

Child Sexual Abuse

Perpetrators – Manipulation – Disclosure – Prevention

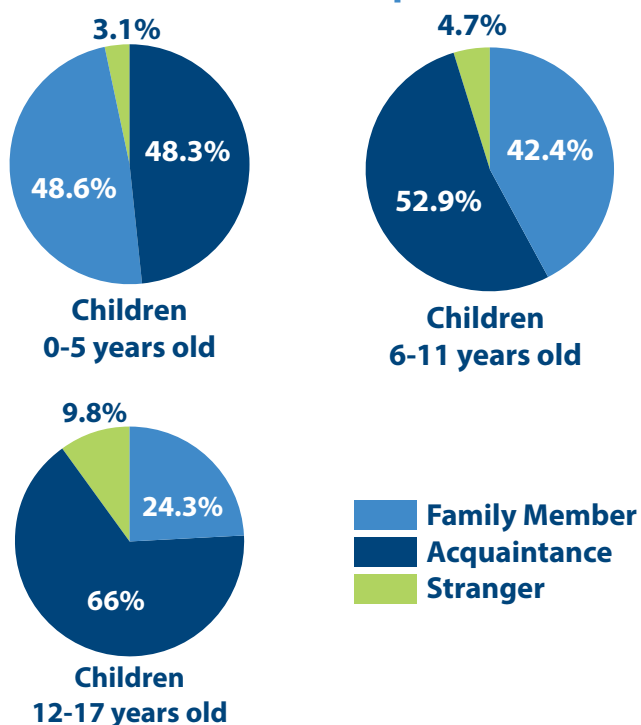
Who are the Perpetrators?^{1,2,3,4,5,6}

Perpetrators can be anyone including family members, family friends, coaches, teachers, clergy, babysitters, and any other acquaintances.



THEY CAN BE ANY AGE, RACE, GENDER, RELIGIOUS BELIEF, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, EDUCATION LEVEL, FINANCIAL STATUS

Child Victim and Perpetrator Relationships



MANIPULATION

How do Perpetrators manipulate children and families?^{7,8,9,10,11}

- Perpetrators are patient! They work to gain trust and friendship of the child and often of the entire family.
- Perpetrators pay attention to what a child likes and dislikes, to find ways to interact with the child.
- Perpetrators find ways to be alone with the child.
- Perpetrators often “test” a child’s ability to protect himself/herself by engaging in touching activities such as hugs and kisses, back rubs, horseplay, etc.
- Perpetrators take advantage of a child’s natural curiosity. If a child seems comfortable and/or curious about touching, then slowly increases the sexual contact.

DISCLOSURE

Why do only 16% of child victims tell about the abuse?^{12,13,14,15, 16, 17}

- Many child victims don’t understand that what is happening to them is sexual or is wrong.
- The “touches” may feel good to the child and because it “didn’t hurt”, the child is less likely to tell.
- Child victims may feel guilty or embarrassed about the abuse, or think it is their fault.
- Perpetrators may give the child alcohol, drugs, or pornography and later threaten to expose the child’s use of these items.
- Perpetrators may threaten to hurt the child, the child’s family members or pets.
- Child victims often fear they will not be believed by family members, especially caregivers.

PREVENTION

How can parents protect their children?^{18, 19, 20}

- Talk with children early and often throughout their development about healthy sexuality.
- Teach children the correct names for all body parts.
- Tell children that sexual or inappropriate touching is NEVER the child’s fault.
- Listen to and believe children if they are trying to tell. Children RARELY lie about sexual abuse.
- If something is not right about a child’s relationship with an adult or other child, act on it.



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