grooming the pre-teen to believe that the adult is the only one who understands how special they are and what they are going through. Teach your pre-teen about this lure and explain that adults who really do care about them would not accept or expect sex.

Talk to your child about the difference between mentors and adults trying to create a sexual relationship. If a mentor ever begins to act in a way that a significant other would, talk to a different trusted adult right away.

**This is a very important age to update and maintain the list of five trusted adults so that your pre-teen is hearing positive messages from adults that you both trust. Be aware of who’s on the list, and be understanding and supportive if the list does not include you.**

### Have the conversation:

Sex becomes a hot topic at this age. It is important to discuss the emotional implications of sexual activity, as most of the media messages may portray sex only in a popular, positive way. As children age through this stage they should learn about precautions such as abstinence and protection (for older teens).

**This is a good time to discuss more in depth your family’s personal or faith-based beliefs regarding sexual activity.**

Parents should discuss self-esteem linked with sexual activity, especially in terms of having control over one’s body and not letting peer pressure influence bad decisions.

### Conversation Starter:

“What if you had a friend who told you that an adult chaperone from a school trip was pressuring her to spend time at his house alone? How could you help her?”

# WE ARE DEFENDERS OF POTENTIAL

## HIGH SCHOOL

### Teach your child:

- > Review cell phone and internet expectations
- > The importance of respecting others' boundaries
- > Listen to your gut instinct – leave situations or people that feel wrong
- > The power of the bystander to get involved and help others
- > “No” is a complete sentence

### Challenges at this age:

Teenagers push limits as they work to get enough information to live and work independently from their parents. Parents are working to help stay connected to their teen, set boundaries and help their teen make safe and healthy decisions.

These two very separate job descriptions can create conflict as the teen and parents attempt to navigate the changes that come with teens' added freedom and responsibilities.

### ***Remind them the importance of listening to their gut.***

Source: <http://www.gundersenhealth.org/ncptc/jacob-wetterling-resource-center/keep-kids-safe/personal-safety/age-appropriate-conversations/>

### Have the conversation:

A teen should be reminded that sexual activity should not be done out of fear, guilt or in hopes of increasing popularity. Discuss with your teen their choices, their friend's choices and the outcomes of these choices.

***Having a discussion about sex and consequences does not mean that parents are encouraging their child to have sex, instead they are preparing that teen to be healthy and safe whatever his/her choices may be.***

This is an age where peer pressure can override the teen's gut instinct.

### Conversation Starter:

*“What if you showed up at a party and your gut instinct told you things were getting out of control?”*

## PERSONAL SAFETY AGE-APPROPRIATE CONVERSATIONS



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