

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

It is crucial for every congregation to be proactive and diligent about protecting the children and youth. Protecting children is everyone's responsibility, but no one can do it better than alert and loving parents. It is therefore essential and that parents learn how to protect their own children.

Here are some guidelines that parents should know and follow:

- ***Know the people with whom your child spends time***
- ***Check references for ALL your child's caregivers, including babysitters***
- ***Be involved in your children's activities***
- ***Watch how adults interact with children***
- ***Talk to sponsors of children's activities and organizations***
- ***Notice when an individual seems to take an interest in your child: gift giving, mentoring, helping out***
- ***Remember that children are mostly molested by someone they know and trust - relative, parent/step-parent, friend, neighbor, teacher, coach, or church leader***
- ***Listen when your children say they don't want to be with someone***
- ***Believe them if they tell you that someone has hurt them or touched them, or made them feel uncomfortable***
- ***Teach your child to feel comfortable talking to you. Make it easy by not overreacting to them***
- ***Be alert to behavior changes in your child***
- ***Don't just hope everyone else is watching out for your children. YOU are their parent and protector.***

▪Be ready to act if your child has been violated. Report it to Child Protective Services and/or law enforcement no matter who the offender is!

Source Acknowledgment: Adapted from recommendations of California's Attorney General

CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM

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