

## Child Sexual Abuse Facts and Statistics

### You should know...

- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before the age of 18. (Finkelhor, 1992)
- In 70% to 90% of child sexual abuse cases, the perpetrator is a family member or acquaintance of the victim. (Finklehor, 1994)
- Children under 12 make up 50% of all forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and forcible fondling cases reported to law enforcement. (Snyder, 2000)
- 1 in 7 sexual assault victims reported to law enforcement are under age 6. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996)
- For 60% of "sexually active" girls under the age of 14, their only sexual experience has been a rape. (Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Coalition of North Carolina, 1994)
- Some estimates indicate that there is one sex offender for every square mile in the United States. (Jensen, 2002)
- Most perpetrators of child sexual abuse are heterosexual, regardless of whether they abuse boys or girls, or both. (Hunter, 1990)
- The most vulnerable age for child sexual abuse is between 7 and 13 years of age. (Finkelhor, 1994)
- 66% of pregnant and parenting teens report having been raped at some point in their lives. (Boyer & Fine, 1990)
- Victims of child sexual abuse can be male or female, of any age or race, and from all different socioeconomic backgrounds.

## ATVP Celebrating 25 Years of Survivors' Strength in 2005

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A UNITED WAY AGENCY

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[www.atvp.org](http://www.atvp.org)

**E-Mail Address**  
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**24-Hour Hotline**  
(509) 332-HELP (4357)  
Or  
(208) 883-HELP  
Collect Crisis Calls Accepted

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## CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

A Guide for Parents



### Alternatives to Violence of the Palouse

Help for victims and  
survivors of domestic  
violence and  
sexual assault

24 hour Crisis Hotline  
**(509) 332-HELP**  
Or  
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## Defining Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse occurs when a more powerful person manipulates, forces, or tricks a child under the age of 18 into sexual behavior for the abuser's own sexual gratification.

The perpetrator may be an adult, such as a parent, teacher, or activity leader. The perpetrator may also be another child, such as an older sibling or babysitter, but is rarely a stranger.

Sexual abuse encompasses both physical and non-physical acts. Examples of sexual abuse include, but are not limited to, fondling, inappropriate touching, rape or attempted rape, using the child to create pornography, making the child view pornography, indecent exposure, voyeurism, suggestive comments, and obscene phone calls.

Most perpetrators of child sexual abuse are known to the child. They may spend months "grooming" the child in order to gain his or her trust. Only a small number of children who have been sexually abused ever tell anyone.

## Possible Indicators and Effects of Child Sexual Abuse

- Genital pain, itching, or bleeding; sexually transmitted infections or early pregnancy
- Compulsive masturbation and sex play inappropriate to the child's age
- Substance abuse and/or promiscuous sexual behavior
- Depression, anxiety, mood swings, and suicide attempts
- Abrupt changes in behavior and academic performance
- Sudden avoidance or fear of a particular person, place, or activity
- Acting out against or sexually abusing other children
- Sudden weight gain or weight loss; eating disorders

### Note...

Many children who have been sexually abused do not show any obvious symptoms of the abuse. Children who have been sexually abused experience a range of emotions, including confusion, fear, doubt, humiliation, and shame. Children rarely disclose sexual abuse for a number of reasons. The perpetrator may threaten to abuse or hurt the child's loved ones, or say that the child's parents will be angry with and blame the child. If the perpetrator is a parent or other relative, the victim may feel the need to protect him or her.

## Teach your children...

- **H**uman anatomy and sexuality. Make them topics your children can discuss with you freely. Communicate with them.
- **P**ersonal space. Tell them it is OK to refuse a touch that makes them uncomfortable, even from a relative or teacher.
- **S**elf-esteem. Validate and praise them. Children with high self-esteem are less likely to be targeted by sex offenders.
- **S**ecrets are not okay, no matter who asks you to keep them. Help your children differentiate "secrets" and "surprises."
- **S**afety planning. Use "what if?" questions. Help them decide what they will do if they encounter a bad touch or uncomfortable situation.

## If your child discloses...

- **S**tay calm. This is difficult but important. If your child thinks he or she is the cause for your distress, he or she may shut down.
- **L**isten to and believe your child. Gather information in a supportive manner. Children do not generally have the capacity to lie about sexual abuse. Assure your child they did the right thing by yelling you. Be there for your child.
- **R**eport the abuse to the appropriate social services agency. Tell your child that whatever the outcome, the abuser is at fault.
- **S**eek both medical assistance and professional counseling for your child, whether the abuse occurred days ago or years ago.
- **S**eek help for yourself. You are affected as well. Contact a therapist or crisis center for information and counseling options.