About 1 in 4 females and 1 in 13 males experience child sexual abuse, according to the CDC.

What can you do to prevent child sexual abuse?

- Talking with your child often can help you monitor for signs of sexual abuse. Ask them about their day. Who did they play with at recess? Who were they with after school? Did they have fun? Did they meet any new adults?
- Your child should know the correct terms for body parts. Use of correct terms makes it easier for adults to understand reports of abuse.
- Teach your child that they are in control over their body. Teach your child that no one should touch them without their consent. Your child should be able to say no to hugs and tickling from anyone.
- Instruct your child to tell you if anyone touches them without their consent. Make sure that they know they will not get in trouble.
- Encourage your child to talk openly about their health and safety.
- Watch for signs of grooming. Grooming is a tactic used by abusers to gain trust.

Sources:

https://www.rainn.org/articles/how-can-i-protect-my-child-sexual-assault?_ga=2.89049051.1128441160.1655740419-1381136367.1655588614

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childsexualabuse/fastfact.html#:~:text=Although%20estimates%20vary%20across%20studies,States%20experience%20child%20sexual%20abuse

What are some warning signs of sexual abuse?

- Know that not all signs of sexual abuse are not obvious. Perpetrators try to cover up what they have done.

Physical signs

- sexually transmitted infections
- bleeding from the genital area
- bruising of the genital area
- blood on clothing or bedding

Behavioral signs

- unsuitable knowledge of sexual topics
- talking less often than normal
- fear of being with people that are not normal caregivers
- avoidance of specific individuals
- unsuitable sexual behavior for the child's age

- behaving like they used to at a younger age
- spending more time alone than normal
- not wanting to change clothing
- not wanting to undress to bathe

Emotional signs

- changes in self-image
- mood changes
- personality changes
- anxiety
- loss of interest in activities
- nightmares
- self-harming

Warning signs in teens

- abnormal weight changes
- changes in eating patterns
- poor grades
- depression
- anxiety
- drug use
- alcohol use
- unexplained injuries

Sources:

https://www.rainn.org/articles/warning-signs-young-children

https://www.rainn.org/articles/warning-signs-teens

93% of abusers are known by the victims of child sexual abuse.

What is grooming? What are warning signs of grooming?

- Grooming is manipulation from an abuser. Perpetrator's use grooming to access victims, convince victims to agree to abuse, and to reduce their risk of being caught.
- Predators groom children, teens, adults, families, and communities. They groom adults to gain their trust. Predators often seem charming, kind, and helpful.
- Abusers may offer gifts and attention to children, without reason. Abusers may share secrets with victims. Abusers do this to mislead victims into thinking that they are safe and caring. The abuser's goal is to reduce the chance of a victim reporting the abuse.

- Predators may introduce victims to touch and sexual topics early. This may include hugging, tickling, wrestling, and snuggling. Which may escalate to massaging, showering, and showing the victim pornography. Abusers do this to normalize the abuse.
- Teens closer in age to the perpetrator may have a tough time noticing grooming.
- Be mindful of those who are excessively willing to help. When something may not be in their best personal interests, they may have a different agenda.

Sources:

https://www.rainn.org/news/grooming-know-warning-signs

https://www.rainn.org/statistics/children-and-teens

What can I do to keep my child safe online?

- Talk with your child about risks associated with use of the internet.
- Tell your child not to share personal information, photos, or videos online, where people who they do not know and trust in real life can see it.
- Instruct your child to tell you if anything online makes them feel uneasy.
- Use parental controls.
- Use privacy settings.
- Show your child how to report and block users who make them feel uneasy.
- Supervise your child's online activity.
- Online devices should only be in shared areas. Online devices should not be in bedrooms or bathrooms.
- Monitor for signs of abuse like trying to hide online activities, withdrawn behavior, depression, anxiety, and unusual angry behavior.
- Review games, apps, and social media sites before your child uses them. Predators use sites to access children. Watch for direct messaging, video chats, anonymous use, and file uploading features.
- Tell child that they have the right to say no to online requests.
- Teach your child that it is not safe to take, send, or receive photos with nudity.

Source:

https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus/keeping-children-safe-online#:~:text=Supervise%20young%20children's%20use%20of,downloaded%20or%20used%20by%20children