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SomeoneTheyKnow.info

Frequently Asked Questions about Child Sex Abuse Prevention

What is SomeoneTheyKnow.info?

SomeoneTheyKnow.info is a statewide multi-media public education and outreach campaign to raise awareness about child sexual abuse sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse Indiana, Indiana Youth Services Association and The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis. The first focus of the public education efforts is to increase awareness about 'who', specifically, a perpetrator may be. In short, a perpetrator can be *anyone*. The program's informational website is www.SomeoneTheyKnow.info, and the social media sites are: www.facebook.com/someonetheyknow , www.twitter.com/SomeoneTheyKnow , and www.YouTube.com/someonetheyknow.info

What is SomeoneTheyKnow.info and what does it do?

SomeoneTheyKnow.info is a public information initiative designed to distribute effective child sexual abuse prevention education and information online and through social networks, where children and their parents find the majority of their sought-after information.

SomeoneTheyKnow.info is simply an informational website that serves as a central resource for information about child sex abuse for the affiliated organizations and their statewide local chapters. It includes easy-to-understand information and tips for parents to discuss the topic of child sex abuse with children, as well as educational information to help children to empower and protect themselves. SomeoneTheyKnow.info provides links to the resources of the participating organizations, as well as the hub for the social media network. The social media sites will continue to serve as the vehicles for conversations and to share information and education about child sexual abuse, perpetrators, and links to resources for parents and children.

What is Child Abuse?

Child abuse is the physical, sexual or emotional mistreatment, or neglect, of a child. Often a traumatic experience for children and teens, child sexual abuse is a criminal offense punishable by law in many societies. Child sexual abuse includes:

- Any sexual act between an adult and a minor, or between two minors, when one exerts power over the other.
- Forcing, coercing or persuading a child to engage in any type of sexual act.
- Non-contact acts such as exhibitionism, exposure to pornography, voyeurism, and communicating in a sexual manner by phone or Internet.

Source: D2L.org

Who is a child sex abuser?

A perpetrator can be anyone. *9 out of 10 child sexual abuse victims are abused by someone they know and trust, or someone their family knows and trusts.* The profile of predator is as varied as any one person. Sexual abuse perpetrators can be anyone, a minister, a teacher, a teammate or coach. **Those who molest children look and act just like everyone else. There are people who have or will sexually abuse children in churches, schools and youth sports leagues.**

Abusers can be neighbors, friends and family members. People who sexually abuse children can be found in families, schools, churches, recreation centers, youth sports leagues, and any other place children gather. Significantly, abusers can be and often are other children.

- About 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser.

How often is the abuser a family member?

- Approximately 30% of children who are sexually abused are abused by family members.

- The younger the victim, the more likely it is that the abuser is a family member.
- Of those molesting a child under six, 50% were family members.
- Family members also accounted for 23% of those abusing children ages 12 to 17.
- About 60% of children who are sexually abused are abused by people the family trusts.

How often is the abuser an older child or youth/teenager?

- As many as 40% of children who are sexually abused are abused by older, or more powerful children, and the younger the child victim, the more likely it is that the perpetrator is a juvenile.
- Juveniles are the offenders in 43% of assaults on children under age six. Of these offenders, 14% are under age 12.

What is the myth about ‘stranger danger’?

Many parents learned about ‘stranger danger’ when they were younger. But, children become confused at the term ‘stranger’. Who is a ‘stranger’? Once a person introduces himself/herself, is he/she a stranger any longer?

- Only 10% of sexually abused children are abused by a legitimate ‘stranger’, or someone whom they have never met and the family does not know.

How do predators begin to approach a child?

Most predators begin with a type of “grooming” process. This process may include gift giving, wanting to spend increased time alone with the child, texting or reaching out by social media, casual touching or tickling that begins to progress in a more sexual manner (this method is used to try and desensitize a child). They may start to tell inappropriate jokes, or introduce the child to sexual images. Again, this process is designed to desensitize the child. Since the sexual abuse perpetrators can be anyone, a minister, a teacher, a teammate or coach, often the child doesn’t recognize this behavior as unusual.

What are some of the factors that increase a child’s risk of being targeted by a predator?

Perpetrators report that they typically look to target passive, quiet, troubled, lonely children from single parent or broken homes. Perpetrators report that they frequently seek out children who are particularly trusting and find new and work proactively to establish a trusting relationship before abusing them.

- Not infrequently, this extends to establishing a trusting relationship with the victim’s family as well

What are some of the circumstances in which child sexual abuse occurs?

Child sexual abuse often takes place under specific, often surprising circumstances.

It is helpful to know these circumstances because it allows for the development of strategies that parents can discuss with children, which will help to avoid child sexual abuse.

- 81% of child sexual abuse incidents for all ages occur in one-perpetrator/one-child circumstances. (One-on-one situations during which the perpetrator and child are alone together for some period of time, so it is best to avoid situations in which your child is alone with anyone, whether it is a teacher or coach or older youth or neighbor.)
- Six to 11-year-old children are most likely (23%) to be abused in multiple-victim circumstances.
- Most sexual abuse of children occurs in a residence, typically that of the victim or perpetrator – 84% for children under age 12, and 71% for children aged 12 to 17.
- Sexual assaults on children are most likely to occur at 8 a.m., 12 p.m. and between 3 and 4 p.m. For older children, aged 12 to 17, there is also a peak in assaults in the late evening hours.
- One in seven incidents of sexual assault perpetrated by juveniles occurs on school days in the after-school hours between 3 and 7 p.m., with a peak from 3 to 4 pm.

What are some statistics about child sexual abuse?

- The average age for reported child abuse is 9 years old.
- More than 90% of abusers are people who the children know, love and trust.
- 30-40% of victims are abused by a family member.
- 50% are abused by someone outside of the family whom they know and trust.
- 85% of child abuse victims never report their abuse.
- Nearly 50% of all victims of forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, and forcible fondling are children under 12.
- Young victims may not recognize their victimization as sexual abuse.
- Nearly 70% of child sex offenders have between 1 and 9 victims...at least 20% have 10 to 40 victims.
- An average serial child molester may have as many as 400 victims in his lifetime.
- Nearly 50% of women in prison state that they were abused as children.
- Over 75% of serial rapists report they were sexually abused as youngsters.
- Women who report childhood rape are 3 times more likely to become pregnant before age 18.

Source: *Darkness to Light*, www.D2L.org

What can you say to a child who you think, or who has admitted to you, that someone they know is having an inappropriate relationship or behavior with your child?

Be careful what you say in front of your child. Although there would be a natural feeling of rage against someone who would endanger your child, if your child ever overhears you saying something that implies you would harm a perpetrator, they may be less inclined to tell you if something were to happen. Remember, the perpetrator is probably someone the child knows,

or loves, and they are probably dealing with feelings of ambivalence and confusion. They may also fear that you would be in trouble.

What do I say if my child says he/she was sexually abused or something happened that makes him/her feel uncomfortable?

If your child comes to you and tells you that something has happened, it is important to immediately:

1. Tell your child, "I believe you."
2. Tell your child, "Whatever happened, it was not your fault."
3. Tell your child, "I am on your side and will help you."

Research shows that if a child is believed and is given help right away, the recovery rate and success is much greater. Because the child almost always knows their abuser, they may feel very manipulated and confused about what is going on, especially if it is a relative or other loved one that is doing the abusing.

To report an incident, call 1-800-800-5556.

How should I talk to my child about sexual abuse?

When talking to and educating your child about sexual abuse and ways to stay safe, always:

1. Use the correct names for their body parts. This strategy helps to protect children by showing potential predators that they are knowledgeable about their bodies and about sexual abuse. Perpetrators tend to not victimize children who appear knowledgeable and empowered. By using accurate names for body parts, both male and female, it lets all children know there is nothing shameful about any part of their bodies.
2. Tell your child to come and tell you if any adult or older youth should ever tell them to keep a secret from you. Note: There is a difference between a "surprise" (like a birthday present) and a "secret" (typically something that could get someone in trouble.)
3. Do not use the terms "good" touch or "bad" touch, but rather let the child know to come to you *if someone is making them feel uncomfortable, or touching them in a way that makes them feel anxious or scared.*
4. Adapt your language based on the age of your child to use appropriate and understandable words. However, since children of the same age can be either more mature or less mature, also adapt your language based upon the development-level of your child.

How often should I talk to my child?

Talk with your child on an *on-going basis*. You should start early, and as your child gets older, you may go into more detail about their bodies and healthy sexual development. There does not have to be just one "facts of life" talk. There should be a continual, progressive conversation with your child as your child gets older.

Does the Internet pose a greater risk for child sexual abuse?

One in 5 child sex abuse victims is solicited sexually on the Internet. In this age of the Internet and social media, it is your duty as a parent or guardian to educate yourself about child sexual abuse and the additional risks posed by the Internet and Social Media, so you will be empowered to protect your child.

- Teach your children about not giving out any personal information on the Internet.
- Help your child understand that people are not always who they say they are online; someone who says they are a child may actually be an adult perpetrator.
- Monitor your child's Internet use, and use parental controls.
- Use the built-in security programs for iPhones and iPads, or download an additional monitoring app.
- Giving your child a cell phone to make calls can be very helpful, but they do not have to have access to the Internet.
- All caregivers should learn about social media, and keep up with terms and apps that are out there. You may not be able to keep up with everything, but you are letting your child, and any potential predator, know that you are paying attention.

Source: *Darkness to Light*, www.D2L.org

What is Prevent Child Abuse Indiana?

Prevent Child Abuse Indiana, A Division of The Villages, is dedicated to preventing child abuse and neglect, and is committed to making Indiana a better, safer place for Indiana's most precious resources – our children. With strong support of volunteers throughout the state, we work together to:

- Increase awareness of the problem and inform communities about solutions.
- Serve as a valuable resource for families, individuals and organizations.
- Advocate for expanded and improved programs and policies to prevent child abuse.
- Foster a statewide network committed to child abuse prevention.

What is Indiana Youth Services Association ("IYSA")?

IYSA membership is comprised of Youth Service Bureaus that deliver community based juvenile delinquency and family support programming. IYSA's current 32 Youth Services Bureaus serve approximately 74 Hoosier counties and focus on support services for vulnerable youth and families and offer programming that supports positive youth development. YSB programming is defined in Indiana state statute and includes four core roles:

- Juvenile delinquency prevention
- Information and referral services
- Community education
- Advocacy for youth

What is The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis?

For nearly three decades, The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis has helped improve the health of central Indiana, especially for those who are underserved or marginalized. Other organizations have come to rely on The Health Foundation to act fairly and thoughtfully in pursuit of health equity.

The Health Foundation proactively seeks out programs, builds partnerships and encourages innovative solutions to some of our community's most pressing health needs through targeted grant making. Together with partner organizations, The Health Foundation has built a reputation for funding the unfundable and seeks health justice for the disadvantaged.

How can I reach SomeoneTheyKnow.info or Prevent Child Abuse-Indiana?

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