



**Global Children's Fund**

# Defeating Secrecy

Please enjoy this parent safety brochure, compliments of your child's school or child care facility. Keep in mind though, this is but one small part of child safety, not intended to be complete safety education. Please visit us online at [WWW.KEEPYOURCHILDSAFE.org](http://WWW.KEEPYOURCHILDSAFE.org), for a variety of free book downloads covering all aspects of child safety.

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Secrecy is probably the most damaging part of sexual abuse. Sexual abuse incidents that are quickly discovered are usually countered with little or no lasting effects on the child. Cases where the abuse goes on for years are the cases where the child is significantly injured from the abuse. Conditioning (The means in which a molester conditions a child not to tell) is an important subject to address in abuse prevention.

## **How molesters invoke secrecy**

There are many ways in which molesters condition their victims not to tell.

### Threats

A molester may use blunt threats to convince a child not to tell. These can include threats of bodily harm, threats of harm to a loved one, or other fearful statements. Threats can be a powerful silencer in young children, who easily believe what adults tell them.

### Reasoning

Reasoning is actually the most common form of conditioning among molesters. There are several techniques and different topics that they use, but it is basically reasoning with a child about why they shouldn't tell. This often works extremely well, and parents make mistakes that molesters use to turn their own words against them.

### Kinship

Many molesters are wonderful with kids, especially the type that most parents will have to worry about. They often simply use the kinship they have built up between the child to keep them from telling.

## **Good news for parents**

If proper steps are taken to address conditioning, the parental bond will always be stronger than anything a molester will do to build up the silence. If it isn't, sexual abuse is the least of your children's problems. It generally only works because parents do not counter it. A little bit of time and devotion to destroying secrecy will give molesters nothing to work with.

## **Teach the difference between secrets and surprises**

Teach children the difference between secrets and surprises. Explain to them that they are never to keep secrets from their parents. That it is your job to keep them safe, and you need to know everything that happens to them, no matter what.

## **Address threats**

It is important that parents not only address threats, but the particular threats used. Doing so will take them away from the molester, and set off an instant alarm if they would try to use one.

## **Know the common mistakes**

Learn how molesters condition children not to tell, and learn the common mistakes that parents make which help them out.

## **Address the concept of threats and conditioning**

Explain to kids that if anyone is saying mean things or trying to get them to keep secrets from you, it is because they are doing something bad. They should tell you right away. The person saying these things is lying about what will happen, and it is important for them to tell you right away.

## **Go over people perceptions**

People perceptions is a rather complex concept, but it basically involves teaching children that people can and do make mistakes. It is important for them to do the right thing and keep all these rules, even if it involves someone they like. This is extremely important, as most molestations will occur at the hands of people that your child likes.

## **Additional Resources**

This part of abuse prevention is an extremely important one, and much too complex for us to adequately explain in this safety sheet. Parents should download a free copy of our book, "A parents guide to sexual abuse prevention" from our website. In it we go into much greater detail the forms of conditioning used by molesters, and what parents can do to counter it. We also offer childrens books that help parents counter the methods used by most molesters.