

WHAT TO DO WHEN A CHILD TELLS YOU THEY ARE BEING SEXUALLY ABUSED

LISTEN

Find a place that's free from distractions, where you can be calm and patient. Let the child use their own words and listen supportively. Do not ask a lot of questions. Avoid asking for details or pushing the child to share.

SUPPORT

Tell the child that you are glad they told you and that you believe them. Do not make any promises you can't keep. They need to know that they are not "freaking you out", and that telling you was the right thing to do.

PROTECT

Identify any immediate risks to the child. Explain that in order to keep them safe, you will have to tell some specific people whose job it is to help. Ask if there are any other adults who the child knows and trusts to help plan for their safety.

MAKE THE CALL

Call Child Protective Services to report ANY suspected abuse 24/7 at 1-800-452-1999.

Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine is here to help through every step of the process. Call the 24-hour Sexual Assault Helpline at 1-800-871-7741. We can talk about next steps and be there for you as you deal with the emotional impact of the situation.