

# STEPS TO SAFETY

## Creating a Trusted Triangle of Grown-Up Buddies

A child's **Trusted Triangle** is made up of three or more trusted adults or **Grown-Up Buddies** who are old enough to drive and to whom the child can tell anything. One person in a child's Trusted Triangle should be a person not in their family unit.

### How to Help Your Child Build Their Trusted Triangle

#### Step 1

Make sure your child understands the importance of the **Grown-Up Buddies**. Grown-Up Buddies 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 Grown-Up Buddies anything and that they can expect their help.

#### Step 2

Make sure your child includes one Grown-Up Buddy outside of their family unit. Ninety percent of the time children are abused, it is at the hands of someone within the family or that the family knows and trusts. A Grown-Up Buddy who is outside of that group is an important part of your child's **Trusted Triangle**. Provide your child with some possibilities of Grown-Up Buddies 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 Grown-Up Buddy in their Trusted Triangle 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 Trusted Triangle.

#### Step 5

Grown-Up Buddies need to understand that in the state of Florida, everyone is a mandatory reporter of suspected child abuse. This means that anyone who knows or suspects that a child is in an unsafe situation is required to report the abuse or suspected abuse to authorities. 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](http://www.DontMisstheSigns.org).

#### Step 6

Help your child complete the Grown-Up Buddies in My Trusted Triangle Letters. After your child has completed the letters, mail them to the Grown-Up Buddies in their Trusted Triangle so that 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.

