
THE PARENT PAMPHLET

A Guide for Families

Children of all genders can be victims of child sexual abuse. The abusers can be any gender.



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INTRODUCTION

This guide provides basic information about the issue of child sexual abuse and services available for your child, yourself and your family.

When your child is sexually abused, you want to be helpful, but you may not know how to handle the problem or what to expect from the agencies that may become involved in the case. If parents of child sexual abuse victims understand what has happened to their child and know what to expect, they are often better able to help their child recover from the abuse.



WHAT TO DO?

One of the most helpful things you can do is find information and support for yourself and your child.

Being informed will help you make good decisions. It is also helpful to talk with your child and let them be involved in decisions. This will help the child regain a sense of control.

Remember that even though your child may not have physical injuries, your child may be upset, afraid or worried. It is not easy to discuss the abuse, but your child may not worry as much if you talk about it. Your child needs to know that you are not afraid and that you are listening to what is said.

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

In the broadest definition, child sexual abuse may refer to:

- Any forced or coerced sexual activity involving a child;
- Sexual contact between a child and another person (whether it is an adult or another child) in which treats, bribes or other tricks are used to get the child to participate in the activity;
- Any sexual contact between an adult and a child.

Some sexual abuse is not physically violent. It can include:

- Sexual talk;
- Exposure of sexual body parts or exposure to sex acts;
- Voyeurism or peeping activities;
- Child pornography;
- Encouraging or promoting child prostitution.

You should take any of these behaviors seriously and report them to law enforcement.

Often, the abuser will persuade the child to cooperate and to keep the abuse a secret. This persuasion may involve the promise of special treats or privileges or threats of physical punishment and other consequences to loved ones or pets.



THE OFFENDERS?

People who sexually abuse children come from all economic, ethnic, social and educational backgrounds. You cannot recognize abusers by their appearance. They do not fit any stereotypes. They can be married or single. They can be old or young. They can be any gender.

About 80% of all sexual abuse of children is perpetrated by someone known to the child. Many abusers are people the child loves and trusts.

Although it is often difficult for adults to believe, children sometimes sexually abuse other children. If the behavior between the children seems unusual or abusive, parents should intervene.



THE EFFECTS ON YOUR CHILD ...

After the abuse, the behavior of your child may change for a time. You may notice any of the following:

- Heightened fear or anxiety;
- Increased tearfulness or crying;
- Disturbed sleeping patterns such as fear of going to bed, fear of sleeping alone, nightmares and bedwetting;
- Loss of appetite;
- Irritable nature, losing patience easily;
- Temper tantrums;
- Isolation or secrecy;
- Difficulty at school.

The absence of these symptoms doesn't mean the abuse didn't occur. While you should be aware of any changes in your child's behavior or attitude, some children are not visibly changed by the experience.

HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

There is no set timeframe for recovery from sexual abuse. Symptoms you can see may last a few weeks or much longer. The reaction by parents and others can impact the recovery. If the child feels especially loved and protected during this time, recovery from the trauma may happen more quickly.

HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?

After learning your child has been sexually abused, try to respond with patience and kindness to your child, yourself and your family. Try these suggestions:

- **Help** your child to express their feelings.
- **Do not blame** the child for what has happened.
- **Be honest** with your child. Share what you know.
- **Restore** your child's sense of control. Allow the child to help decide what to do.
- **Do not push** your child to talk about the experience. If the subject comes up, discuss it honestly and openly.
- **Maintain routines** and return to your family's usual activities as soon as possible. Don't become too protective of your child.
- **Give** your child safety information. Help the child identify safe people to go to when scared or sad.
- **Pay attention** to the needs of other children in your household. Give them the information and support they need.
- **Discuss** your feelings with someone you trust, such as a friend, relative or counselor. This is not a time for you to be "tough." It is a good time to seek support for yourself.

WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

FROM A RAPE CRISIS CENTER ...

You can call a rape crisis center for advice and help. Phone numbers are listed at the end of this booklet. Each crisis center has workers that can help you get medical care and legal advocacy. Centers also provide case management and ongoing individual and family counseling services. These services are free and confidential to victims and their friends and family.

Crisis center staff and volunteers can help you report the abuse to police and DCFS and can provide emotional support for you, your child and your other family members. Crisis center advocates can go with you to meetings with law enforcement, the prosecutor and the DCFS caseworker, as well as attend court with you and your child. Crisis center counselors can assist you and your family in the healing process after sexual abuse.

FROM A DOCTOR OR HOSPITAL ...

Your child may not appear to be injured, but a medical exam is needed to check for injuries, sexually transmitted infections or other evidence of sexual abuse. It is important to preserve any medical evidence of the abuse. Therefore, a sexually abused child should have a complete physical exam by a doctor as soon as possible after the incident occurs, even if you don't learn of the abuse until months later.

FROM THE POLICE OR DCFS ...

Child sexual abuse is a crime and should be reported to your local police department. If the abuser is a parent, teacher or other caretaker, call the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services at 1-800-25-ABUSE. The hotline worker will tell you if DCFS can help with your child's case.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

AT THE HOSPITAL ...

The hospital emergency room has special kits and procedures to use in sexual abuse cases. You can ask that the hospital call a rape crisis center advocate to provide support for you and your child. Medical staff will examine your child, fill out a report and do certain lab tests that may be used as evidence in court.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Your child may also need to see a medical provider for follow-up care. Unless your child is eligible for Medicaid, you should receive a voucher to pay for follow-up care related to the sexual abuse. The voucher is good for 90 days after the emergency room visit. Follow the instructions of the hospital staff.



WITH THE POLICE/DCFS ...

When you call the police, they will take an initial report and schedule an interview, which may be conducted at a Child Advocacy Center (CAC). A child protective services caseworker may also be assigned to the case.

The investigator needs to know:

- What happened;
- Where;
- When; and
- Who else was present at the time.

This information will help the investigator decide what to do next. The child's statement may be recorded.

The investigator will also ask you and your child if you know the offender and if he is a relative. Sometimes victims won't remember every detail in every setting, so don't be alarmed if your child's story of the abuse varies with each telling.

AT COURT ...

If a suspect is arrested, your child may have to go to the courthouse to speak with a prosecutor. The prosecutor will review the results of the medical examination and lab tests. He or she will read the statement your child gave to the police and review other information about the incident. The prosecutor will decide whether to file charges against the person who is accused of abusing your child.

To make it easier for children to testify against their abusers, testimony may be taken in private, rather than in open court, and transmitted via closed-circuit television equipment. A rape crisis advocate can help you and your child prepare for the case. A recording of your child's interview at the police department or CAC may also be used.

NOTES ...



RAPE CRISIS SERVICES IN ILLINOIS ...

■ NORTH

ADDISON*

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
Patterson & McDaniel Center
24 hrs. 708-748-5672

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS

Northwest CASA
24 hrs. 888-802-8890
www.nwcasa.org

ATKINSON*

Freedom House, Inc.
24 hrs. 800-474-6031
www.freedomhouseillinois.org

AURORA

Mutual Ground, Inc.
24 hrs. 630-897-8383
www.mutualgroundinc.org

BELVIDERE*

Rockford Sexual Assault
Counseling, Inc.
24 hrs. 815-636-9811

BERWYN*

The CARE Center
24 hrs. 708-482-9600

CHICAGO HEIGHTS

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago
South Suburban Center
24 hrs. 708-748-5672
www.ywcachicago.org

CRYSTAL LAKE*

Northwest CASA
24 hrs. 888-802-8890

DEKALB

Safe Passage, Inc.
24 hrs. 815-756-5228
www.safepassagedv.org

DIXON*

YWCA of the Sauk Valley
24 hrs. 815-288-1011

ELGIN

Community Crisis Center
24 hrs. 847-697-2380
www.crisiscenter.org

EVANSTON*

Northwest CASA
24 hrs. 888-802-8890

FREERPORT

VOICES of Stephenson County
24 hrs. 815-232-7200

GALENA

Riverview Center
24 hrs. 888-707-8155
www.riverviewcenter.org

GURNEE

Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center
24 hrs. (847) 872-7799
www.zcenter.org

HICKORY HILLS

The Pillars Community Services
24 hrs. 708-482-9600
www.pillarscommunity.org

JOLIET

Sexual Assault Service Center
Guardian Angel Community
Services
24 hrs. 815-730-8984
www.gacsprograms.org

KANKAKEE

Kankakee County Center
Against Sexual Assault
24 hrs. 815-932-3322
www.kc-casa.org

MORRIS*

Sexual Assault Service Center
Guardian Angel Community
Services
24 hrs. 815-730-8984

MOUNT CARROLL*

Riverview Center
24 hrs. 877-273-7772

OREGON*

Rockford Sexual Assault
Counseling, Inc.
24 hrs. 815-636-9811

OTTAWA

ADV & SAS
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

PLAINFIELD*

Sexual Assault Service Center
Guardian Angel Community
Services
24 hrs. 815-730-8984

PONTIAC*

ADV & SAS
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

PRINCETON

Freedom House, Inc.
24 hrs. 800-474-6031
www.freedomhouseillinois.org

QUAD CITIES

Rape/Sexual Assault Counseling
Program
Family Resources, Inc.
24 hrs. 309-797-1777
www.famres.org

ROCHELLE*

Rockford Sexual Assault
Counseling, Inc.
24 hrs. 815-636-9811

ROCKFORD

Rockford Sexual Assault
Counseling, Inc.
24 hrs. 815-636-9811
www.rockfordsexualassaultcounseling.org

SKOKIE*

Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center
24 hrs. (847) 872-7799

STERLING

YWCA of the Sauk Valley
24 hrs. 815-626-7277
www.ywca.org/saukvalley

STREATOR

ADV & SAS
24 hrs. 800-892-3375
www.advsas.org

WATSEKA*

Iroquois Sexual Assault Services.
24 hrs. 815-432-0420

■ CHICAGO

Chicago 24-Hour Hotline
1-888-293-2080

RAPE VICTIM ADVOCATES

www.rapevictimadvocates.org

- Stroger Hospital*
- Austin*
- Northside*

MUJERES LATINAS EN ACCION

www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org

- North Riverside

YWCA METROPOLITAN

CHICAGO SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

www.ywcachicago.org

- Laura Parks and Mildred
Francis Center*
- Englewood*
- Logan Square*
- RISE Children's Center*

RAPE CRISIS SERVICES IN ILLINOIS ...

■ CENTRAL

BLOOMINGTON

Stepping Stones Sexual Assault Services
YWCA McLean County
24 hrs. 309-827-4005
www.ywcamclean.org

BROWN COUNTY*

Quanada Sexual Assault Program
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

CHARLESTON/MATTOON

Sexual Assault Counseling & Information Service
24 hrs. 888-345-2846
www.sacis.org

DANVILLE

Vermillion County
Rape Crisis Center
24 hrs. 866-617-3224
www.vcrapecrisis.org

DECATUR

Growing Strong Sexual Assault Center
24 hrs. 217-428-0770
www.growingstrongcenter.org

GALESBURG*

WIRC/CAA Victim Services
Knox County
24 hrs. 309-837-5555
www.wirpc.org/victim-services

JACKSONVILLE*

Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault
24 hrs. 217-753-8081

MACOMB

Western Illinois Regional Council/ Community Action Agency Victim Services
24 hrs. 309-837-5555
www.wirpc.org/victim-services

MT. STERLING

Quanada
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

QUINCY

Quanada Sexual Assault Program
24 hrs. 800-369-2287
www.quanada.org

PEORIA

The Center for the Prevention of Abuse
Sexual Assault Services
24 hrs. 309-691-4111 or 800-559-SAFE
www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org

PITTSFIELD*

Quanada Pike County
24 hrs 800-369-2287

ROBINSON*

Counseling & Information for Sexual Assault/Abuse
24 hrs. 866-288-4888

RUSHVILLE*

Quanada
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

SPRINGFIELD

Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault
24 hrs. 217-753-8081
www.prairiecasa.org

TAYLORVILLE*

Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault
24 hrs. 217-753-8081

URBANA/CHAMPAIGN

Rape, Advocacy, Counseling and Education Services
24 hrs. 217-384-4444 or 877-236-3727
www.cu-races.org

■ SOUTH

ALTON*

Call For Help, Inc.
Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975

BELLEVILLE

Call For Help, Inc. Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975
www.callforhelpinc.org

CARBONDALE

Rape Crisis Services of The Women's Center, Inc.
24 hrs. 618-529-2324 or 800-334-2094
www.thewomensctr.org

CENTRALIA*

Sexual Assault and Family Emergencies
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

EAST ST. LOUIS*

Call For Help, Inc.
Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975

EFFINGHAM*

Sexual Assault and Family Emergencies
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

HARRISBURG*

Rape Crisis Services of The Women's Center, Inc.
24 hrs. 800-334-2094

MARION*

Rape Crisis Services of The Women's Center, Inc.
24 hrs. 800-334-2094

MT. VERNON*

Sexual Assault and Family Emergencies
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

TROY*

Call For Help, Inc.
Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975

VANDALIA

Sexual Assault and Family Emergencies
24 hrs. 800-625-1414
www.safecrisiscenter.org

WATERLOO*

Call For Help, Inc., Sexual Assault Victims Care Unit
24 hrs. 618-397-0975

** Shows satellite and outreach offices of main centers.*

**FOR SERVICES AND INFORMATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY
CONCERNING SEXUAL ASSAULT OR SEXUAL ABUSE,
CONTACT:**



**100 N. 16th Street
Springfield, IL., 62703
Phone: (217) 753-4117 Website: www.icasa.org**