

WHAT TO DO

if a child discloses they have been abused

If a child discloses they have been abused, either physically, sexually or emotionally, *here are some suggestions which may help the child, and you, to feel safe:*



✓ STAY CALM

Try to put your feelings aside. An over reaction will only reinforce the child's reluctance to disclose.

To help you stay calm and in control, try and remember the following four things you need to tell the child:

1 "I'm glad you told me"

2 "I believe you"

3 "It is not your fault"

4 "I'm going to do something about it"

✓ BELIEVE THE CHILD

Children rarely lie about abuse. However, they are often discouraged from disclosing because they think no one will believe them.

✓ DO NOT QUESTION THE CHILD

Do not pressure the child to give in-depth details. They may have to repeat their story for authorities, and they may find it distressing each time they have to recount the abuse.

✓ OFFER REASSURANCE

Reassure the child that it is not their fault and they haven't done anything wrong; they are not to blame.

You can also use phrases such as:

"You've done the right thing by telling me,"

or,

"I'm sorry this has happened to you, and we'll work this out together."

✓ DO NOT APPROACH THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

Leave this to the authorities.

✓ MAKE NO PROMISES

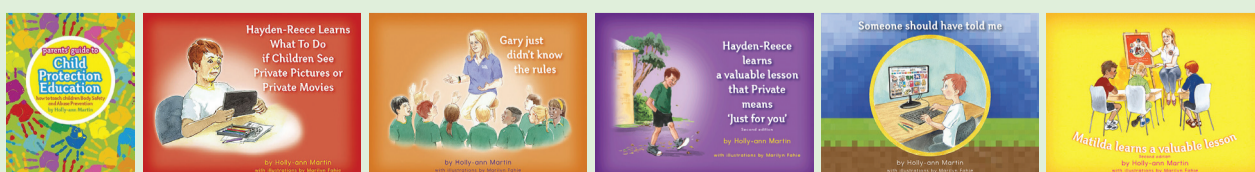
Do not promise to keep this a secret. You may have to tell the authorities about what has happened.

✓ CONTACT AUTHORITIES

• The Department for Child Protection

• Police Child Protection Unit

Resources available on the website: www.safe4kids.com.au



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