



Prevent Child Abuse Pennsylvania

Responds to the Penn State tragedy, 11-10-11

Where do we go from here?

Child abuse is preventable. That's the message the Advisory Board of the Pennsylvania Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America wants to share with everyone who cares about the health and well being of children. The outrage over the Penn State grand jury report is understandable and the system, however flawed it may be, will continue the process of deciding what went wrong. What we want to know is "Where do we go from here?" What can we do as parents? As neighbors? As a community?

So here's one lesson for parents — do not ever forget that the sexual abuse of children is a reality and the perpetrator really can be anyone - even someone who appears to be a fine upstanding person who cares for your child - even a family member, favorite teacher, a coach, the person you're dating or the babysitter.

Here's another lesson — it's crucial to know as much as you can about every adult spending time with your child. There is no substitute for vigilance. "Pedophiles can ingratiate themselves into the life of your child and sometimes your family, and seduce your child by meeting his or her needs. This need could be emotional, such as affection and attention from an adult male, or tangible such as gifts like video games or a skateboard. By the time sex is introduced, the child may accept sex as the price to be paid for the positive points of the relationship," said Dr. Janet Rosenzweig, consultant to Prevent Child Abuse America. Parents **MUST** talk with their children about sexuality and child abuse and make every effort to keep them safe.

What can neighbors and communities do? Say yes to your role as a protector. It is not a child's responsibility to keep him or herself safe – it is up to adults. Keep your eyes open and ears tuned in to all of the adults spending time with kids in your community, and trust your instincts if something does not seem right. If you see the dynamics of a relationship between an adult in your family or community taking a suspicious turn, open the lines of

communication with the child and watch the relationship closely. The moment you suspect a child is being abused, call ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313. You don't have to give your name. If a child tells you about abuse – believe it – and report it.

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[Prevent Child Abuse Pennsylvania](#) is committed to raising awareness that child abuse is the # 1 public health issue in the country and that prevention is possible. We want all Pennsylvanians to know the role they play in raising healthy, safe, protected children.

Prevent Child Abuse PA is a program of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) – a 501c3 non-profit organization of pediatricians dedicated to the optimal health, safety and well-being of infants, children and adolescents. The PA AAP is registered with the PA Dept of State, Bureau of Charitable Organizations.
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