

## HOW DO I TALK TO MY CHILD ABOUT THE REALITIES?

Talking to your child about sexual abuse is an uncomfortable discussion. We want to empower them with tools, not make them fearful of strangers, "kinda-knows", and people they do know. First, it is essential to define a stranger as someone they do NOT know. Strangers can look like anyone. Kinda-knows are people your child has met a few times, but does not really know or interact with. Kinda-knows can be people at the grocery store, school personnel, coaches of other teams, etc. People the children know are just that – people they know.

We all teach our children about strangers, so now our challenge is to teach them that sometimes people they know (or kinda know) may want to hurt them. It is important to teach children about trusting their instincts when someone makes them feel uncomfortable or confused. We call this the "uh-oh" feeling. Children should be taught to trust that feeling and tell one of their identified trusted adults. Most children know instinctively when something does not feel right. This feeling arises when asked to do something they do not want to do, or when asked to do something sexual, or even when asked to keep a secret they may know is "bad". Continually identifying situations in which your child may have the "uh-oh" feeling increases the likelihood of their disclosing a hurtful or confusing situation.

Trust your instincts when you feel something inappropriate has happened with your child. Predators are masters at deception; deceiving the families and deceiving the children. Know the signs of predator behavior and predator grooming. Sometimes it may feel judgmental, but the harsh reality is that it is better to keep your children protected than to risk them being abused by someone because you feel "bad" about questioning their motives with your child. Predators more often are charming, friendly, helpful members of the community, blinding us with their "kindness".

## DO'S AND DONT'S OF TALKING TO YOUR CHILD:

**DO** talk to your children about their private parts and that their body belongs to **THEM**.

**DO** believe your child when they tell you something has happened to them.

**DO** ask "Has something happened to you that you want to tell me about?" Ask open ended questions, such as, "Tell me more about what happened....?"

**DO** have conversations about appropriate touching. Remember that sometimes touching feels good to a child so it can be confusing if you ask them about a "good" touch or a "bad" touch.

**DON'T** suggest that something may have happened to them if you suspect abuse. Asking questions such as, "Did Mr. Jones touch you?" is leading and can lead to false disclosures.

**DON'T** judge your child for their disclosure. It is NEVER their fault.

**DON'T** be afraid to consult with professionals if you are suspicious of someone possibly grooming your child.

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Summit County Sheriff's Office:(435) 615 –3500

Park City Police Department:(435) 615 –5500

Department of Child and Family Services:  
(855)-323-3237

Summit County Attorney's Office, Criminal Division:  
Christina Sally investigator, (435) 615–3828

For more information or to schedule a presentation please contact:

Melissa McKain, Director  
Summit County Children's Justice Center  
(435) 615–3910  
mmckain@summitcounty.org

## Moving Forward....

keeping our children safe

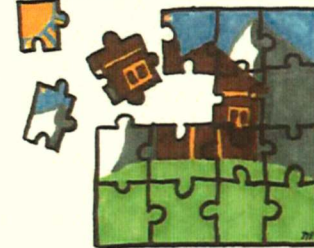


**David R. Brickey**

Summit County Attorney

Founder, Summit County Children's Justice Center

Summit County  
Children's Justice Center



Putting the pieces back together

*The mission of the Summit County Children's Justice Center is to provide a child friendly environment to interview child abuse victims, while utilizing a multi-disciplinary team approach to investigate child abuse, reduce further trauma to our victims, and to provide the necessary resources for healing.*