

# New Jersey Child Assault Prevention Adult Guide



***All Children Deserve to be  
Safe, Strong & Free!***

A Program of the International Center for Assault Prevention



CAP is the Child Assault Prevention project. It is a program of the International Center for Assault Prevention. Its goals are to:

- Increase the personal safety of children
- Make the prevention of family violence a community concern

## **CAP OFFERS WORKSHOPS TO**

- Children
- Parents
- Teachers, School Staff
- Community Groups

CAP workshops teach that all children deserve to be “**Safe, Strong and Free.**” Child abuse takes away those basic rights. CAP which teaches children how to protect their rights, offers specific workshops in the following curricula:

- Early Childhood  
Preschool  
Kindergarten
- Elementary
- Teen
- Special Needs
- Bullying Prevention  
Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade  
3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade



# How can I help Children to be *Safe, Strong and Free*?

1. Review with your child what she/he learned in the CAP workshops by asking the following questions:

- **What three rights did you learn?**  
*(The rights to be Safe, Strong and Free)*
- **What happens when someone tries to take these rights away?**  
*(You have a problem.)*
- **How can you protect yourself from being bullied?**  
*(Stand up for yourself, say "NO", get away, get a friend, tell a "trusted adult")*
- **What can you do to protect yourself from strangers?**  
*(Stay more than two arm lengths away. Don't give your name, address, email address or other personal information. Don't talk to them.)*
- **What can you do if someone touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable?**  
*(Say "NO", get away, find trusted adults and tell them)*
- **Who can you tell if you have a problem? Who are your "trusted adults"?** *(Parents, relatives, neighbors, school staff, etc.)*
- **What can you do if you see a friend in trouble?**  
*(Do your CAP yell, get help, tell trusted adults.)*

2. **Talk to them about their “private parts”**

Teach your child that it is okay to talk about genitals. Not naming those parts of the body conveys to children that these parts are bad and should never be mentioned. Teaching a young child words like breasts, penis, vagina and buttocks helps him or her reach a comfort level with the proper terms.

3. **Teach them their personal boundaries**

- Help children understand that their bodies belong to them.
- Teach them how to wash, dress and care for themselves.
- Respect their right to privacy.
- Give them privacy when they dress, use the toilet or wash.
- Knock on their door before entering their bedroom or bathroom.
- Respect their possessions.
- As you set an example of respect for them, they may realize that they have the right to be respected as well as the responsibility to respect others.

#### 4. Play the “What If...Game”

This game teaches children to strategize what they would do in a dangerous situation.

##### **How to start the game**

Ask the child "What would you do if..." and then let the child respond. The key is to let the child come up with ideas, and then reinforce good ideas with praise. This will build the child's self-confidence in handling dangerous situations. Below are some questions you might ask:

- What would you do if your bike broke down and a stranger offered you a ride home?
- What would you do if I were at home and the cable man came to the door to say that he wanted to fix the internet?
- What would you do if a babysitter did something to you that made you feel uncomfortable and asked you to keep it a secret?
- What would you do if someone touched you in a way that you didn't like or confused you?

Let the child come up with the answers. Encourage the child to use realistic solutions. Solutions should include getting help from a friend, telling trusted adults, saying "NO", and standing up for his/her rights.

#### 5. Learning to say “NO”

"NO" is a **Safe, Strong and Free** word. One reason children may be reluctant to say "no" to abuse is they are taught that saying "no" is impolite or disrespectful. Adults must realize there are times when saying "no" is essential to keeping children safe. Children deserve to know that saying "no" is a good way to protect themselves and keep their rights.

#### 6. Physical Activities

Encourage games and organized sports. This will help them gain a sense of physical self-confidence in case they need to protect themselves.

Discourage games in which the adult or older child says, "Hit me as hard as you can; you can't hurt me." This teaches children that they are powerless against someone bigger, which is not necessarily true.

Make sure children are respected during games. For instance, if children are tickling each other, and one asks the other to stop, make sure that the game ends.

*\*Information from No More Secrets, by Caren Adams and Jennifer Fay*

## How can I Recognize if a Child is Abused?

Sometimes children don't tell us they have a problem, they show us. A change in a child's behavior could be the result of abuse. Some of the following changes in behavior can alert adults to the possible problems.

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Abused Children Are Often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-fearful of interpersonal relationships or overly compliant</li><li>-withdrawn or aggressive, hyperactive</li><li>-constantly irritable or listless, detached</li><li>-affectionless or overly affectionate (misconstrued as seduction)</li></ul>
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Physical Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-bruises, burns, scars, welts, broken bones, continuing or unexplainable injuries</li><li>-urinary infections (particularly in young children)</li><li>-sexually transmitted diseases</li><li>-chronic ailments, stomach aches, vomiting, eating disorders</li><li>-vaginal or anal soreness, bleeding, or itching</li></ul>
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Activity and Habit Clues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-recurring nightmares</li><li>-inappropriate masturbation</li><li>-a child afraid to go home or to some other location, running away</li><li>-delinquency</li><li>-fear of being with a particular person</li><li>-lying</li><li>-fire setting</li></ul>
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Age Inappropriate Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-regression in behavior (an onset of thumb sucking or toileting accidents after being toilet trained)</li><li>-sexually active or aware</li><li>-promiscuity</li><li>-bed wetting</li><li>-alcohol/substance abuse</li><li>-older child assaulting younger children</li><li>-child takes on adult responsibilities</li></ul>
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Educational Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-extreme curiosity, imagination</li><li>-academic failure</li><li>-sleeping in class</li><li>-inability to concentrate</li><li>-sudden change in school performance</li></ul>
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Emotional Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-depression</li><li>-phobias, fear of darkness, public restrooms, etc.</li><li>-chronic ailments</li><li>-self-inflicted injuries</li><li>-injuring/killing animals</li><li>-excessively fearful</li><li>-lack of spontaneity, creativity</li></ul>
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## **How can I help an Abused Child?**

When you are faced with a child who has been assaulted, it is often difficult to know how to respond. These guidelines will help you and the child through this crisis period.

1. Always be calm. Your reaction makes a difference.
2. Believe what you are hearing. Too often, children lack credibility. Listen to the child in a non-judgmental way.
3. Deal with explicit language. A child may use explicit terms to discuss her/his experience. Be prepared. Try and use this same language also.
4. Do not avoid embarrassing subjects. Let the child know that he/she can talk about anything.
5. Do not project or assume anything. Let the child tell the story and leave your own assumptions out.
6. Assess a child's safety needs.
7. Validate the child's feelings.
8. Assure the child that he/she is not to blame.
9. Let the child know she/he has a RIGHT to be safe.
10. Let the child know what action you will take.

**It is important to know the reporting law. If a report needs to be made, be prepared to do so.**



## Reporting Child Abuse in New Jersey

The Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) is New Jersey's child protection and child welfare agency within the Department of Children and Families. (DCF)

DCP&P is responsible for investigating allegations of child abuse and neglect and, if necessary, arranging for the child's protection and providing support to the family.

The Child Abuse Hotline (State Central Registry) receives all reports of child abuse and neglect 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. Reports requiring a field response are forwarded to a DCP&P Local Office for investigation. After normal business hours, the hotline is linked with a statewide network of Special Response Units charged with the responsibility of responding to reports.

***If You Suspect Child Abuse  
Call the NJ Child Abuse Hotline:***

***1-877-NJ ABUSE (24 HRS -7 DAYS A WEEK)  
(1-877-652-2873)***

The following information would be helpful:

- Name and address of child
- Name and address of parents or caretaker
- Age and sex of child
- Nature and extent of injuries or description of abuse



## Helpful Resources

### STATEWIDE:

- Alcohol & Drug Information Hotline - 24 Hours **800-238-2333**
- Domestic Violence - Referral/Information - 24 Hours **800-572-7233**
- Parents Inc.- 24 Hours **800-843-5437**
- NJ Child Assault Prevention (CAP) **www.njcap.org** **856-374-5001**
- NJ Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline 24/7 **877-NJABUSE**
- NJ Helps-Services to assist families in NJ **www.njhelps.org**
- Women's Referral Center - 24 Hours **800-322-8092**  
*Information/Referrals on all issues relating to women*
- 2ND FLOOR– Youth Helpline [www.2ndfloor.org](http://www.2ndfloor.org) **888-222-2228**
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline **www.njhopeline.com** **800-273-8255**

### NATIONAL:

- Missing & Exploited Children - 24 hours **www.missingkids.org** **800-843-5678**
- Missing Persons Hotline - 24 Hours **800-843-5678** (1-800-THE LOST)
- Sexual Assault Hotline **www.rainn.org** **800-656-4673**

## New Jersey Child Assault Prevention (CAP)

Camden County College  
200 College Drive,  
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856-374-5001  
[www.njcap.org](http://www.njcap.org)  
[www.internationalcap.org](http://www.internationalcap.org)



*A Project of the  
New Jersey Department of Children and Families*