



**It's estimated that there are 60 million survivors of childhood sexual abuse in America today.**

# SEXUAL ABUSE

## STATS & FACTS

- ➔ The numbers are staggering. An average of 5.5 children per 10,000 enrolled in day care are sexually abused.
- ➔ An average of 8.9 children out of every 10,000 are abused in the home.
- ➔ Approximately 31% of women in prison state that they had been abused as children.
- ➔ Approximately 95% of teenage prostitutes have been sexually abused.
- ➔ It is estimated that children with disabilities are 4 to 10 times more vulnerable to sexual abuse than their non-disabled peers.
- ➔ Long-term effects of child abuse include fear, anxiety, depression, anger, hostility, inappropriate sexual behavior, poor self esteem, tendency toward substance abuse and difficulty with close relationships.

[www.prevent-abuse-now.com](http://www.prevent-abuse-now.com)

Child sexual abuse has been reported up to 80,000 times a year, but the number of unreported instances is far greater, because the children are afraid to tell anyone what has happened, and the legal procedure for validating an episode is difficult. The problem should be identified, the abuse stopped, and the child should receive professional help. The long-term emotional and psychological damage of sexual abuse can be devastating to the child.

Child sexual abuse can take place within the family, by a parent, step-parent, sibling or other relative; or outside the home, for example, by a friend, neighbor, child care person, teacher or stranger. When sexual abuse has occurred, a child can develop a variety of distressing feelings, thoughts and behaviors.

**It's Not About Control. It's About Influence.**

## WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

- ➔ Telling children that if someone tries to touch your body and do things that make you feel funny, say NO to that person and tell me right away.
- ➔ Teaching children that respect does not mean blind obedience to adults and to authority. For example, don't tell your children that they always have to do everything a teacher or baby-sitter tells you to do. Some things are wrong no matter who is asking you to do it.
- ➔ Encouraging professional prevention programs in the local school system.

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

No child is psychologically prepared to cope with repeated sexual stimulation. Even a 2 or 3 year old, who cannot know the sexual activity is wrong, will develop

problems resulting from the inability to cope with the overstimulation.

A 5-year old (or older) who knows and cares for the abuser becomes trapped between affection or loyalty for the person, and the sense that the sexual activities are terribly wrong. If the child tries to break away from the sexual relationship, the abuser may threaten the child with violence or loss of love. When sexual abuse occurs within the family, the child may fear the anger, jealousy or shame of other family members, or be afraid the family will break up if the secret is told.

A child who is the victim of prolonged sexual abuse usually develops low self-esteem, a feeling of worthlessness and an abnormal or distorted view of sex. The child may become withdrawn and mistrustful of adults, and can become suicidal.

Some children who have been sexually abused have difficulty relating to others except on sexual terms. Some sexually abused children become child abusers

or prostitutes, or have other serious problems when they reach adulthood.

Often there are no obvious physical signs of child sexual abuse. Some signs can only be detected on physical exam by a physician.

Sexually abused children may develop the following:

- ➔ unusual interest in or avoidance of all things of a sexual nature
- ➔ sleep problems or nightmares
- ➔ depression or withdrawal from friends or family
- ➔ seductiveness
- ➔ statements that their bodies are dirty or damaged, or fear that there is something wrong with them in the genital area
- ➔ refusal to go to school
- ➔ delinquency/conduct problems
- ➔ secretiveness
- ➔ aspects of sexual molestation in drawings, games, fantasies
- ➔ unusual aggressiveness
- ➔ suicidal behavior

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For more information, visit [www.therealmajority.com](http://www.therealmajority.com)