

STEPS TO SAFETY

Creating a Safety NETWORK

A child's **Safety NETWORK** is made up of three or more trusted adults and peers to whom the child can tell anything. The adults in a child's Safety NETWORK must be old enough to drive a car. The peers must understand that anything told to them involving safety must be reported to a trusted adult. One person in a child's Safety NETWORK should be a person not in their family unit.

How to Help Your Child Build Their Safety NETWORK

Step 1

Make sure your child understands the importance of **trusted adults**. **Trusted adults** are adults who are old enough to drive a car and can help your child to be safe. Your child needs to know that they can tell their **trusted adults** anything and that they can expect their help. Your child also needs to understand that anything told to a peer that involves their safety will be reported to a **trusted adult**, even if they ask that peer to keep it a secret.

Step 2

Make sure your child includes one **trusted adult** outside of their family unit. Ninety percent of the time children are abused, it is at the hands of someone within the family, or is someone the family knows and trusts. A **trusted adult** who is outside of that group is an important part of your child's **Safety NETWORK**. Provide your child with some possibilities of **trusted adults** who are not in their family, like a teacher, pastor, parent of a friend, coach, or scout leader.

Step 3

Help your child understand that an **Unsafe Touch** or an **Unsafe Secret** should ALWAYS be shared with a **trusted adult** in their **Safety NETWORK** and that your child needs to keep telling until they get the two H's: HEARD and HELPED.

Step 4

Encourage your child to never give up when trying to tell and receive help with an **Unsafe Touch** or **Unsafe Secret** that is happening to them or to a friend. If they are not heard and immediately helped, they must tell another person in their **Safety NETWORK**.

Step 5

Members of your child's **Safety NETWORK** need to understand that in the state of Florida, everyone is a mandatory reporter of suspected child abuse. That means that knowing about or suspecting that a child is in an unsafe situation requires the abuse or suspected abuse be reported to authorities, and failure to report can result in criminal charges. To learn more about signs of abuse and how to make a report, visit www.DontMisstheSigns.org.

Step 6

Help your child complete the "**Trusted Adults in My Safety NETWORK**" letters. After your child has completed the letters, mail them to the trusted adults in their Safety NETWORK so your child will know that these adults will help them, and these adults will understand the special and unique role they play in your child's life.