

Breaking the Silence of Child Sexual Abuse

A Guide for Parents

Possible Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse

The following indicators may or may not be present in cases where sexual abuse is involved.

Physical

- € A sexually transmitted disease in a young child
- € Complaints of pain and itching in genital area
- € Torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- € Pregnancy
- € Genital and/or anal infections

Behavioral

- € A child behaving in an unusually seductive manner
- € Withdrawn, infantile or regressive behavior
- € Overly sophisticated knowledge and interests in sexual acts
- € Child reporting being sexually involved with an adult
- € Use of drugs/alcohol
- € Repeated attempts to run away
- € Simulating sexual acts or being obsessed with masturbation
- € New names for private parts
- € Psychosomatic indicators (migraine headache, stomach ache, etc.)

MYTHS VS. FACTS

MYTH: The total stranger represents the greatest potential danger to the child.

FACT: Nearly 90% of child sexual abuse is committed by someone the child knows.

MYTH: Child victims come from lower socio-economic families.

FACT: Sexual abuse happens in every kind of family. Sexual abuse knows no boundaries.

MYTH: Sexual abuse is not harmful to children.

FACT: Sexual abuse can have long term effects if it is not dealt with appropriately.

MYTH: Children lie or make up stories about sexual abuse.

FACT: Children rarely lie about sexual abuse. Children cannot imagine or describe in explicit detail a sexual act they have not experienced.

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS I MUST TEACH MY CHILD?

- € It is important for a child to know, as early as possible, the proper names for his/her private parts
- € Let your child know that it is OK to tell you if someone touches his/her private parts.
- € Tell your child NO ONE should touch his/her private parts except to keep him/her CLEAN AND HEALTHY.
- € SECRETS about touching are not OK.
- € If someone wants to touch them they have the right to:
 - Say "NO!"
 - GO away
 - TELL a grown-up
- € Let your child know it is NOT their fault if it happens.

WHAT IF IT HAPPENS?

- € REPORT the abuser
- € Let your child know you believe him/her
- € Do NOT make threats which would frighten your child
- € Do NOT force your child to talk about the abuse
- € Find someone to talk to!

The numbers are frightening: One out of four girls and one out of six boys will be sexually abused before they reach the age of eighteen...yet only ONE OUT OF EVERY SEVEN WILL TELL SOMEONE.

There are no easy answers. We want our children to be safe, yet we may not be able to be with them every minute of every day.

Educating ourselves and our children can reduce the risk of our children becoming victims.

We can start by learning the FACTS about Child Sexual Abuse.

Wichita Area Sexual Assault Center

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Wichita, KS 67202-1115

24 – Hour Crisis Line (316) 263-3002

Office Number: (316) 263-0185

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This grant project was funded by the Federal Victims of Crime Act awarded by the Federal Office for Victims of Crime and Office of Justice programs of the Federal Department of Justice as administered by Kansas Attorney General Carla J Stovall. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication, program or exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Office of the Kansas Attorney General or the Federal Department of Justice.