A summer of fun and safety:
How to keep kids safe from abuse at summer camp and summer programs

When preparing to send your kids to summer camp and summer programs, you’ll pack sunscreen and clothes to protect them. Keeping kids safe from abuse is another step in protecting your kids this summer.

Check out camp and program policies:
• Are all staff and volunteers screened and trained in sexual abuse prevention?
• How do staff report concerns of abuse?
• How are concerns of abuse addressed?
• When are parents notified if there are concerns of abuse?

Know camp and program rules:
• Are families told about clear expectations of behavior before the program begins? Once you know the program rules, talk with your child about them.
• How are romantic relationships and inappropriate sexual advances addressed?
• Are kids encouraged to voice their concerns?
• Are their concerns heard and treated seriously?

Before kids leave home, make sure kids know about:
• Correct names for all body parts so they are comfortable talking about them.
• Personal boundaries. Teach kids that their bodies belong to them and they have the right to say “no” to touches that bother or confuse them. Teach them to respect other kids’ and grownups’ personal boundaries.
• Remind kids that “no means no,” to help them resist peer pressure.
• Some adults and kids have touching problems and break rules about personal boundaries. They might use bribes, like candy, money and drugs, and ask kids to keep it secret.
• Teach kids to tell you or a safe grownup right away if someone scares them or makes them uncomfortable.

Important next steps for parents:
• Get to know people your kids spend time with – friends and their parents, neighbors, activity directors and camp staff.
• Pay close attention when someone shows your child a great deal of attention or gives them special gifts. Talk with your child about that person. Tell that person or his/her supervisor that you are not comfortable with your child being treated differently.
• Be a good role model. Demonstrate good boundaries and respect others’ boundaries.
• Speak up if you see concerning behaviors and report abuse immediately.

Abuse prevention resources:
www.caresnw.org
www.stopitnow.org
www.safe4kids.org