

NEW JERSEY CHILD ASSAULT PREVENTION (CAP)



ELEMENTARY PARENT PACKET

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NJ CAP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Child Assault Prevention (CAP) Project originated in 1978, in Columbus, Ohio, as a project of Women Against Rape (WAR). It is presently disseminated nationwide by the National Center for Assault Prevention (NCAP). In 1984, CAP was chosen as a funded prevention program for New Jersey by the Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect. CAP is recognized by the Task Force as "the most comprehensive prevention program in the country today." New Jersey is the first state in the country to specify CAP as a funded prevention program for children and young people. It has received national recognition as a "model state" in child assault prevention education.

A network of CAP projects has been assembled in each New Jersey county. CAP projects statewide are organized and trained by the NJ CAP Regional Training Center.

CAP seeks to integrate the best resources of a community in an effort to reduce a child or young person's vulnerability to verbal, physical and sexual assault. New Jersey's CAP projects work closely with the Division of Child Protection & Permanency (CP&P), law enforcement, community groups and local school districts. CAP has a threefold educational approach to prevention which includes trainings in the following areas: Staff In-Service, Parent Program and Individual Classroom Workshops for Children and Teens.

STAFF IN-SERVICE TRAINING is a one to one and a half hour in-service given by CAP facilitators for all staff persons involved in a school. The training includes an overview of assault, a detailed explanation of the classroom workshop, information on identification of abused persons, active listening guidelines for dealing with a child in crisis, community resources and referrals for reporting abuse, and legal rights and responsibilities of staff members who report abuse or neglect.

PARENT WORKSHOP PROGRAMS include similar information for adults in the community. The training emphasizes communication skills for discussing assault with children and effective responses for handling a child in crisis. Parents are given a detailed description of the classroom workshops.

CLASSROOM WORKSHOPS may be given in any of the following areas: Preschool, Kindergarten-Sixth Grades, Cognitively Impaired, TeenCAP and Bullying Prevention. Individual classroom workshops are facilitated by CAP leaders. Using roleplays or scenarios and guided group discussion, the classroom workshops train children and young people to recognize and deal with potentially dangerous situations. The roleplays or scenarios represent the most common assault experiences a child or teen might encounter. CAP emphasizes self assertion, peer support, and communication and reporting skills as prevention strategies. All CAP workshops are centered on the rights of children and young people to be **SAFE, STRONG and FREE.**

New Jersey Child Assault Prevention (NJ CAP)

Program Descriptions

The **CAP** Project is a comprehensive primary prevention program. CAP utilizes a three-pronged approach to community prevention education: training of staff, parents and children. CAP strategies include self assertion, peer support, effective communication and reporting skills. CAP programs are presented with a view of assault as a violation of the basic human rights to be 'Safe, Strong and Free'.

ADULT programs precede the children's programming and cover the prevention and empowerment strategies used in the children's workshops. Suggestions are provided for the most effective ways to support those strategies at home, school and in the community.

PRESCHOOL workshops are designed for 3½ to 5 year old children. The classroom workshop consists of 45 minute sessions presented over three consecutive days by two specially trained CAP facilitators. Time is included for individual review of the program following the workshop, each day, within the classroom. CAP facilitators present children's rights and personal safety issues through the use of pictures, dolls, songs and role plays. Role plays deal with aggression from a bully, sibling, stranger and known adult. Children participate in the highly interactive format and respond positively to the developmentally appropriate and sensitive curriculum.

KINDERGARTEN workshops are designed for children ages 5 to 6. Classroom workshops consist of one-hour sessions, presented on two consecutive days by three CAP facilitators. Time is included for individual review of the program following the workshop each day, within the classroom. Children's rights and personal safety issues are taught through the use of pictures, dolls, songs and role plays. The classroom workshop trains children to recognize potentially dangerous situations, and to make effective use of the options available to them in these situations.

GRADES 1-6 workshops are presented by CAP facilitators in one 60-minute period in individual classrooms. Each interactive program includes a discussion of rights, and an unsuccessful version of each of three role plays (assaults by a bully, a stranger, and a known adult) with guided discussion of problem solving strategies, and the re-enactment of the role play with a successful resolution. Students also learn self protection techniques and watch a role play with a staff member demonstrating adult support for a child with a problem. The program is followed by a 30-minute review period.

SPECIAL NEEDS presentations are designed for students with cognitive disabilities in the intermediate grades. The five-day program focuses on working closely with the teacher to teach recognition of body rights and development of self- confidence and independence.

TEEN CAP workshops, designed for adolescents, are presented in three 40-45-minute classroom periods. Workshops are held in individual classrooms. The programs include discussion of personal safety rights, types of assaults and effective strategies for handling many potentially dangerous situations.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION THROUGH CONFLICT RESOLUTION (VPCR) workshops for fourth, fifth and sixth grade students offer a wide variety of alternatives to violence. The 5 one-hour presentations are experiential. The students are introduced to the skills of cooperation, communication, affirmation and problem solving.

Bully Prevention Program is a 6-month initiative designed to help the school community deal with bullying by training the adults in appropriate intervention strategies and increasing students' awareness of the dynamics of bullying. This innovative program is designed for Kindergarten to 8th grade for implementation in schools that have already had the CAP program. It is a whole-school approach to bullying with workshops for school staff, parents and students.

CYBER EMPOWERMENT is an adult workshop which explores how some electronic communications are opportunities for bullying, bias crimes and violence among students. It promotes understanding of students' cyber activity as it relates to basic human rights. This is one of several alternate adult workshop offerings.

CLUES TO POSSIBLE VICTIMIZATION

Sometimes children don't **tell** us they are in crisis, they **show** us. A change in a child's behavior could be due to the stress of being abused. These changes in behavior can alert adults to their problem.

Abuse and neglect can also sometimes leave physical marks on a child's body which adults can observe. Knowing both the physical and behavioral clues to abuse can help adults intervene on behalf of children.

Keep in mind that some clues can be normal behaviors for a given child at a given time. Therefore it is important to be aware of new behaviors, extreme behaviors, or combinations of the following characteristics.

Abused children can not be identified by racial, ethnic, religious or socio-economic class. Abuse crosses these lines.

Abused Children Are Often	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- fearful of interpersonal relationships or overly compliant- withdrawn or aggressive, hyperactive- constantly irritable or listless, detached- affectionless or overly affectionate (misconstrued as seduction)
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Physical Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- bruises, burns, scars, welts, broken bones, continuing or- unexplainable injuries- urinary infections (particularly in young children)- sexually transmitted diseases- chronic ailments, stomach aches, vomiting, eating disorders- vaginal or anal soreness, bleeding, or itching
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Activity and Habit Clues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- nightmares- inappropriate masturbation- a child afraid to go home or to some other location- running away- delinquency- fear of being with a particular person- lying- prostitution
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Age Inappropriate Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- an onset of thumb sucking- sexually active or aware- promiscuity- bed wetting- alcohol/substance abuse- older child assaulting younger children- child takes on adult responsibilities
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Educational Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- extreme curiosity, imagination- academic failure- sleeping in class- inability to concentrate
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Emotional Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- depression- phobias, fear of darkness, public restrooms, etc.- chronic ailments- self-inflicted injuries- injuring/killing animals- excessively fearful- lack of spontaneity, creativity
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SUGGESTED IN-HOME FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Practice the CAP yell with your child. Talk about why the yell should only be used in dangerous situations.
2. Evaluate children's regular walking routes, noting spots of potential danger (abandoned houses, wooded areas, etc.)
3. Roleplay common assault situations with your children.
4. Encourage your children to help other children. Talk about how they can be support persons to their peers.
5. Confront suspicious people and question suspicious events in the community.
6. With your child, establish a network of persons whom they see as trusted adults.
7. Discuss children's rights: the right not to be touched in ways they feel are uncomfortable; the right to say "no", and the right to get help.
8. Let your child know that you believe in her/his ability to stay safe and that you want to be there to help.
9. Incorporate the words, "Safe, Strong, and Free" into your family's vocabulary.
10. Discuss "good" vs. "bad" secrets, and comfortable vs. uncomfortable touches.
11. Tell your children about a bribe, what it is and what it seeks to accomplish.
12. Answer children's questions about nightmares, television programs, real-life tragedies, and "what if's" positively and creatively without ridiculing their feelings or denying reality.
13. As a family, read books on building children's self-esteem, child sexual assault, children's rights, and assertion. Make children's good self-esteem and safety a family project.

HOW CAN I HELP CHILDREN TO BE SAFE, STRONG & FREE?

"WHAT IF...GAME" This is a game you can play with children to help them brainstorm about what they would do in dangerous situations. Having a plan ahead of time is important in reducing your child's vulnerability to assault. Dinnertime, bedtime, or riding in the car are good times to play this game. Pay attention to times when this game can be played spontaneously, such as when your child asks you a question or tells you a story about a friend.

The game is played by asking your child "What would you do if." and then letting the child respond. The key is to let the child come up with ideas, and then reinforce good ideas with praise and approval. This will empower children by building their self-confidence in handling dangerous situations. Some questions you can ask are:

- ♦ What would you do if your bike broke down and a stranger offered you a ride home?
- ♦ What would you do if I weren't home and the telephone man came to the door and said that he wanted to fix the phone?
- ♦ What would you do if a babysitter did something to you and asked you to keep it a secret?
- ♦ What would you do if someone touched you in a way that you didn't like or confused you?
- ♦ What would you do if someone asked you to touch them inside their pants? (or be more specific)

"STORYTELLING" You can tell any kind of story about a child staying safe. A story about being lost, abandoned, problems with a stranger, etc. can be used. Use your imagination. ALWAYS end with a successful way of dealing with the situation. FOR EXAMPLE:
There was a little boy who had a favorite uncle who always bought him whatever he wanted. But the uncle would scare him by hiding behind furniture and jumping out just when the little boy came along. The little boy didn't like to be scared, but he didn't know what to do. One day he asked his father if he was ever scared. His dad said that he was afraid sometimes. The little boy asked how he got "unafraid". Dad asked him if something was frightening him. The little boy told his dad about the way his uncle scared him. His dad helped him figure out that he could ask the uncle not to do that anymore. When his dad asked him if he wanted any other help, the little boy said that he would try it himself first, and let his dad know how it went.

TALKING ABOUT "PRIVATE PARTS" Teach your child that it is OK to talk about genitals. Not naming those parts of the body and being secretive about genitals, conveys to children that these parts are bad and should never be mentioned. This will make it difficult for them to report sexual assault. When a child is young, he/she should learn about breasts, penis, vagina and buttocks. These will then be accepted parts of the body.

PERSONAL SPACE BOUNDARIES Help your child develop boundaries about touch, physical affection, privacy and nudity. When talking about their bodies, talk about good, bad and confusing touch. Phrases such as "under your dress" or "down your pants" can be used. If you are comfortable doing so, use specific terms. Teach a child to wash his/her own genitals, and say that they are his/hers to take care of. You can also add "If anybody else wants to touch you there, I want to know. "At age 6 or 7 children begin to ask for privacy, when going to the bathroom, dressing, taking a bath, etc. RESPECT THEIR WISHES!

ROOM PRIVACY Children begin to want their own room, closed doors, and private time alone. It's important to foster that so children learn they have the right to control their own body and personal space. An analogy can be drawn between a bedroom door (closed) and sexual assault. If a door is closed, like a bedroom door, then another person should not enter it without permission. Later, a child will generalize this to mean "No one can do anything to me without permission."

LEARNING TO SAY "NO" - A SAFE, STRONG AND FREE WORD One of the reasons that "NO" isn't said more often is that children quickly learn that they aren't supposed to talk back to adults or refuse to do what they say. For example:

- "Don't answer back! Just do as I say."
- "Be nice to people. It's not nice to hurt people's feelings."
- "Don't be rude. If someone speaks to you, answer him or her."
- "People like children who are nice, not those who aren't."

Rules like these put children in vulnerable positions because they may be generalized into all situations with authority figures. A much better instruction: "In a situation that is dangerous or makes you feel funny inside, don't worry about being nice. Run away and get out of the situation."

THE "NO" GAME This game lets children practice saying "no" to each other. One child makes a request. The other simply says "no" without an explanation. Let them get used to saying "no". Later, have them ask each other why they said it. Parents often ask, "What if my child begins to say "no" when I don't want him/her to?" This concept doesn't mean every time children say "no" to bedtime, vegetables, or baths; they should get their way. It means that when you can, let the "no" stand. When you can't, talk it out with the child. "I understand that you would rather not go to the babysitter today. I have been gone a lot this week, but I have to go to work. Are you feeling lonely and want me to stay home? Is something happening at the sitters?"

Make sure that children aren't learning powerlessness through games that can't be stopped when the game is no longer fun, such as tickling sessions. Respect when the child says "NO" and end the game. Intervene when someone else doesn't.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES Encourage games and organized sports not only for boys but also for girls. This will help them gain a sense of physical self-confidence in case they need to protect themselves. Discourage games in which the adult or older child who says, "Hit me as hard as you can; you can't hurt me." What this teaches children is that they are powerless against someone bigger, which is not necessarily true.

Information from the CAP Project of Contra Costa County

*Starred information from No More Secrets, by Caren Adams and Jennifer Fay.

ACTIVE LISTENING GUIDELINES

1. Always be calm. Your reaction makes a difference.
2. Believe what you are hearing. Too often, children lack credibility. Listen to the child in a non-judgmental way.
3. Deal with explicit language. A child may use explicit terms to discuss her/his experience. Be prepared. Try and use this same language also.
4. Do not avoid embarrassing subjects. Let the child know that he/she can talk about everything that concerns him/her.
5. Do not project or assume anything. Let the child tell the story and leave your own assumptions out.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess a child's safety needs.
2. To find out what the child wants from you.
3. To validate the child's feelings.
4. To assure the child that:
 You care.
 You are still a friend.
 The child is not to blame.
5. To let the child know she/he has a RIGHT to be safe.
6. To let the child know what action you will take.

When you are faced with a child who has been assaulted, it is often difficult to know how to respond. The guidelines above will help you and the child through this crisis period.

----- IF YOU SUSPECT THAT ABUSE HAS HAPPENED -----

1 Call the Child Protection & Permanency Office - 1-877-NJ ABUSE

2. *For immediate protection call the local or NJ State Police (24 hour)...*

The following information would be helpful:

Name and address of child.
Name and address of parents or caretaker.
Age and sex of child.
Nature and extent of injuries or description of abuse.

HOTLINE NUMBERS

STATEWIDE:

1-800-322-5525	ALCOHOL INFORMATION HOTLINE - 24 HRS
1-800-572-7233	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE-REFERRAL/INFORMATION - 24 HRS
1-800-225-0196	DRUG INFORMATION/REFERRAL - 24 HRS
1-800-322-8092	WOMEN'S REFERRAL CENTER: INFORMATION AND REFERRAL ON ALL ISSUES RELATING TO WOMEN; SPONSORED BY THE NJ DIVISION ON WOMEN - 24 HRS
1-800-331-DCF	OFFICE OF Child Protection & Permanency: QUESTIONS/CONCERNS RELATED TO CP&P 24 HRS
1-877-NJ-ABUSE	24 HR REPORTING HOTLINE
1-800-843-5437	PARENT'S ANONYMOUS - 24 HR HOTLINE FOR (THE KIDS)
1-800-THE-KIDS	INFORMATION/REFERRALS AND SELF HELP GROUPS STATEWIDE
1-800-367-6274	NJ SELF-HELP CLEARINGHOUSE; INFORMATION ON FORMING AND FINDING SELF-HELP GROUPS STATEWIDE MONDAY-FRIDAY, 9:00 - 5:00

NATIONAL:

1-800-843-5678 (THE LOST)	NATIONAL MISSING PERSONS HOTLINE 24 HRS.
1-800-621-4000	
1-800-RUNAWAY	NATIONAL RUNAWAY HOTLINE SWITCHBOARD
1-800-231-6946 (AUSTIN)	BOTH THESE NUMBERS PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR RUNAWAY CHILDREN THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY
1-800-621-4000 (CHICAGO)	RUNAWAYS CAN CALL THESE NUMBERS FOR SHELTER, MEDICAL CARE, LEGAL HELP, COUNSELING OR TO GET A MESSAGE THROUGH TO THEIR PARENTS. PEOPLE WORKING IN THESE CENTERS CAN REFER TO ANY AREA OF THE COUNTRY FOR THE ABOVE SERVICES.
1-800-892-KIDS	KIDSRIGHTS – A NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MATERIALS ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS