

URGENT: Child Abuse Cases Surge Nationwide, Expert-Endorsed Program Offers Critical Tools to Keep Children Safe

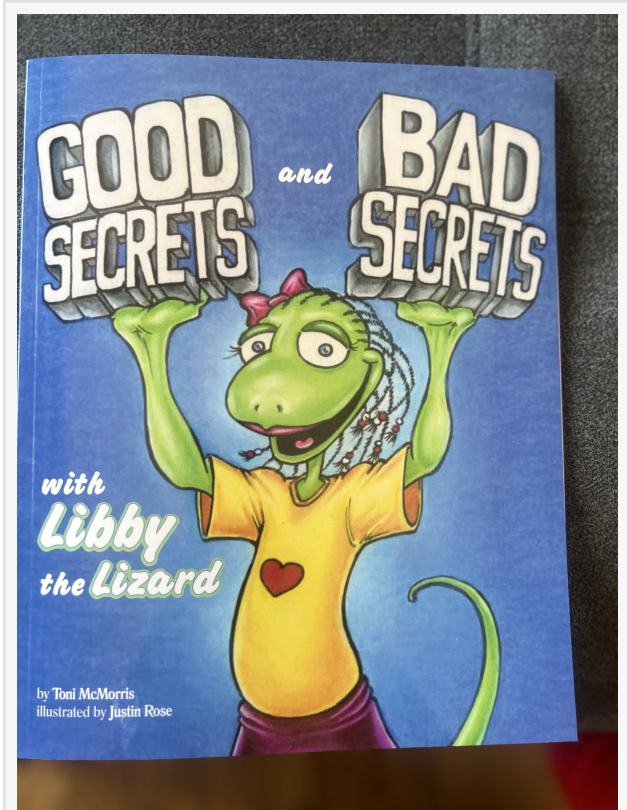
April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Libby the Lizard is a Tool to Help Protect Children from harmful secrets. Author also promotes Hand Signal for Distress

DETROIT, MI, UNITED STATES, April 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With more than 550,000 children known to U.S. authorities as victims of abuse and neglect, children's author [Toni McMorris](#) and her clinically-supported Libby the Lizard program is reaching out to parents, educators, communities of faith, law enforcement, medical and mental health clinicians, and the public as a reminder and resource for National Child Abuse Prevention Month. The program, endorsed by educator and school performance specialist Dr. Shawn Hurt and child psychologist Dr. Suzanne Brown, combines storytelling, animation, and the Canadian Women's Foundation's Signal for Help that could save young lives and alert adults if they are exposed to or experiencing bullying, abuse, thoughts of suicide, or hurting others. It can potentially alert authorities if children are aware of another child's plans for revenge.

"Bad secrets need to be told," says McMorris, whose evidence-based approach has been successfully implemented in educational settings and validated by mental health professionals. Her book, "Good Secrets and Bad Secrets with Libby the Lizard," transforms how children learn about personal safety through age-appropriate messaging endorsed by child development experts.

The clinically-supported program includes:

- An engaging children's book featuring Libby the Lizard, reviewed by child psychologists
- Professional-grade animated content bringing safety lessons to life



Helping to Protect Children from Abuse, Bullying, Trafficking, and Suicide

- The Signal for Help, created by the Canadian Women's Foundation - a simple one-handed gesture that allows someone to silently indicate they need help
- Expert-developed resources for parents, educators, and caregivers

National statistics reveal the urgency of this initiative:

- Reports of child abuse are made every 10 seconds
- 74.3% of victims suffer from neglect
- 17% experience physical abuse
- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before the age of 18
- 91% of perpetrators are known to the child

Available for Speaking Engagements:

- School assemblies and teacher training
- Healthcare provider conferences
- Mental health professional workshops
- Child advocacy organizations
- Law enforcement and first responder training

"Every child deserves to feel safe and know how to ask for help," McMorris adds. "Through Libby the Lizard, we're providing tools that mental health professionals, educators, and healthcare providers agree children can understand and use to protect themselves."

McMorris's expanding program includes plans for additional expert-reviewed books and animations focusing on various aspects of child safety, including bullying prevention and personal boundaries, all developed in consultation with child development specialists.

About Toni McMorris:

Toni McMorris is survivor, author, and child safety advocate whose work has been featured in the Detroit Free Press and endorsed by leading healthcare providers, educators, and mental health professionals. Her character Libby the Lizard has evolved into a clinically-supported tool for child protection nationwide.

For media inquiries, interview requests, or speaking engagement bookings, please contact:

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