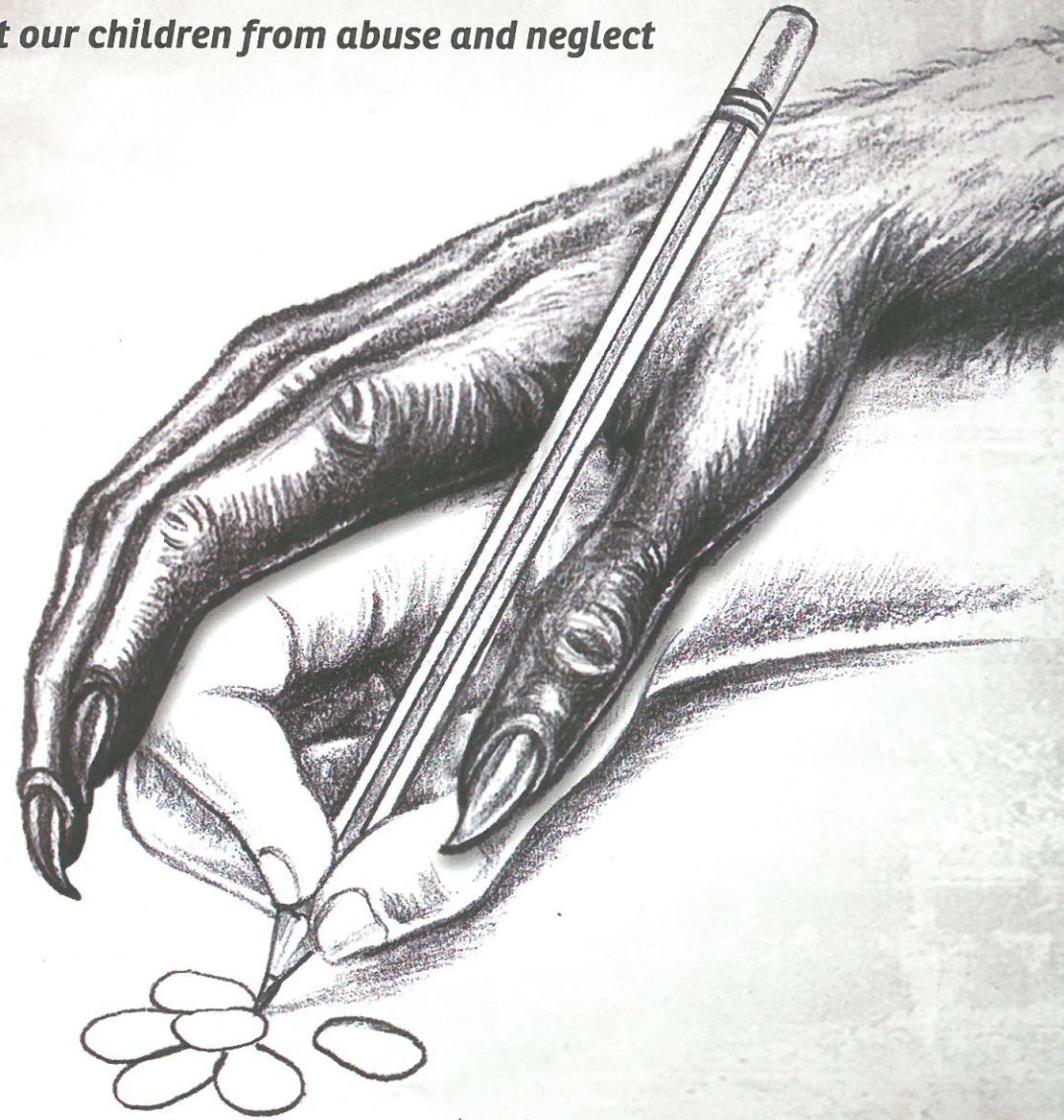
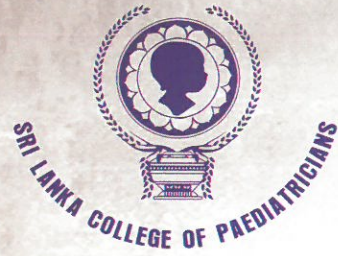
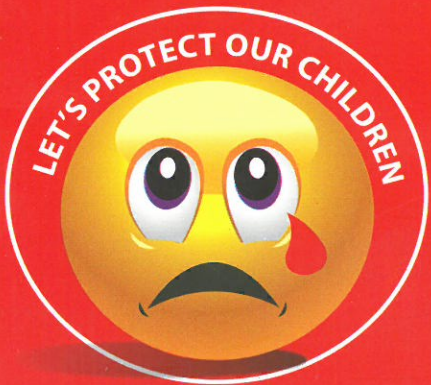




Let's protect our children from abuse and neglect



***Most child abuse is committed
by a person the child trusts. Be alert !***



Message from Bharati Airtel ...

We Sri Lankans have always prided ourselves on our sense of community. Regardless of differences in race, religion or even opinions, when it comes to strengthening our great country, we come together to do what's best for one another. What better way to make this Nation stronger than to protect our youngest citizens? By keeping them safe from harm, they'll be better able to succeed in school, establish a greater sense of self-worth, actively pursue their passions and become productive, caring adults. One person can make a call, make a difference. But it takes a collective effort to protect our children, stop child abuse and in turn, keep our motherland moving forward.

At Airtel, our values are to be **Alive**, **Inclusive** and **Respectful**. In the context of these little children, today we are taking a stand to be **Alive** to their needs and act with passion, energy and a can-do attitude to help them realize their dreams. We want them to feel **Inclusive** - Airtel is for everyone and we recognize the breadth and depth of the communities we serve. We will work with them, anticipating, adapting and delivering solutions that enrich their lives. And finally, we want them to feel **Respected** - we will share the same joys and the same pains. It is for these reasons that we focus on the prevention of child abuse and neglect, and we support families by offering parent education and skills development. We view it as critical to help children; we must also strengthen parent/child bonding, improve communications, and help parents/caregivers manage many environmental challenges. And so this booklet has been published, and a toll free hotline has been established, based on the belief that the community should share in the responsibility of responding to child abuse allegations.

We have a great responsibility as a community. We have a responsibility to use our voice whenever we believe a child is at risk. We need to not hesitate to pick up the phone and report any suspicion of abuse. You do not have the responsibility to determine if a child is being abused, we have police officers and child welfare investigators for that, you just need to be courageous enough to make the call on a child's behalf. If we expect children to use their voice and tell us what is happening, we need to use ours to help keep them safe. In my view, there is nothing more vicious and outrageous than the abuse, exploitation and harm of the most vulnerable members of our society, and I firmly believe that our nation's laws and resources need to reflect the seriousness of these terrible crimes. Child abuse and neglect is sometimes the result of a parent who reaches the end of their frustration and tolerance level. If we can give parents tools to deal with an infant who is particularly challenging with their crying, we will have taken an important step toward our prevention mandate.

It's important to talk about it. You raise awareness. But you can also prevent it (child abuse) by not letting it be a secret.

I want to leave you with one last thought: Samuel Johnson said, "Whatever enlarges hope, will also exalt courage". Thank you for taking an interest in this important work by Airtel. By supporting the cause you will join with us in enlarging a family's hope and offering courage to a child.

Suren Goonewardene
Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director
Bharti Airtel Lanka (Pvt) Ltd

Message from the President of the Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians

Children are the greatest asset of a nation. They need to be loved, nurtured and protected at all times, to achieve their full growth and developmental potential. If children are subjected to abuse and neglect they will bear long lasting physical and psychological scars. It will undermine their development and prevent them achieving their true potential.

All parents and teachers should be aware that child abuse and neglect is a problem in Sri Lanka. It is disturbing to note that newspapers have been reporting at least one case of child abuse daily in recent times. The majority of children admitted to hospital for abuse have been sexually abused. Of these the larger number are females. Unfortunately sexual abuse amongst boys is not well recognized. Studies amongst young adults reveal that more boys have been the victims of sexual abuse than girls in their childhood. In over 90 percent of cases of all forms of abuse the perpetrators were adults whom the children have known and trusted. Children from 'broken families' seem to be significantly more vulnerable. It is important for parents and teachers to be aware of these facts.

Child abuse and neglect are preventable. Having dealt with victims of abuse and neglect, Paediatricians agree that every effort must be made to prevent this problem. Once we come across these children in hospitals it is too late. The damage has already been done and the effects last a lifetime.

Children do not have the skills to protect themselves. In this backdrop it is the responsibility of all adults, especially parents and teachers, to ensure their safety and to teach them the skills they need to protect themselves.

The members of the Child Protection Committee of the Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians are unanimous in their view that expertise and energy should be utilized for a well planned prevention programme. Raising awareness, teaching children how to protect themselves, home visitation by community workers especially to at-risk families are some of the methods that have been identified.

This booklet is one arm of the entire project. We hope to increase the knowledge, skills and attitudes of parents, teachers and all responsible citizens in this country.

We are extremely grateful to Bharati Airtel for collaborating with us on this project, as part of their efforts towards corporate social responsibility.

Let us make this country a better place for children to live in.

Prof. Asvini D Fernando
President
Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians
10, August 2012

This booklet outlines the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required of responsible adults to protect children from abuse and neglect.

Sri Lanka has signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. It defines a child as a person below the age of 18 years.

Child abuse and neglect

Children may be abused by ACTS of COMMISSIONS or OMISSIONS of caretakers, leading to

- exposure to unnecessary suffering
- actual or potential damage to health and development

There are several different forms of child abuse:

Physical

Sexual

Emotional

Child Labour

Neglect

Intentional Drugging & Poisoning

Münchhausen Syndrome by Proxy

Conscription of Children to Armies



The physical and psychological scars of these types of abuse are harmful to children. These lead to problems throughout their lives.
Some short and long term effects of child abuse and neglect:

Bruises, burns, head injuries, broken bones, damage to eyes, ears and disability

Delayed development, poor school performance and hyperactivity

Pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and infertility

Poor self esteem, post traumatic stress disorder, depression & anxiety, difficulty in forming relationships, marital disharmony and suicidal ideas

Alcohol & drug abuse, feelings of shame and guilt

Becoming perpetrators of child abuse and neglect in adult life

Therefore all responsible adults should work towards ensuring the protection of children.

Physical Abuse



Physical abuse may be the result of: a deliberate attempt to hurt the child or an attempt to discipline the child.

Instilling discipline in children is very important to achieve a healthy, well balanced society. The methods used however should not make them suffer physically or mentally.

The aim of disciplining children is to teach them:

- Right from wrong
- Valuable life skills and positive behaviour
- To become resilient
- To deal with difficult situations



The best way of instilling a sense of discipline in children, is by examples set by responsible adults in day to day activities. Modelling of that adult behaviour then becomes second nature to the child.

Note:

The best way to help children to do what you want them to do is by doing those things yourself. You must try to be the sort of person you hope your child/pupil will become.

Good ways of disciplining children

- ***Penalties*** – “You can't watch TV if you don't do your homework.”
- ***Withholding rewards*** – “You will not be allowed to play cricket today as planned, because you have fought with your sister.”
- ***Rewarding good behaviour***
Complimentary words for any good behaviour - “Thank you very much for helping me to clean the house today.”
Offering to take the child somewhere he likes to go - “For the good deed done today, I will take you to the park.”
- ***Discuss about their behaviour and let them understand the consequences***
When something goes wrong, the first and best response of all is usually to sit down and talk about it. Often, open communication is all that is needed to change behaviour. Use your discussions to point out natural consequences that might occur from the misbehaviour. Children sometimes need help seeing the chain of events, and understanding why they happen.
- ***Teach children to apologise / make amends***
You should set examples by apologising when you are wrong and by making amends. Children should then be encouraged to do the same when they are wrong.

- ***For bad behaviour give them additional responsibility or work.***

"For the bad deed done you will have to help me clean the house today."

"For disrupting the class today you will have to write an essay during the interval without going out to play."

- ***Time out technique***

"As you have done a wrong deed, please sit quietly on this chair for half an hour" (The time can be varied depending on the age of the child). This often helps to calm the child down. In older children it also helps them to think about the wrong they have done.

All family members should be consistent with the messages given.

If one parent uses a disciplinary method the other parent / grandparent should not change it.

Bad ways of disciplining children

- ***Physical punishment*** - slapping, pinching, burning, biting, pulling by the ear, hitting using a cane, belt or any other object
- ***Verbal punishment*** - shaming, ridiculing, using of cruel words, saying "I don't love you", "I don't like you" and cursing
- ***Depriving of needs***
- ***Using fear tactics***
- ***Comparing with another child or sibling***
- ***Using medication / drugs***

When disciplining a child, ask yourself

What are you trying to achieve?

- Is the proposed method of disciplining proportional to the misbehaviour?
- Is the method of disciplining appropriate to the developmental age of the child?
- Is the purpose of the punishment to educate the child or to vent your anger?
- Is the child capable of understanding the relationship between his behaviour and the punishment?
- Is the punishment appropriate and within acceptable boundaries?
- Is a less severe, but equally effective, punishment available?
- Is the punishment degrading, brutal, or extended beyond the limits of what the child can handle?
- If physical force is used, will it be done carefully to avoid injury?

What should you do when you are angry with a child?

- Recognize why you are angry. Take a deep breath and then another. Then remember you are the responsible adult. Remove yourself or the child from the immediate situation. Put some physical space between yourself and the child to prevent quick reactions.
- Recognize that your child / pupil is simply a convenient target for your anger. Most of the time physical abuse is a sign of frustration.
- Empathize with the child's feelings. Close your eyes and imagine you are hearing what your child is about to hear from you. Plan a disciplining scenario in your head first.
- Think of positive things about the situation. Think about why you are angry. Think of all the good qualities the child has, well behaved situations and examples that have made you proud.
- Control your anger. Press your lips together and count to 10, or better still, to 20.

Children have suffered serious injuries to nerves leading to paralysis of arms, broken bones, head injuries and ruptured ear drums due to physical punishment in schools and homes. Deaths have also been reported. Once this happens it is too late. You, as an adult, will repent for a lifetime.

Effects of physical abuse

- Disruption of the relationship between students, parents, teachers and principals in schools
- Antisocial behaviour
- Risk of becoming a perpetrator of child abuse as an adult
- Risk of resorting to physical violence as adults and parents
- Corporal punishment is banned in schools in Sri Lanka
- Sri Lanka has signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. It emphasizes (28(2) sentence) that corporal punishments have to consider the dignity of the child

A plea to Parents and Teachers

- **Avoid physical punishment at all costs**
- **Learn about alternative and more effective methods of disciplining a child**

Alternative ways of disciplining children, which are recommended by the Ministry of Education Circular Number 2005/17, dated 11.05.2005 states:

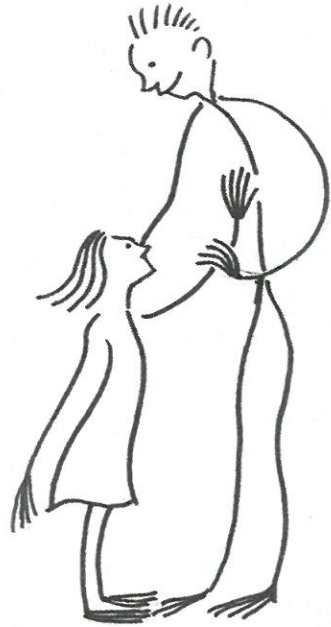
Organize curricular and extra-curricular activities in schools to prevent students engaging in bad behaviours in school, teach them about the rules and regulations prevalent in schools. Don not allow and accept wrong acts.

Be an example of good behaviour and let them learn by good adult models.

If he/she does a very wrong act, a decision regarding the punitive action to be taken should be made by a panel. The panel should include the principal. A child can be suspended for a maximum period of 2 weeks. The decision should be conveyed to the parents.

If the act is very wrong, depending on the seriousness of the act, the child can be transferred to another school, to the same grade with the approval of the Zonal / Provincial Director of Education. Every single act against the student should be recorded and kept in the school. This information should not be publicized in the school or outside the school.





Child Sexual Abuse

Child Sexual Abuse is defined as;

Involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children & adolescents in sexual activities that they do not truly understand, to which they cannot give informed consent and which violate the social taboos of family roles or are against the law.



According to Sri Lankan Law:

- The legal age for consent for sex is 16 years. Hence, it is an offence to have sexual contact in any way with a child less than 16 years of age
- The legal age of marriage for children in Sri Lanka is 18 years

Child sexual abuse is a complicated form of abuse because of issues of secrecy, guilt and shame. Most of the time children do not understand what is happening to their bodies.

Child Sexual Abuse can be divided into categories based on,

- Physical activity (touch)
- No actual physical activity (non-touch)

Touch

- Asking or pressurising a child to engage in sexual activities
- Physical contact with the child's genitals, breasts or mouth
- Actual sexual act with a child

Children should understand that safe touch is: touch that does not make the child feel uncomfortable in anyway.

Non-Touch

- Viewing of the child's genitalia without physical contact
- Indecent exposure of the adult's genitals
- Using a child to produce child pornography
- Selling sexual services of children
- Displaying pornography / pornographic videos

Child sexual abuse usually occurs at the hands of known trusted adults. Parents, close relatives, neighbours, teachers and even religious dignitaries have all been implicated. The perpetrator often tells the child that the act is a secret between them. The child is threatened that something bad will happen to the child or a family member if the incident is reported.

It is not just girls who are at risk. Boys and girls both suffer from sexual abuse. Sexual abuse of boys is often unreported as issues of loss of virginity and pregnancy are not obvious problems. However, if a male child is sexually abused they should be seen by health professionals as they need to be screened and treated for sexually transmitted diseases and psychological problems. If this is neglected the child will grow up as an adult with psychological issues and he may even turn out to be a perpetrator of child abuse in his adulthood.

If a child confides in you, take him or her seriously. DON'T TURN A BLIND EYE!



Warning signs of sexual abuse in children:

- Deterioration of school performance
- Constant complaints of headache, abdominal pain etc., that the doctor cannot really find a cause for
- Trouble in walking or sitting
- Displays knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to his or her age, and/or shows seductive behaviour
- Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason
- Doesn't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities

Why is Sexual Health Education important? It helps children to:

- Understand the changes that occur in the body at puberty
- Understand the nature of sexual activity and helps to safeguard against sexual abuse
- Protect against the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infections
- Understand and thereby reduce the incidence of adolescent pregnancies
- Understand and avoid being used for prostitution & pornography

To help children avoid being victims of abuse they need appropriate sexual health education at home and in school

An important note

The World Wide Web and Child Sexual Abuse

The wide use of the web or internet has opened up a new facet in child abuse. Internet is used to establish contact with unsuspecting children in an attempt to attract them into sexual abuse pornography and prostitution. Children must be advised not to communicate with any unknown person on the web, give their e-mail address to unknown people, exchange pictures of themselves on the net or upload pictures to various websites. Parents must monitor the contacts that the child makes while using internet facilities.





Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can severely damage a child's mental health and social development, leaving lifelong psychological scars.

- Constant belittling & blaming, shaming, routine labelling and humiliating a child
- Calling names and making negative comparisons to others
- Telling a child that he or she is 'no good', 'worthless', 'bad' or 'a mistake'
- Frequent yelling, threatening or bullying
- Inappropriate or excessive demands, eg. "You have to become the 1st in class this term"
- Ignoring or rejecting a child as punishment and withholding communication
- Limited physical contact with the child - no hugs, kisses or other signs of affection
- Exposing the child to violence or the abuse of others, whether it is the abuse of a parent, a sibling or destruction of personal belongings



Neglect

Failure to provide the child's basic needs.

Physical needs -

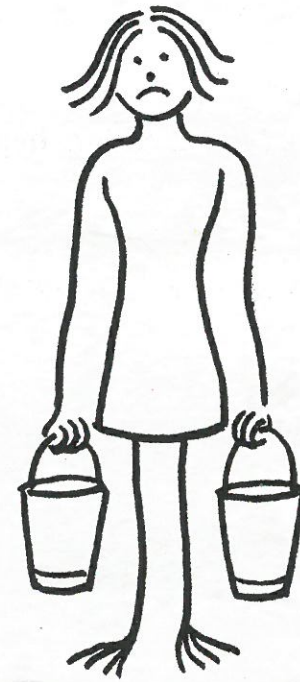
Such as food, clothing, hygiene, shelter, protection and medical care etc.

Emotional needs -

Such as affection, attention, supervision and interaction with other children etc.

This form of child abuse often goes unnoticed.

Child Labour



The following regulations are issued by the Commissioner of Labour, Sri Lanka

- Employment of a child under the age of 14 years is prohibited in Sri Lanka by statute. They can be employed only before and after school time by his / her parents for their agricultural or gardening activities
- Children under 14 years cannot be employed in domestic labour
- Children under 14 years can participate only in vocational training programs conducted by the state or recommended technical colleges
- Children under 14 years should not be allowed to participate in public performances where tickets are being sold. They may however, be allowed to participate in charitable events organized by school or drama society or where tickets are not being sold
- Children under the age of 16 years should not be engaged in performances of a dangerous nature
- Children less than 16 years of age should not be engaged in any performance endangering his/her life or limbs

It is the duty of all responsible citizens of Sri Lanka to prevent child labour.

To report about child labour please contact -
District Labour Officer / Assistant Labour Commissioner
Labour Commissioner, Women & Children Section, Labour Department, Colombo 05.
Tel: 011-2587315, 011-2369297, 011-2368539, 011-2369800, Fax: 011-2587315

What can parents do to help children protect themselves?

- They need to talk to children about their personal safety

Who is the best person to talk about personal safety to children?

- **You – The Parent** is the best person to teach the child about personal safety

What should you teach?

Effective personal safety skills

Smart thinking

How to be strong

Sticking together

That you are always there to help



When should you start?

Now - The ability to comprehend and practice safety skills is determined by age, educational and developmental levels. Therefore messages should be given at different ages in ways children can understand.

How should you act?

1. LISTEN to children

- a. Know your child's daily activities and habits
- b. Listen to what your child likes and what they do not like
- c. Encourage open discussion. Let children know they can talk to you about any situation.
Reassure children that their safety is your first and main concern

2. TEACH children

- a. To set boundaries about places they may go to, people they may see and things that they may do
- b. About the parts of their bodies
- c. That if someone is touching them in a way that feels uncomfortable or wrong to:

Refuse | Run | Report to you or any trusted adult

The 3 R's to safety



Culturally we teach children to obey and respect adults.
However, teach them that if they feel uncomfortable or that something is wrong, it is quite alright to say NO.



It's Ok to **say NO** – teach children to trust their instincts

3. Get INVOLVED

Know where children are at all times. Children should inform you if there is a change in plans. There is no substitute for your attention & supervision

4. **PRACTICE** safety skills with the child. Rehearse safety skills so that they become second nature

How can you help your child to ensure his / her safety?

Children spend their time at home, in the neighborhood, on the way to and from school or in school and private classes. It is important that you as the parent, should teach them skills to protect themselves in each of these places.

What can you do at home?

- Teach them their full name, address, home phone number and how to use the telephone
- Make sure your contact information is clearly known by the child (Office / mobile phone number)
- The child should know a trusted adult to call if they are scared or has an emergency
- Choose caregivers with caution, after obtaining references from family, friends and neighbours
- Drop in unexpectedly to see how your child is doing. Ask your child how the experience with the caregiver was and listen carefully to their responses and take action as needed

What can you do in the neighbourhood?

- Get to know your neighbours
- Make a list with your child of their neighbourhood boundaries and whose homes they are allowed to visit
- Ask them to never go anywhere with anyone without getting permission first.
Never leave your child unattended in shops, movie theatres, parks, video arcades or in an automobile
- Teach your child to be alert when they are asked for directions to houses in the neighbourhood by a stranger.
This may be a trick
- Teach your child not to get into a vehicle of an unknown person
- Teach your child not to accept food offered by an unknown person

What can you do about safe transportation to and from school?

- Check on the registration of the vehicle, safety of the vehicle, the driver's driving license and his identity
- Check whether the vehicle has been registered for transportation of children with the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA). If another person is employed to replace the driver the NCPA should be informed about him
- If you are handing over your child to a school van or bus please be vigilant about what is happening in the school van or bus. Make sure you or another responsible adult is available for handing over and taking over
- Child's safety, while transportation to and from school, is the responsibility of the driver and the person who accompanies the children
- Parents can request from the person who is providing the school van service to have a female accompanying the children, especially if the child is under the age of 5 years
- Walk the route to and from school with your child, pointing out landmarks, show acceptable routes and safe places to go if they are being followed or need help. Ask your child to avoid shortcuts or isolated areas. If children take a bus, visit the bus stop with them and make sure they know which bus to take.

What can your child do at school?

You should teach your child that the school should be a safe and happy place. They should report to you if this is not the case.

Teach your child:

- To inform you if an adult or another child touches him or her in a way that feels uncomfortable
- To inform you if someone punishes him or her by hitting
- Not to go out alone after school. This rule is not just for little kids; it should apply to teenagers too
- That if there is a change of plans after school, always check first with you or the person in charge
- That he / she should never go anywhere with anyone, without getting your permission first
- That if he / she goes home alone after school,

To check that everything is okay before going into the house. Once inside, they should call you to tell you that everything is alright

To go to a safe place to call for help if something doesn't seem right

To lock the door and not to open the door for, or talk to anyone who comes home unless that person is a trusted family friend or relative and mother or father has said it is okay

Never to tell callers that parents are not at home. Instead say that he or she cannot come to the phone and offer to take a message

- To recognize bullying by classmates or older school children and to report to you or the teacher.
There are different kinds of bullying:

Physical - Hitting, punching, pushing, shoving, kicking, inappropriate touching, making fun of him / her

Verbal - Foul language, calling bad names, tormenting, commenting negatively on looks, clothes, body

Emotional - Calling bad names, spreading malicious rumours, harassment, provocation

Sexual - Based on the child's sexuality or gender, it may be physical or non-physical

Cyber bullying - Bullying that takes place using modern communication technology, e-mail, blogs, instant messaging, text messaging, websites etc.

Other areas to be vigilant about:

- Smoking and substance abuse:

Parents should teach children that smoking and substance abuse is harmful.

Parents should inquire about friends and adults that their child associates with and their habits.



Teach children to

Be strong, smart, stand his / her ground and have the right to be safe.

Who Can Help ?

Hotline to report child abuse and neglect - 1929 (Toll free)

Police - Women & Children's Units in police stations

National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) - Tel: 011 22798911-4

