

Be A Prepared Advocate

Have you ever been in a public situation and observed a potentially dangerous situation between a child and a caregiver but didn't know how to help? Don't be caught off guard again follow these tips to help prevent child abuse in your community.

Prevention Tip 1: If you see a parent having a hard time with their child, strike up a conversation with the adult to divert attention away from the child. Something like, "She has beautiful eyes," or "Children can wear you out sometimes, can't they?"

Prevention Tip 2: Encourage positive parenting by rewarding positive behavior.

Prevention Tip 3: Remember: Crying is how babies communicate. Crying is not a reflection on the skills of a parent or caregiver.

Prevention Tip 4: Reduce stress when out and about with your kids- Make up games to keep your kids occupied – count the hats on people's heads, find all the B's on store signs, or find five red items in the store.

Prevention Tip 5: If you know parents are under stress, offer them a break from their children.

Prevention Tip 6: Take time to cool down in stressful situations with kids. Take a deep breath, and another. Remember, you are the adult.

Prevention Tip 7: Reduce stress when out and about with your kids- Make your expectations of behavior clear to your child, role play if needed.

Prevention Tip 8: Keep control of yourself in tough situations. Press your lips together and count to 10. Or better yet, to 20.

Prevention Tip 9: Talk to the men in your baby's life. Male caregivers may be less familiar with infant soothing skills (and self-coping practices). Work with dad and other dad figures to encourage bonding with baby.

Prevention Tip 10: Parents need "time outs" too! Identify a family member or friend who can support you if you need a break anytime during the day or night. Write their number by your phone and call them if you need to talk.

Prevention Tip 11: Think before you speak! When caught up in a tough moment with your kids, close your eyes and imagine hearing what your child is about to hear. Be constructive with your words, not critical.