

Books to Help Parents Talk About and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse

Research suggests that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 20 boys report experiencing childhood sexual abuse before the age of 18.¹ The safety of children should be the number one priority for every parent and educator. For Child Abuse Prevention Month, we are encouraging all parents to talk with their child and help them look for the signs of sexual abuse, not be afraid to report it, and, most importantly, not feel ashamed. This is not a sexual conversation—this is a safety conversation. Below is a list of books we recommend which provide valuable information for keeping your kids safe.

Books for Families About Child Safety

The Safe Child Book: A Commonsense Approach to Protecting Children and Teaching Children to Protect Themselves

by Sherryll Kerns Kraizer (1996)

This book offers positive, concrete guidance about personal safety tools families can use and teach to children and also helps caregivers practice personal safety skills with their children by using a variety of “What if” questions. It has chapters on abuse, bullying, staying safe online, and choosing childcare providers.

Out of Harm’s Way: A Parent’s Guide to Protecting Young Children from Sexual Abuse

by Sandy K. Wurtele (2010)

This booklet is an excellent starting place for any parent or caregiver looking for information about how to prevent child sexual abuse. In 30 clear, easy-to-read pages, this guide teaches readers how to recognize potential

¹ Finkelhor, D., Shattuck, A., Turner, H. A., & Hamby, S. L. (2014). The lifetime prevalence of child sexual abuse and sexual assault assessed in late adolescence. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 55*(3), 329–333. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.12.026>

abusers, help keep children safe from abuse, and how to talk about sexuality and body safety with young children.

Off Limits: A Parent's Guide to Keeping Kids Safe from Sexual Abuse

by Sandy K. Wurtele and Feather Berkower (2010)

This easy-to-read, understandable, and practical book breaks down into 32 safety tips how parents, communities, and children themselves can prevent child sexual abuse. These tips are useful for parents of young children through to teenagers, and simple scripts are provided to help parents talk with children and teenagers about this sensitive topic.

Trauma-Proofing Your Kids: A Parents' Guide for Instilling Confidence, Joy, and Resilience

by Peter A. Levine and Maggie Kline (2008)

The authors explore in ordinary, jargon-free language how trauma of all types—from being in a fender-bender to severe sexual abuse—can affect children. They also discuss children's remarkable resiliency in the face of such adverse experiences and help families and caregivers understand how to build resiliency in children and how to restore it in children who have suffered a traumatic experience.

Books for Children Recovering from Trauma

Please Tell!

by Jessie (1991)

Please Tell! is written and illustrated by a nine-year-old who shares her own experience of being sexually abused by her uncle and her journey to recover from the experience. This book is appropriate to read with children who have suffered sexual abuse to help them recover from trauma.

Available in Spanish: *Por Favor, Di!*

A Terrible Thing Happened

by Margaret M. Holmes, illustrated by Carty Pillo (2000)

Using large, colorful illustrations and a simple, clear story, *A Terrible Thing Happened* explores what happens to a child who experiences a traumatic event. It acknowledges the many different responses young children can have to experiencing trauma and encourages children to find an adult they feel comfortable sharing their experiences with in order to begin the healing process.

Books for Adults Supporting Children Recovering from Trauma

When Your Child Has Been Molested: A Parent's Guide to Healing and Recovery

by Katheryn B. Hagans and Joyce Case (2004)

This book offers information, comfort, and advice to families experiencing the trauma of child sexual abuse. Using everyday language and modern research, this book explains both the effects of child sexual abuse and what families can do to heal.

Children Changed by Trauma

by Debra Whiting Alexander, PhD (1999)

Dr. Alexander uses the real experiences of children who have suffered a wide range of traumatic experiences to illustrate in clear, understandable language both how children respond to traumatic experiences and how adults can help support children through compassion and understanding. This book offers practical, intelligent advice to parents, friends, relatives, and educators for helping children who have experienced traumatic events.

Healing the Harm Done/Recuperarse Del Daño: A Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child Overcome the Effects of Sexual Abuse

by Jennifer Y. Levy, PhD (2005)

Written in both English and Spanish, this book offers clear, concise advice for how parents and caregivers can help children recover from sexual abuse. In just 35 pages, Dr. Levy offers practical, real-world suggestions for how

families can respond to children's behavior in a positive, healthy way and help children work through the terrible trauma they have suffered.

Helping Your Child Recover from Sexual Abuse

by Caren Adams and Jennifer Fay (1998)

This is a practical guide for parents of a child who has suffered sexual abuse. It discusses each stage of a child's recovery and includes sample conversations and activities for parents and children.