

What Can I Tell My Children:

- Avoid scary details. You know more than your children need to know. Use language that is honest and age-appropriate (e.g. "there are people who do bad things to children"). Include general information, as this may protect them from others who would try to harm them as well. If your children are likely to have contact with an SVP or other registered sex offenders, you should show your children the sex offender's photo. In a manner that does not incite panic, instruct your children to avoid all contact with the offender, even if the offender's offense of conviction does not involve an offense against a child. Instruct them to avoid being in the vicinity of the offender's residence or workplace. All sex offenders are prohibited from contact with children, and any contact should be reported to the supervising officer. Encourage your children to tell you if the sex offender initiates contact with them. Review the public safety materials with your children and encourage your children to tell you about any contact with an offender or any other person who makes them feel uncomfortable. It is important to teach your children about appropriate and inappropriate contact and to encourage regular discussion about their interactions with other people.
- Teach your children: DON'T take rides from strangers; DON'T harass or visit any sex offender's home or yard; DO tell a safe adult if anyone acts inappropriately toward them (e.g. creepy, too friendly, threatening, offering gifts in a secret way, or touching them); DO RUN, SCREAM, and GET AWAY if someone is bothering them; DON'T keep secrets; DON'T assist strangers; DON'T go places alone; DO ask questions and DO talk about any uncomfortable feelings or interactions.
- Make it a habit to LISTEN to your children and to believe them. If a child feels listened to and believed about small everyday things, they are more likely to share the big scary things with you. Be sensitive to changes in your child's behavior. Pay attention to your child's feelings and thoughts.
- Role-play safety with your child. Act out scenarios of various dangerous situations and teach them how to respond (e.g. home alone & someone comes to the door; separated from Mom in the toy store & a man comes up to talk to them; or chatting on the Internet & they are asked for their home address).

