

10 Ways Parents Can Protect Their Children from Sex Trafficking

By Rahab's Daughters

One of the most frequent questions we are asked is, "How do I protect my children from predators?" Numerous social media channels, like tik tok, are attracting younger followers who publicly share images and aspects of their lives. There are many outlets for children to connect with people they don't know. It is also easier for predators to identify and try to groom vulnerable children. While it's impossible to prevent every single harmful interaction, here is our best advice for preventing your children from falling prey to sex trafficking.

1. Set a high standard of LOVE within your home.

We can't stress this point enough. Filling your home with love is the single most important thing you can do to create a feeling of security and comfort for your children. Creating this atmosphere in your home sets the foundation for all the other tips we have to provide in this article.

By placing this high emphasis on love, we are not advocating for a home where children are never told "no." It is important to not confuse a strong feeling of love with letting children do whatever they want. In fact, a loving household includes setting and sticking to healthy boundaries for your children. Maintaining healthy limits for your children creates clear expectations and will help your child learn more about themselves so that they can set their own standards and limits for interaction later on. A home with healthy boundaries provides the security for everyone's needs to be met. [Learn more about setting boundaries for your children.](#)

2. Talk to your children about sexual abuse.

This is difficult. Sexual abuse is a horrific topic, but the reality is, we all need to be aware of this crime to protect ourselves and others. [There are ways to have age appropriate conversations](#) with your children about what sexual abuse is and give children an understanding of their own bodily autonomy. Continue these conversations about safety as your children grow up and make sure both your sons and daughters understand their bodies, their boundaries and where they can seek help if needed. Visit: www.rainn.org/articles/talking-your-kids-about-sexual-assault for more tips.

3. Talk to your children about sex trafficking.

Just like above, it's not easy to teach children about the dangers of the world we live in, but keeping them in the dark only leaves them more vulnerable to predators. [Sex trafficking](#) happens all around us, and differs from sexual abuse in important ways. Children must know what signs to look out for and how to protect themselves at all times. Learn [more tips for talking to your children about sex trafficking.](#)

4. Talk to your children about the dangers of social media.

As mentioned before, social media has opened immediate connections with millions of people, worldwide. Social media has led to some wonderful opportunities and friendships, but it has also made it easier for predators to hide their identities behind avatars and personas. Speaking to your children about accepting friend requests and sharing information will give them the tools needed to navigate social media channels safely. It is also important to monitor online activity in your home and communicate openly about your expectations for online behavior.

5. Talk to your children about the dangers of online gaming.

Like above, massive multiplayer games connect your children instantly to other players with the ability to chat while engaged in game play. Forming teams, developing strategies and getting to know other players is half the fun of playing online games, but it is important to know how to determine if your child is interacting with friends or foes. Again, make sure your child knows they can come to you if they are uncomfortable with someone else in the game.



6. Pay attention to your children.

This tip might seem obvious, but signs that children are in danger are often missed or dismissed as “just a phase.” It is easy to settle into routines and get caught up in the “busyness” of work and our other social interactions. Now, more than ever, it is important to make the time to check in with your children and note any worrying patterns or sudden changes in personality. Sudden changes in personality, like becoming withdrawn or angry, or a drastic change in group of friends might be signs of typical adolescent behavior or they may be signs that your child is being abused or controlled by someone else. Ask questions, and make it clear that kids can talk to you or a safe adult about anything without fear of punishment. [Our website Rahab’s Daughters](#) has more signs to look for if you suspect human trafficking.

7. If you are dropping your children off for activities like gymnastics or soccer make sure there is a delegated safe parent staying for every game and every practice.

Children need to be socialized and parents need some time to themselves. Team sports, art classes or other extra-curricular activities can serve both purposes. As parents, we trust that the people running or coaching those activities have been properly vetted. When those people are members of our own communities, we trust that they are taking care of our children, but recent scandals demonstrate that trusted institutions aren’t always safe places. Not every organization conducts background checks and some have power structures that actively protect abusers. Forming a group of “safe parents” who take turns attending practices and activities to keep a watchful eye on the people interacting with your children is a way to prevent your child falling victim to sexual abuse in a place where they should be safe.

8. Make sure your kids have [safe adults](#) in their lives to confide in.

No matter how much you emphasize that the lines of communication are open and create a loving and safe home for your child, there are just some things children don’t want to discuss with their parents. They may not feel comfortable coming to a parent if they feel guilty or frightened of consequences. They may seek the help of other adults they feel they can confide when they feel unsure and unsafe. This could be aunts and uncles, parents of their friends, or teachers. Talk to the other adults around your children about being open to listening to their concerns and bringing any alarming or concerning information to you. Promise to do the same with their children. It is important to remember not to betray confidence, but if your child is speaking about abusive or criminal behavior, their safety should take priority.

9. Use a camera cover on all laptop and desktop cameras when not in use.

Now that Zoom and Google meetings are a part of our learning, workplace and social interaction, wi-fi internet access and webcams are a daily part of our lives. When they are not in use, get into the habit of covering the camera and train all the members of your household to do the same. There are several instances of home computers or wi-fi based security systems being hacked, and the cameras controlled by the hackers. Taking some common sense precautions is good prevention.

10. Teach your children empathy for enslaved people and explain what it means.

In addition to speaking to your children about the reality of human trafficking and sexual abuse in the context of their own safety, you can incorporate an ongoing remembrance of victims and create an empathetic approach to the issues by:

- Praying for trafficking victims with your children
- Discuss, without judgement, the circumstances that might lead to people being trafficked
- Provide safe harbor or employment to survivors, if you are in a position to do so.

