

Sexual Abuse Prevention

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Prevalence

- In 2010, over 60,000 individual children were reported.
- Sexual abuse is
 - < 10% of all child maltreatment
 - Appears to be on the decline



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Prevention

- Myth: Stranger Danger
- Facts: Most offenders are known to the child; they are often adults in positions of authority.



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Prevention

- What to tell kids
- Tips for parents
- Tips for youth serving organizations
- Acknowledgement: www.enoughabuse.org, a CDC-funded project of Massachusetts Citizens for Children.



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3 rules for kids

1. Adults shouldn't be interested in your private parts.
2. Adults never need a child's help with his / her body.
3. Adults should never tell a child to keep something secret from their parents.



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What to do?

- Tell your mom or dad

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For Parents

- Encourage your child to talk with you
 - *You are a special person and deserve to be treated with love and respect.*
- Support activities in group settings
- If child is in one-one activities (ie mentoring)
 - Its OK to drop in unexpectedly
 - Encourage meetings in public places
 - Sign up with an organization that monitors





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For youth serving organizations

Adult Behavioral Signs

- Prefers the company of children / teens to adults
 - Has a special friend among the children
 - Gives child gifts for no particular occasion
 - Finds ways to be alone with a child
 - Encourages child / teen to discuss sexual feelings
 - Ignores cues rejecting touch (hugs, kisses, tickling)
 - Doesn't respect child's privacy
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Identification

- Typical presentation is nonspecific
 - Physical irritation
 - Somatic complaints
 - Behavior changes
- Warning signs:
 - Reluctance to be with a particular person
 - Having gifts – money, clothes, music
 - Reluctant to give details about what they do together



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- Myth: Doctors or NPs can tell if a child has been abused by physical exam
 - Fact: Most abused children appear normal

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Reporting

- Reporting is based on *suspicion* – not *certainty*
- Ask for referral to a child advocacy center
 - *Forensic interview*
 - *Forensic exam*
 - *Child friendly environment*





Factors that indicate need for quick evaluation

- Recent sexual contact
 - May be able to collect forensic evidence
- Child still exposed to alleged perpetrator
- Family crisis

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Summary

- Steps for prevention
- Identification is difficult
- Reporting is required



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