

Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention: It Is Your Business

Podcast Transcript

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It can be far too easy to see something worrisome or suspicious, like possible child abuse or neglect, and say to yourself, “Somebody else will probably take action.” It may feel awkward to respond and seem like it’s none of your business. But the safety and well-being of children is everyone’s business. It’s our responsibility as a society to ensure that children are able to grow up safe and healthy. It only takes a minute to speak up if you see a parent in need or a child in danger.

If you see a parent under stress, you can step in and offer assistance. You can offer to watch their child for a short time to give them a break. They may need to talk about their frustrations. Sometimes listening is the best thing you can do. There are also resources you can direct them to for professional advice and support. The New Parent Support Program is a great resource for parents of children up to 3 years of age — or 5 years of age for Marine Corps families. You can locate this program on your installation by visiting www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil or contacting your installation family support center. Parents with children of all ages can contact Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 for no-cost, confidential non-medical counseling.

If you are a parent and find yourself under stress, you can access these programs as well. Supervision is key to keeping your child safe. Try to avoid leaving your child unsupervised, but if you absolutely must step away for a moment to collect yourself, make sure young children are secured in a safe place like a playpen or crib. If you need a longer break, reach out to a friend, neighbor or babysitter and arrange for someone to watch your child while you have some time to cool off and relax. It’s normal to get frustrated from time to time and it’s important you ask for help when you need it.

If you suspect that a child is being neglected or abused, it is your business to speak up. Your action could help save a child. If you see an unsupervised child, take immediate action. Find the child’s caregiver or call local law enforcement for help. If you witness violence or believe someone is in imminent danger, call 911 or military police if you are on an installation. You can also call the installation Family Advocacy Program or local civilian Child Protective Services to make a report or share your concerns. Finally, you can contact your state’s child abuse reporting hotline or call Childhelp at 800-4-A-CHILD (422-4453).

When a child’s safety is compromised, don’t assume someone else will take action. It only takes a minute to reach out to a parent in need, reach out for help if you are a frustrated parent or report suspected abuse or neglect. Have the courage to speak up for a child and you could save a life.

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For more information, visit Military OneSource at <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>, an official Department of Defense website.