

**IF YOUR CHILD TELLS YOU HE/SHE HAS BEEN SEXUALLY ABUSED OR
SEXUALLY SOLICITED ON-LINE**

- Listen and believe your child;
- Reassure your child that you are glad he/she told you;
- Do not get angry towards your child: stay calm, keep a reassuring attitude;
- Explain to your child that he/she is not responsible for the assault, whatever the circumstances;
- Explain to your child that you will protect him/her from having other contacts with the offender;
- Don't hesitate to seek help for you and your child.

IF YOU SUSPECT SEXUAL ABUSE

- The best way to respond to a child who you suspect may have been sexually abused is to listen carefully to what the child says and to be attentive to his or her behaviour. Show your concern. Ask if anything is the matter. But do not press for an answer. Let the child know that you are ready to listen at any time.
- Some parents may wonder if their child could have been sexually abused because they display certain sexual behaviors, inappropriate for their age. Not all sexual behaviors in children are signs of sexual abuse. It is difficult to know when these behaviors stop being normal. If you are worried about certain sexual behaviors displayed by your child you can consult a professional.

FOR HELP, CONTACT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES:

- A counsellor at the CLSC Pierrefonds (514) 626-2572
- The Department of Youth Protection (514) 935-6196
- The MUC Police
- www.cybertip.ca
- www.internet101.ca

Centre de santé et de services sociaux
de l'Ouest-de-l'Île
West Island
Health and Social Services Centre

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION
School Health Program

Dear parents of Grade 3 students:

A sexual abuse prevention program will be presented to your child during the coming weeks. This program "**Feeling yes, Feeling no**" was produced by the National Film Board of Canada and has been largely used and appreciated across Canada since 1984. This program, presented in class by the school nurse with the support of the teacher, will assist your child in:

- ♦ Recognizing a sexual abuse situation, as well as sexual exploitation of children on the Internet;
- ♦ Knowing how to react and assert him/herself when confronted with uncomfortable touching or situations;
- ♦ Knowing to whom he or she can confide and where to find help if needed.

Parents play a major role in helping their children to protect themselves against sexual abuse, and sexual solicitation on-line. We invite you to discuss this subject with your child. Parents do not always know what or how much to tell their children. **To assist you, useful information to "Help Protect your child" is found in this brochure.**



HELP PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

The more children know about sexual abuse and abusers, the better able they will be to protect themselves and the more likely they will be able to tell their parents what is happening to them. Also, studies show that **in more than 80% of the cases the offender is someone known to the child: a parent, relative, friend of the family, neighbour or baby-sitter.** Most offenders are male: adult or teenager. Furthermore, statistics also report that 1 in 5 children are sexually solicited or approached over the Internet in a one year period of time.

In the case of a **known aggressor**, the abuse usually occurs in the child's natural, familiar surroundings. The sexual aggressor will take advantage of the relationship of authority and trust to engage in secret sexual games. In this type of sexual exploitation this trusting relationship makes him/her more vulnerable to the aggressor's tricks and manipulation.

In the case of a **stranger** there is an absence of this trusting relationship between aggressor and victim. Threats and physical violence are more likely to be used in this situation, along with other lures, in order to exploit the child.

In the case of a **cyber child sex offender**, the abuser uses luring techniques such as befriending through chat rooms or instant messaging discussions, and e-mail to form a trusting relationship with the child in the hope to set up a meeting with the child.

IDEAS TO HELP YOUR CHILD

- Teach your child the proper names of the parts of their body that are private, as part of their ongoing basic sexual education.
- Bring up the subject of sexual abuse with your child by questioning him/her about the prevention program received at school. Ask him/her what was learned.
- Play the "What If" games that will help your child know how to react in new situations. Go over the different lures used:
 - ✓ "My puppy is lost. Can you help me look for him?"
 - ✓ "I am a detective and I saw what you just did, come with me!"
 - ✓ "Your mother was in a car accident. She asked me to come and get you".
 - ✓ You see a disturbing image "pop up" on the computer.
- Teach your children to only go with strangers who know your **FAMILY PASSWORD**.
- Monitor your child's activities on-line. Review their contact lists (e-mail, MSN) if using. These programs are strongly discouraged for this age group.
- Place the computer in a central location in the home where your child will have access to a parent while using the computer.
- Help your child identify the adults who he/she can trust and could confide in.

WHAT TO TELL YOUR CHILD

- Your body and your feelings are your own;
- You are allowed to say **NO** to anyone (a friend, neighbour, stranger, family member) who wants to touch your private parts or who wants you to touch their private parts, or who makes you feel uncomfortable;
- You can like someone and **not** like the way he/she touches you;
- If someone wants to touch your private parts, come and tell me, or tell someone, in order to stop this from happening;
- Some secrets are fun (like a surprise party) but if anyone threatens you, or gives you a gift to keep a secret you **must** tell someone you trust.
- If you see a disturbing image "pop up" on the computer, **close** the site immediately and come and tell me, or tell someone you trust.
- **Don't** talk to strangers on-line. The Internet is not a place to start a friendship.
- **Never** agree to meet someone that you have met on-line.