PreventEd: Sexual Abuse
6th Grade

Attention Parents and Caregivers:

Today your child participated in a body safety program presented by the Center for Prevention of Abuse. This school-based program focuses on the prevention and awareness of childhood sexual and physical abuse.

Erin’s Law: On January 24, 2013, former Governor Pat Quinn signed into law “Erin’s Law,” which requires all Illinois schools to provide age-appropriate child sexual abuse prevention education for students K–12th, annually. To find out more, go to www.erinslaw.org.

Helping all people live free from violence and abuse.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Center for Prevention of Abuse at:

Main Line: 309.691.0551
24/7 Crisis Hotline: 1.800.559.SAFE (7233)
Website: www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org

According to the FBI:

- In the average classroom, five students have been sexually abused before the age of 18
- The median age for reported child sexual abuse is nine years old (Darkness to Light; www.d2l.org)
- 90% of child abuse victims know their abuser

Today’s lesson took a closer look at child sexual abuse, good and bad secrets, and being a good bystander

- Child Sexual Abuse – Any type of sexual contact that happens between a minor child (under the age of 18) and an adult or older minor. This type of abuse does not always involve touching. It can include verbal abuse (inappropriate conversations) or visual abuse (an adult exposing themselves or showing inappropriate photos or videos to a minor). This is never the younger child’s fault.

- Child Exploitation – Exploitation is when one person uses another person to make themselves feel good or to get something from the other person no matter how the other person feels. Someone who exploits a child may make promises or threats, buy the child gifts, or do them favors. Abusers may start with touches that feel safe like tickling. People who exploit children are usually in a position of power or “in charge” (babysitter, coach, bus driver). They use their position so that the child follows directions. They always want exploitation to remain secret.

- Trusted Adults – A trusted adult is an adult who the child feels they can turn to if they ever need help. A trusted adult who truly cares about a child would never intentionally do anything to hurt them.

Please turn this page over to review with your child what they learned today.
Brilliant Bystanders

Although your child may not be the target, they may have witnessed abuse, bullying, or harassment as a bystander. Bystanders can be impacted by fear, anxiety, and guilt even though they are not directly involved. Some may be discouraged from helping out of fear for their own safety or retaliation. While a passive bystander does not do anything to change the situation, an active bystander can often help. Here are a few ways you can be an active bystander without risking your own safety.

1. Make eye contact with the victim. Let them know that you see them and acknowledge the situation. Often targets of bullying, harassment, or abuse can feel isolated. Let them know they are not alone. Check in with them and be supportive. Encourage them to tell a trusted adult and offer to go with them and be supportive as a witness.

2. If you feel safe, distract and/or redirect the attention of aggressors: “Yeah, yeah, we know. Now let’s go and...” This is considered a safe intervention because it neither challenges the aggressor nor appears to sympathize with the target.

3. Connect with other bystanders through eye contact or body language and support those looking to be proactive. Bystanders look for support from those who are also a witness to the situation. We can stand together and empower one or another to act.

4. Avoid spreading rumors, gossip, or private information about the people involved. Report what you know to a trusted adult who can help. Be empathetic to the victim and do not post or share their personal information on social media. If you see negative posts or pages, you can shut it down by refusing to join in, share, or spread them. You can also report hurtful content to the social media platform.

5. If you feel safe, intervene by approaching the target and getting them out of the situation. It could be as simple as walking up and telling them that you need to talk right now. Make an excuse about homework or something on your phone you need to show them, whatever works to get them out of the situation.

Four Body Safety Rules

1. Say “No”
   Say this in a strong, “this is important” voice

2. Get Away
   To a safe space where others can help

3. Tell Someone
   A safe, trusted adult

4. Be Believed
   Keep telling trusted adults until someone helps you

The Private Body Parts Rule

No one is allowed to look at or touch your private areas, unless they are helping you stay healthy and clean (like parents and the doctor). No one is allowed to ask YOU to look at or touch them in their private areas.