

# 5

## STEPS TO PROTECTING CHILDREN™



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5

### These steps form a framework for preventing child sexual abuse.

They can help you become aware of the scope of the issue, take actionable steps toward both preventing and responding to abuse, and create safer environments for the children in your life. They act as a guide for developing protective behaviors against abuse.

To learn practical ways to effectively implement all five steps, Darkness to Light offers *Stewards of Children*®, an in-depth training available both online and in-person.

To learn more or get trained, visit [www.D2L.org](http://www.D2L.org)

#### LEARN THE FACTS

If we don't understand child sexual abuse, we can't end it.

It is highly likely that you know a child who has been or is being abused. Experts estimate that one in 10 children are sexually abused before their 18th birthday.

#### MINIMIZE OPPORTUNITY

Safe environments can help reduce the risk for abuse.

More than 80% of sexual abuse cases occur in isolated, one-on-one situations. Make sure interactions with children can be observed and interrupted.

#### TALK ABOUT IT

Talking openly breaks down barriers and reduces stigma.

Children often keep abuse a secret, but talking openly about our bodies, sex, and boundaries can encourage children to share and feel safe.

#### RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

Signs of abuse aren't always obvious, but they are often there.

Emotional or behavioral changes are often the most common signs, rather than physical evidence. Trauma may be the root of what is typically labelled 'bad' or 'difficult' behavior.

#### REACT RESPONSIBLY

It's our responsibility to react appropriately to suspicion, disclosure, or discovery of abuse.

Only 4% to 8% of reports of all sexual abuse are false. Understand how to respond to risky behaviors and suspicions or reports of abuse.



**DARKNESS TO LIGHT**®  
END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE