

TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT OFFENDERS

Because offenders get their power through secrecy, the single most effective means of protecting your child is communication with your child. They have to feel comfortable discussing sensitive matters with you. If they feel they can talk with you about their true feelings and that they will not be “put down” for it, then they will be more likely to tell you when they are put in an uncomfortable situation by a child molester. Also, children need to know that there are many adults who can help if they have a problem.

For a list of free child safety pamphlets, call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, toll free (800-843-5678) and the Jacob Wetterling Foundation, toll free (800-325-HOPE), or call your local sexual assault program, victim services agency, or social services agency.

NOW THAT I KNOW THAT A SEX OFFENDER LIVES IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD, WHAT SHOULD I DO DIFFERENTLY TO PROTECT MY FAMILY AND MYSELF?

Open communication between parents and children are vital components of family safety. Talk to your children. Explain in general terms that this person has hurt someone before and that children should stay away from this individual. Review safety tips. Be aware of common lures. Remember, the purpose behind community notification is to reduce the chances of further victimization of persons by this offender. The information gained through notification should assist you and your family in avoiding situations that allow for easy access to victims. *Don't harass your neighbor...an offender put in a stressful state is more likely to relapse.* We all win with fewer victims!

WHAT DO I TELL MY KIDS ABOUT OFFENDERS?

Avoid scary details. You may know more than your children need to know. Keep information general, as it may protect them from others who would try to harm them as well. Explain the importance of avoiding dangerous situations in general rather than trying to teach them how to be safe from just the one person you know about.

Some basics about offenders:

DON'T accept rides from offenders

DON'T go into the home or yard of offenders

TELL your parents if offenders offer you toys, money, or gifts

TRY to use the buddy system when kids play outdoors

CALL 911 if your parents aren't home and an offender approaches you

ARE YOU GOING TO TELL US IF THE OFFENDER MOVES OUT OF THIS NEIGHBORHOOD SO WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ANYMORE?

No. The information shared about sex offenders is basic safety information that we should all be aware of. There are sex offenders in this and every community. It would serve no purpose to have people relax, or not follow safety measures because the one they know about moved from the neighborhood.