

Disclosure

Steps for Responding to Disclosure

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Believe the child, young children rarely lie about sexual abuse.

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Reassure the child that he is safe and that you will take care of him.

Reassure the child that it is not his or her fault.
Remain calm and listen.
Initiate open discussion with statements like, "Tell me what happened";

Allow the child to describe what happened in his or her own words.

Do not ask questions like "Did he touch your private area";

This type of question can be suggestive and confuse the facts.

Avoid asking questions that lead to yes or no answers.
Do not confront the suspected abuser.
Call a family member or friend to provide support.

Be sure not to talk about the incident in front of the child.

Call your pediatrician or your local children's service agency.

While the resources mentioned above are the best options, there are some situations that may warrant a direct visit to the hospital.

If sexual contact has taken place within the past 3 days (72 hours).
If the child is complaining of pain or has visible signs of injury, especially to the genital area, such as bruising or blood.

