

This resource is one of many available to you through the *Second Step* Child Protection Unit, a comprehensive school-based child protection program, which includes staff training, student lessons, and family resources. Access additional free resources on child sexual abuse prevention for parents at earlyopenoften.org.

Responding to Disclosure

Do	Don't
Respond calmly and matter-of-factly.	Don't show disgust or alarm.
Believe the child.	Don't imply a child is lying. It's very rare that a child lies about abuse.
Encourage the child to talk by saying, "Tell me more." Write down the exact words the child uses.	Don't ask the child for a lot of detail or ask leading questions.
Tell the child that it is not his or her fault.	Never suggest the child is to blame.
Focus the discussion on the child's needs.	Don't make judgments about the abuser or suggest consequences the person may face, such as going to jail.
Reassure the child what will happen next to make sure he or she is safe. Inform him or her about the process in an age-appropriate way.	Don't scare the child, but don't make promises that things will "be fine."
Respect the child's need for privacy about what's happening.	Don't tell anyone who doesn't need to know.
Consult with child protective services about whether to talk to a parent and whether or not to send the child home.	Don't make a decision on your own about whether it's okay to send the child home. Don't take the child home with you!