



Greetings WHES Families,

Today, students were taught the importance of personal body safety. I used the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center Foundation Curriculum this year. The state of Tennessee requires that Erin's Law is taught to children in pre-kindergarten through high school on the topics of sexual abuse awareness, education, and prevention. You can learn more about the program by visiting the website here: <http://barbarasinatrachildrencenter.org/prevention/>.

I addressed the topic of sexual abuse in an age-appropriate manner with the intent to ensure that your children know how to handle unsafe situations. Students learned about three essential topics: differentiating good touch from bad or wrong touch, understanding personal boundaries; and the "Shout, Run, Tell" rule to use if they are in an uncomfortable situation. The "Shout, Run, Tell" rule teaches children to first say "no" in a clear and confident voice, leave the area for a safer one, and then tell a safe adult. They also learned they should always check first with an adult before they change their plans unexpectedly and should never get in the car with someone unexpected. We reviewed that adults we don't know should never ask us for help or to keep secrets. We emphasized that they are the boss of their own body and have the right to tell another child or adult "no" if they don't like what is happening to their bodies such as tickling, noogies, and too tight hugs.

We believe you, the guardians, are your child's best teacher and understand talking to your child about personal safety can be very uncomfortable. However, it is important to continue the discussion at home. During this conversation, it will be important to give your child your undivided attention and allow them the time to process the information they have received as well as ask questions. Use a calm voice, keep your information simple, and don't be afraid to have a sense of humor. Keeping a relaxed manner will help keep your kids from becoming ashamed, confused, or unwilling to participate in the conversation. Asking your child if they remember your full name and a safe person's phone number is a great way to start the conversation about personal safety.

For more information about how you can help reinforce these lessons at home, see here: <http://www.erinslaw.org/for-parents/> or <http://www.stopitnow.org/ohc-content/tip-sheet-8>. To learn about the signs of child sexual abuse, see here: <http://barbarasinatrachildrencenter.org/prevention/signs-of-child-abuse/>.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Best regards,

Elishia Basner, M.S.  
School Counselor, WHES  
[elishia.basner@knoxschools.org](mailto:elishia.basner@knoxschools.org)

# Signs of Child Abuse

## What is Child Abuse?

### **Physical abuse:**

Includes beating, burning or punching a child.

### **Emotional abuse:**

May involve criticizing, insulting, rejecting or withholding love from a child.

### **Sexual abuse:**

Includes rape, touching/fondling or involving a child in pornography.

### **Neglect:**

Includes failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional or educational needs. (Leaving a young child home alone or failing to provide needed medical care may be considered neglect.)

## Common Behavioral & Emotional Indicators of Abuse

Children who seek counseling exhibit many of the following **PRESENTING SYMPTOMS\***. One of the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center at Eisenhower's goals is to address these symptoms, when they are the result of abuse, and work toward positive feelings and reduced symptoms. Both sets, along with other indicators, assist clinicians when assessing and implementing the client's individually planned counseling program and progress.

## Presenting symptoms of Abuse

- Bed-wetting
- Sleep disturbances/nightmares
- Temper tantrums
- Social Withdrawal
- Aggressive behavior:
  - Biting
  - Pinching
  - Hitting
  - Fighting
- Drugs/Alcohol abuse
- Fearfulness
- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Poor academic performance
- Headaches/stomachaches
- Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate sexual play or behavior
- Regressive behaviors
- Crying without provocation
- Flashbacks/Self-inflicted injuries
- Anxiety
- Inadequate awareness of personal/social boundaries

## The Protect Yourself Rules



- **Tell a Grown-Up:** We must always tell a trusted grown-up if someone hurts us, touches us on a private part of our body, or makes us feel uncomfortable or unsafe in anyway.
- **Safe Touch, Unsafe Touch:** Unsafe touches are any touches to a private body part or part of our bodies that would be covered by a bathing suit, or any touches that make us feel uncomfortable or unsafe in any way.
- **Stranger Safety:** We should never talk to strangers without a trusted grown-up present and should never go anywhere with a person we don't know if they ask us to. A strage grown-up will never need help from a child, and they should never offer us anything like a ride, candy, or presents.
- **Shout, Run, & Tell:** If someone makes us feel uncomfortable or unsafe, we should shout for them to stop, run away, and tell a trusted grown-up what happened. No matter who it is or where we are, if someone makes us feel unsafe, we should Shout, Run, and Tell.
- **Hitting is Wrong:** No one should ever hurt us, physically or emotionally. Hitting, kicking, pinching, biting, throwing things, and yelling hurtful words are not allowed. If someone does this to us, we have to tell a grown-up we trust to make it stop.
- **Doesn't Matter Who It Is:** No one can ever touch us in an unsafe way, even people we know well. It doesn't matter if it's a friend, a relative, a teacher, or anyone else. We are allowed to tell people if we don't want to be touched, and they have to listen. If they don't, we have to Shout, Run, and Tell.