

# 8

# Ways to Keep Kids & Youth Safe



## 1. Be sure that all children and youth are supervised at all times.

Children and youth are safest when adults are paying close attention to what's going on. Don't let your phone distract you from watching the kids.

## 2. Keep one-on-ones observable.

No adult staff member or volunteer should ever be alone with a single child where the staff or volunteer cannot be observed by other adults. If you need to have a one-on-one conversation with a youth, find a location like bleachers, a hallway, etc. where others can see.

## 3. Ask before touching.

Respect a child's right not to be touched in ways that make them feel uncomfortable. Ask before touching a child, and let them know it's okay if the answer is "no".

## 4. Model appropriate touch.

Appropriate touch like pats on the back or shoulder, side hugs, handshakes and high fives are a great way to show enthusiasm and appreciation. Avoid frontal hugs or touching any area of the body that would be covered by a bathing suit. If a child initiates an inappropriate form of touch with a staff member or another child (lap sitting,

front hugs, etc.) firmly and positively redirect the child and encourage a safer alternative. (e.g. "Remember, we don't give front hugs at camp. May I have a side hug instead?")

## 5. Don't play favorites.

Don't give gifts or special attention to one child or one group of children. Appropriate boundaries mean all children feel included and receive equitable treatment from staff.

## 6. Set good boundaries.

Don't communicate with camp children and youth through social media, computers or handheld devices. Avoid spending time with children you meet in KU's programs outside of KU summer programming. This includes babysitting, giving rides home, inviting children to your home, etc. Any exceptions must be formally discussed with and approved by administration ahead of time.

## 7. Use your voice.

If you see other staff members pushing these boundaries or breaking a safety rule, speak up. This can feel awkward, but our top priority is to keep children safe. Redirect any inappropriate behavior in the moment and always report it to your supervisor.

(e.g. "Hey, we're not supposed to pick kids up." "That's not appropriate.")

It's important that as adults who care about children, we work to keep them safe. Child sexual abuse is scary, and we also know that it is real.

Not everyone who breaks a safety rule is planning to abuse children, but by holding everyone accountable to these safety rules, together we can prevent abuse.

## 8. Report any suspicion of abuse.

If you have any reason to suspect that a child may have experienced abuse at camp or outside of camp, you have the responsibility to report your suspicion. You do not need to be able to prove abuse has taken place to make a report. Listen to your gut – if something seems wrong to you, we take that seriously.

DCF Reporting Hotline:

**1-800-922-5330**

IOA - Reporting @ KU:

**785-864-6414**

KU Public Safety:

**785-864-5900**

## Stats to know:

# 1 in 10

children experience sexual abuse before their 18th birthday.

Child sexual abuse is common and can happen to children of any age. It's important that camp counselors know how to respond and who to tell if they learn that a camper has experienced abuse.

# 90%

of children who experience sexual abuse know their perpetrator.

Many schools and families have focused on "stranger danger", but statistics show that most people who abuse children are known to the child. The abuser could be a teacher, family member, neighbor, or another child or youth.

## A child just disclosed sexual abuse to me. **WHAT DO I DO NOW?**

### 1. Say, "I believe you," and "It's not your fault."

**DO** remain calm.

**DO** ask open-ended questions: "Then what happened?"

**DON'T** make promises. Say, "We're going to get the help we need."

### 2. Conduct a "minimal fact" interview.

**DO** let them use their own words.

**DON'T** ask leading questions or probe for details.

### 3. Report immediately.

**DO** tell law enforcement and/or child protective services.



**FALSE SEXUAL ABUSE REPORTS  
MADE BY CHILDREN ARE RARE\***

Source: D2L.org/Statistics

## "I'm glad you told me."

Validate that the child did the right thing by reporting. Don't ask any leading questions or investigate. Your job is to listen to the child, let them know they are not in trouble for speaking up, and to make a report.

# Community Resources

## The Sexual Trauma & Abuse Care Center

24/7 Support Hotline

Free therapy for children and parents

Assistance with reporting & free prevention training

**(785)843-8985 (24/7 Support)**

**stacarecenter.org**

## Kansas Department for Children and Families

Child abuse prevention  
& protective services

Report Child or Adult Abuse or Neglect:

**1-800-922-5330**  
**dcf.ks.gov**