



Recognize, **RESPOND** & Report
CHILD ABUSE RESOURCE
PACKET



**Arkansas Child
Abuse Hotline:
1-844-SAVE-A-CHILD**

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If you suspect a child is being abused, call the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline immediately. **1-844-SAVE-A-CHILD**

Dual report to local law enforcement. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

For more training opportunities, please check out our website:
<https://cfacbentonco.com/training-opportunities/>

Dynamics of Child Abuse

If we see or hear something that doesn't feel right, we must act on that suspicion of abuse and report it. A majority of children will never disclose their abuse in childhood. Making a report to the child abuse hotline is giving the child an opportunity to tell their story, a chance at hope and healing, and a way to end the cycle of abuse. Abuse only ends with intervention and the power of intervention lies with you.

Children may withhold information because they:

Are afraid they will get in trouble or upset their family	Want to deflect blame	Feel ashamed/ guilty	Don't want to relive traumatic events
Feel they will not be taken seriously	Feel embarrassed to talk to an adult	Lack trust in the people around them	Fear consequences
Worry they will make the situation worse	Were told to keep the abuse a secret	Received blackmail/ threats	Are afraid no one will believe them

It's important to remember that disclosing abuse is a process, not an event. Children are more likely to deny the abuse ever occurred than they are to make up allegations. When children disclose abuse, nearly eighty percent will only share bits and pieces of what happened. It's common for children to not share everything at once as they may come forward with more information over time. The dynamics of abuse, a child's individual coping mechanism, and the impact of trauma are all factors in a child's disclosure.

Disclosure can look and sound differently:

Direct	Indirectly	Behaviorally	Non-verbally
Making specific verbal statements about what's happened to them	Making ambiguous verbal statements which suggests something is wrong	Displaying behavior that signals something is wrong (may or may not be deliberate)	Writing letters, drawing pictures or trying to communicate in other ways

Rights and Responsibilities of a Mandated Reporter

As a mandated reporter, it will be your responsibility to identify and recognize signs that a child may be experiencing abuse and/or neglect. We should never put the responsibility on the child to come forward and only rely on a disclosure to make a report.

Reporting suspected abuse also applies to any child-on-child maltreatment. This allows investigators the opportunity to explore the learned behavior, which in many cases, will lead them to an unsafe adult as the source of abuse.

Civil investigators, such as Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Crimes Against Children Division (CACD), are not allowed to disclose the name of the reporter. Your name is protected.

Making a hotline report does not make it worse for the family. You are providing them an opportunity to tell their story if abuse is happening. It is much worse to stay silent and allow a child to continue living a life of abuse and/or neglect.

§12-18-402 Mandated Reporters

(a) An individual listed as a mandated reporter under subsection (b) of this section shall *immediately* notify the Child Abuse Hotline if he or she:

- (1) Has **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child has:
 - (A) Been subjected to child maltreatment; or
 - (B) Died as a result of child maltreatment; or
- (2) Observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in child maltreatment.

(b) The following individuals are mandated reporters under this chapter (listed on facing page)

(c) (1) A privilege or contract shall not prevent a person from reporting child maltreatment when he or she is a mandated reporter and required to report under this section.

(2) An employer or supervisor of an employee identified as a mandated reporter shall not prohibit an employee or a volunteer from directly reporting child maltreatment to the Child Abuse Hotline.

(3) An employer or supervisor of an employee identified as a mandated reporter shall not require an employee or a volunteer to obtain permission or notify any person, including an employee or a supervisor, before reporting child maltreatment to the Child Abuse Hotline.

(d) A mandated reporter who in good faith notifies the Child Abuse Hotline in accordance with subsection (a) of this section is immune from civil and criminal liability.

Updated: July 2020

- A child care worker or foster care worker;
- A coroner;
- A day care center worker;
- A dentist;
- A dental hygienist;
- A domestic abuse advocate;
- A domestic violence shelter employee;
- A domestic violence shelter volunteer;
- An employee of the Department of Human Services;
- An employee working under contract, or a contractor of, the Department of Human Services when acting within the scope of his or her contract or employment;
- A foster parent;
- A judge;
- A law enforcement official;
- A licensed nurse;
- Medical personnel who may be engaged in the admission, examination, care, or treatment of persons;
- A mental health professional or paraprofessional;
- An osteopath;
- A peace officer;
- A physician;
- A prosecuting attorney;
- A resident intern;
- A public or private school counselor;
- A school official, including without limitation institutions of higher education;
- A social worker;
- A surgeon;
- A teacher;
- A court-appointed special advocate program staff member or volunteer;
- A juvenile intake or probation officer;
- A clergy member, which includes a minister, priest, rabbi, accredited Christian Science practitioner, or other similar functionary of a religious organization, or an individual reasonably believed to be so by the person consulting him or her, except to the extent of the clergy member: (A) has acquired knowledge of suspected child maltreatment through communications required to be kept confidential pursuant to the religious discipline of the relevant domination or faith; or (B) received knowledge of the suspected child maltreatment from the alleged offender in the context of a statement of admission;
- An employee of a child advocacy center or a child safety center;
- An attorney ad litem in the course of his or her duties as an attorney ad litem;
- A sexual abuse advocate or sexual abuse volunteer who works with a victim of sexual abuse as an employee of a community-based victim service or mental health agency such as Safe Places, United Family Services, Inc., or Centers of Youth and Families;
- A sexual abuse advocate or sexual abuse volunteer includes a paid or volunteer sexual abuse advocate who is based with a local law enforcement agency;
- A rape crisis advocate or rape crisis volunteer;
- A child abuse advocate or child abuse volunteer who work with a child victim of abuse or maltreatment as an employee of a community-based victim service or a mental health agency such as Safe Places, United Family Services, Inc., or Centers for Youth and Families;
- A child abuse advocate or child abuse volunteer includes a paid or volunteer sexual abuse advocate who is based with a local law enforcement agency;
- A victim/witness coordinator;
- A victim assistance professional or victim assistance volunteer;
- An employee of the Crimes Against Children Division of the Division of Arkansas State Police;
- An employee of a reproductive healthcare facility;
- A volunteer at a reproductive healthcare facility;
- An individual not otherwise identified in this subsection who is engaged in performing his or her employment duties with a nonprofit charitable organization other than a nonprofit hospital; and
- A Child Welfare Ombudsman.
- A coach or director of a public or private athletic organization, team, or club
- A coach or director of a public or private nonathletic organization, team, or club
- A person who is at least twenty-one (21) years of age and volunteers in a public school or private school
- A Licensed massage therapist
- A person who is 18 years of age or older and observes abuse, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of a child, regardless of the person's occupation.

Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect

What is child abuse and neglect?

Abuse is defined as any willful act or threatened act that results in any physical, mental, or sexual injury or harm that causes or is likely to cause the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired. Abuse of a child includes acts or omissions. Corporal discipline of a child by a parent or legal custodian for disciplinary purposes does not in itself constitute abuse when it does not result in harm to the child. Neglect occurs when a child is deprived of, or is allowed to be deprived of, necessary food, clothing, shelter, or medical treatment or a child is permitted to live in an environment when such deprivation or environment causes the child's physical, mental, or emotional health to be significantly impaired or to be in danger of being significantly impaired.

	PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS
PHYSICAL ABUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple and/or unexplained bruises in different stages of healing Welts, human bite marks, bald spots Burns that cannot be explained Unexplained fractures or other injuries Untreated injuries & medical needs Wears clothes not suited to the weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nervouse, withdrawn, clingy, and/or tries to please caregiver Hostile, aggressive, violent, and/or self-destructive behaviors Complaints of soreness/injuries Explanation of injuries does not make sense Fearful of parent, going home, or adult contact Shows little or no emotion when hurt Excessive absences
SEXUAL ABUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Torn, stained or bloody undergarments Genital pain, swelling or itching Difficulty walking or sitting Bruises or bleeding in genital or anal area Sexually transmitted diseases Frequent urinary tract or yeast infections Pain when urinating or passing stool Unexplained abdominal pain Vaginal or penile discharge Physical Indicators present less than 10% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Withdrawn, depressed, and/or threatened by physical contact Premature knowledge of sex Seductive behavior Sexual acting out, excessive masturbation Low self-esteem, lack of confidence Sudden changes in weight Change or decrease in school performance Uncontrolled emotions, secrecy about feelings Anxiety, sleep difficulties, nightmares, and/or other fears Regressed behaviors (speech, bedwetting) Adolescent: self-mutilation, eating disorders, promiscuity

Signs of child abuse and neglect

The warning signs of child abuse and neglect vary from child to child. Children have different ways of coping with abuse, and the signs often depend on each child's characteristics and environment. Parents, guardians, teachers, professionals, and bystanders all have the responsibility to keep children safe. One way to do that is by observing the behaviors and interactions of children at home, at school, and with their friends. Please keep in mind the following warning signs and possible indications of abuse in order to help keep children safe. In reviewing the signs of abuse, it is important to also keep in mind that signs are not limited to one type of child abuse or neglect, and sometimes, different types of abuse and/or neglect occur in combination. It is important to remember the presence of these indications does not prove abuse is occurring, but rather MIGHT indicate abuse is occurring.

Source for pages 6 & 7:



MONIQUE BURR
FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN
PREVENTION EDUCATION PROGRAMS

	PHYSICAL INDICATORS	BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS
EMOTIONAL ABUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delayed physical or cognitive development Speech problems Habit disorders (sucking, rocking, biting) Eating disorders, ulcers Sleep disorders Hair loss Failure to thrive in infants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demanding, needy, attention-seeking or overly compliant Extreme temper tantrums, oppositional and/or destructive Delinquent or criminal activity Unfriendly, distant, poor peer-relations Low self esteem, depressed, suicidal Anxiety disorders
NEGLECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abandonment by parent/guardian Lack of adult supervision Untreated lice, other medical or dental needs Poor hygiene - constantly dirty Constantly hungry, underweight Failure to thrive in infants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constantly tired, sleep disorders Steals or begs for food Excessive absenteeism/tardiness Extremely needy, rejected, isolated Poor social and/or communication skills Conduct disorders Delayed growth or motor development, learning disabilities

Recognizing & Reporting Child Abuse/Neglect

Risk factors for abuse and neglect

Being aware of potential risk factors can help with both the identification and prevention of abuse.

Child

- Special needs
- Gifted
- Premature
- Infant with feeding difficulties
- Colicky
- Hyperactive
- Unwanted or wrong sex
- Difficult conception or birth
- Medically fragile
- Demanding/needy/clingy
- Previous victim of abuse or other trauma/maltreatment

Parent or Caregiver/Family

- Substance abuse/mental illness/depression
- Family disorganization or chaos/domestic violence
- Family isolation
- Poor parenting skills
- Adolescent or single parent
- Parental low self-esteem
- Parental expectations are inappropriate for child
- Increased stressors (poverty, job/housing issues)
- Low income
- Family history of abuse
- Provides inadequate supervision/abandons child
- Belittles child or uses harsh or corporal punishment

Environment

- Corporal punishment accepted
- Lack of family support
- Lack of resources
- Denial of abuse
- Legislative policies not supportive of families
- Poor response by criminal justice system

Disclosure and reporting abuse and neglect

Every citizen, whether a mandatory reporter or not, should report suspected abuse. If you suspect any child is being abused, please call the Hotline for your state or area. You DO NOT NEED PROOF that a child has been abused or neglected to make a report, only reasonable suspicion. The authorities will determine if abuse or neglect is occurring. For a list of state reporting hotlines visit: https://www.childwelfare.gov/organizations/?CWIGFunctionsaction=rolsmain.dsoROL&rolType=custom&rs_id=5



If a child discloses abuse or neglect

DO

- Recognize that hints may be the start of a disclosure (children often test you before disclosing abuse)
- Use open-ended, reflective questions – who, what, where, when, how
- Tell the child you believe them
- Remain calm and supportive
- Listen and allow the child to tell you what happened in their own words
- Tell the child that you are glad they told you
- Tell the child “It was not your fault”
- Use the child’s vocabulary when addressing them and when reporting
- Document direct quotes

DON'T

- Show shock or disgust
- Make promises (ex. “I won’t tell” or “the abuse will stop now”)
- Ask WHY
- Be critical or judgmental of the offender (Children are protective of people they care about, even if they are abusive)
- Try and “rescue” or “cure” the family on your own, especially in lieu of reporting
- Rely on any other person or agency to report

If you witness child abuse or neglect

DO

- Remain calm and supportive
- Try to distract the child
- Empathize with the parent and/or offer help
- Notify the store manager if you are in public
- Make a report to DCF if you have a license plate number or any other information
- Call 911 & report the child’s location if they are in immediate danger

DON'T

- Show shock or disgust
- Stare at the parent or give dirty looks
- Belittle the parent
- Assume it’s “none of your business”
- Rely on someone else to intervene
- Intervene in a hostile situation which may be dangerous to you

Grooming Behaviors

WHAT IS GROOMING?

Grooming is a patterned behavior meant to normalize abnormal behaviors. It is a deliberate process by which perpetrators initiate and maintain abusive relationships with victims.

RED FLAGS



Giving special attention or preference to a child

While offenders often break rules and press boundaries, they are rarely caught in the act of abuse. It is important that we set clear boundaries when it comes to our children and call out even small boundary violations to set the tone for a child-protection culture.

Set the boundary: "Sorry, it is nothing personal, but Jane is not allowed to go to the movies without a parent - even if another adult is present."



Gift giving

Gift giving, large or small, is a technique used to flatter and win favor with families, the community, or the targeted individual.

Set the boundary: "While it's a very kind gesture, we only allow gifts for holidays or special occasions."



Touching or hugging

Offenders will begin introducing touch in the relationship in very small ways to test the reaction of children or those present. This may be an arm around the shoulder or offering hugs. As touch becomes normalized, they will grow in severity and secrecy. It is important to teach kids about their own body autonomy, and their right to say no - even to adults.

Set the boundary: "It looks like you keep asking Jane to hug you, please stop. We let Jane decide if and when she wants to give affection."

Source:



DARKNESS to LIGHT
END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The grooming process is often misleading, as it typically involves an adult that is well-known or highly regarded within a community. This is because perpetrators typically groom families and communities before they target children and teens.

RED FLAGS



Sympathetic listener

Offenders will build barriers between children and nonoffending caregivers by sending the message that they care and are there to listen more than anyone else. When a child begins sharing secrets, it opens the door for them to introduce additional secrets. It is important to remind your children that you are always there to listen—stay open and engaged. Additionally, remind your children that even people they love can hurt them.

Set the boundary: "If anyone asks you to keep a secret, please tell me right away no matter who it may be. You can tell me anything."



Offers to help the family

An offender may offer to help a parent in order to have one-on-one time with the child. This could be rides home from practice or helping them with their homework. Regularly remind the adults around you that no adult can be one on one with your child and ask that they help you keep others accountable.

Set the boundary: Come home early while a babysitter is watching your children. Stay for the entire duration of sporadic soccer practices.



Gaining access via the internet

Just as we would ask who our kids are talking to in-person, we should regularly check in on who they're talking to online. It is common for adults to pose as children online to gain their trust.

Set the boundary: Monitor what apps your children, as well as when and where they're using their devices.

Source:



DARKNESS to LIGHT
END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

How to RESPOND to Suspected Child Abuse



Rapport

Get to know the child before you start asking questions. Build trust and make them feel comfortable.



Explore Concern

Identify what you SEE or HEAR that causes suspicion of abuse. Don't make assumptions about what's happening. Stick to something that's observable: Injury • Changes in behavior • Inappropriate language or dialogue



Safe

Tell the child they are not in any trouble with you. Tell the child that it's not their fault. Get on their level. Don't hover or stand over them. Minimize authority. You are there to LISTEN.



Place

Choose a child-friendly location to talk. Minimize the number of people present. Avoid an environment that may trigger more trauma. Avoid places associated with being in trouble or where the abuse may have occurred.



Open-Ended Questions

Essential information only: Who. What. Where. When. Don't push or force a reluctant child. It's ok not to have all the information. (Example: "I see/hear _____. Tell me more about that.")



Notify

Call the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline immediately. 1-844-SAVE-A-CHILD. Dual report to local law enforcement. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911.



Do's & Don'ts

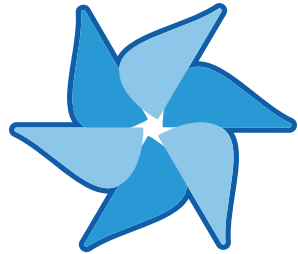
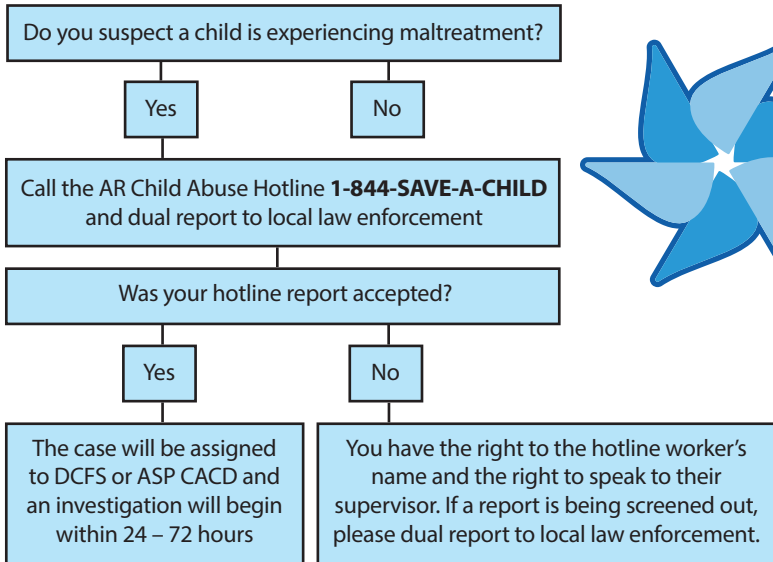
DO be B.R.A.V.E.:

Believe
Remain calm
Always listen
Validate
Expose

DON'T:

Notify the alleged offender.
Blame the victim.
Make promises.
Conduct your own investigation.
React.

Hotline Flow Chart



Reporter Tips:

1. Remember, it's okay to not have all the information. Investigators will fill in missing information. There's no need to ask the child more questions for answers that can be gathered elsewhere.
2. Hotline calls are short. Save background information and dynamics to discuss with the investigator when they call for more information.
3. It's important to note any changes in mood/behavior and the negative impact it is having on the child.
4. If your report gets screened out, don't be discouraged. Screened out cases mean they won't be open for an investigation, but the report will still be documented. If new details and allegations arise from the situation, please keep reporting. A high volume of screened out calls will still raise alarm for that child when a worker looks over their case.
5. Professionals are welcome to use the AR Mandated Reporter Online Portal to report allegations of child maltreatment at <https://mandatedreporter.arkansas.gov/>

Prevention Tips for Organizations

Building Blocks for a Protection-Focused Organization

Six building blocks are used to keep families and children safe as well as protect an institution from situations of abuse. When an organization prioritizes and implements a culture of child protection, the more likely it will deter a potential offender. Offenders seek opportunity for easy access to children, such as faith-based programs and youth facilities. Many do not have a criminal record and will not be identified from a background check. This is where different building blocks, policies, and behavior-based interviewing can help protect future victims of abuse.

Governance

Intentionally set an organizational culture, tone and intensity towards child protection. It is the leadership's responsibility to foster accountability and discourage silence. Implement a culture that is committed, not complacent.

Policy

Define organizational codes of conduct that applies to all. Codes of conduct should clearly outline expectations for interaction with and supervision of children.

Screening

Screening should involve three layers of AIR filtration:
Application • Interview • References

Training

Train staff and youth on policy, prevention, responding and reporting. When youth are made aware of rules regarding interaction with other youth and staff, they will be more confident to come forward when it is clear that a rule has been broken.

Watch

Anyone can be an offender. Keep a close eye on all community members. Familiarize yourself with the process of grooming and be able to identify red flags. Most importantly, call it out and speak up.

Report

Establish a reporting procedure. Refer to the RESPOND acronym (see page 12).

Source: 
CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS


Prevention Tips for Caregivers

To prevent child sexual abuse, it is important to keep the focus on adult responsibility while teaching children skills to help protect themselves.

- Trust your instincts!
- Open, honest communication about sex and sexual abuse may decrease your child's vulnerability.
- Take an active role in your children's lives. Learn about their activities and people with whom they are involved.
- Teach children accurate names of private body parts and the difference between touches that are "okay" and "not okay".
- Explain that no one has the right to touch them in a way that makes them uncomfortable, including adults whom they know and trust.
- Make sure your children know they can talk to you about anything that bothers them or confuses them.
- Explain the difference between "secrets" and "surprises". No one should ever ask a child to keep a secret from their caregiver.
- Reassure your children that sexual abuse is never the fault of the child.
- Monitor children's use of technology and ask about any people you don't recognize.
- Teach children to take care of their own bodies so they do not have to rely on adults or older children for help.
- Teach anatomically correct names for body parts to reduce the chances of someone dismissing a child's disclosure because of the use of nicknames.

DESCRIBE THE BEHAVIOR

It looks like you are forcing Anna to hug you. She looks uncomfortable.

Tell the person who crossed the boundary what the problematic behavior is.

SET A LIMIT

Please stop. We let Anna decide who she wants to show affection to.

Be clear that the child and their boundaries need to be respected.

MOVE ON

Anna, let's go see what the other kids are up to.

Make sure the child's boundary will be respected, if you are unsure remove the child.



Prevention Tips for Youth

If you are in a place that doesn't feel right or with a person who is making you feel confused or scared: listen to that **uh-oh feeling**.

Every person should have **5 adults** that they can talk to if someone is making their uh-oh feeling go off or is asking to break a rule. You are allowed to say no to people asking you to break rules. Even if you don't say no, it isn't your fault, and you can still tell.

1. Check First with the person taking care of you before going anywhere with anyone. We check first before:

- Going into a house
- Going into a car
- Accepting a gift
- Letting someone video tape you/ take your picture
- Going with an adult asking for help

2. No Secrets. We don't keep secrets from the person who takes care of us, especially if the secret makes you feel confused or scared.

3. We Talk About Touches. No touch should ever be a secret. We tell if someone wants to touch or look at our private parts or wants you to touch/look at their private parts. There are times when someone may touch your private parts to keep you clean and healthy. Clean and healthy touches are never a secret, so you can always talk to one of your five adults if you have questions about any kind of a touch.

4. We tell when someone is being hurt. If we find out someone is being hurt, we should tell one of our five adults. Everyone has a right to be safe.

For more information about "Empower Me", please reach out to Jacob Wetterling Resource Center, a program of Zero Abuse Project at www.jwrc.org



Notes

Notes

Resources

For more information on reporting suspected abuse and/or neglect:

Arkansas Mandated Reporter Website

<https://ar.mandatedreporter.org/>

Darkness to Light | Reporting Abuse

<https://www.d2l.org/get-help/reporting/>

Arkansas Department of Human Services | How to Report

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/dcfs/how-to-report>

Children & Family Advocacy Center | Get Help

<https://cfacbeniltonco.com/get-help/>

For more information on how to talk to children about abuse:

Committee for Children | How to Talk with Kids About Sexual Abuse

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I2gVdBmA-s>

Darkness to Light | Talk to Kids

https://www.d2l.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Talk-to-Kids-Body-Safety_-JTM.pdf

Stop It Now! | Talking to Children and Teens

<https://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/talking-to-children-and-teens>

Childhelp | Handling Child Abuse Disclosures

<https://www.childhelp.org/story-resource-center/handling-child-abuse-disclosures>

For more information on preventing child abuse:

Childhelp | Protecting Your Child From Abuse and Neglect

<https://www.childhelp.org/what-is-child-abuse/protecting-your-child-from-abuse-and-neglect/>

Darkness to Light | Online Safety

https://www.d2l.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/One-Sheet_Technology-Guide_JTM.pdf

Darkness to Light | Sample Code of Conduct

<https://www.d2l.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/SAMPLE-CODE-OF-CONDUCT.pdf>

Stop It Now! | Everyday Actions to Keep Kids Safe

<https://www.stopitnow.org/everyday-actions>

Stop It Now! | What Parents Need to Know When Selecting a Program for Their Child

<https://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/parent-questions-about-school-policies>

Arkansas Department of Health | Protecting Your Child's Health From Toxic Stress

https://healthy.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/ACEs_handout_English_final_9.28.16.pdf

Children & Family Advocacy Center

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