

Child sexual abuse is the exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or caregiver. Sexual abuse includes both touching and non-touching offenses.<sup>1</sup>

## Prevalence of Sexual Abuse of Children

Child sexual abuse is often underreported.<sup>2</sup> As such, the following data points likely underestimate the frequency of sexual abuse.



**1 in 4** girls experience child sexual abuse.<sup>3</sup>



**1 in 13** boys experience child sexual abuse.<sup>4</sup>



Of the children removed from their home in 2023,<sup>\*</sup>  
**3%** were removed for reasons of sexual abuse.<sup>5</sup>

\* A child may be removed for more than one reason.

## Types of Offenses

### Touching Offenses:

- Fondling
- Sodomy
- Rape
- Intercourse
- Masturbation

### Non-touching Offenses:

- Child pornography
- Indecent exposure

## Who are the victims?

**91%** of children know their abuser.<sup>6</sup>

Certain groups of children and youth are more at risk of being sexually abused:<sup>7</sup>



Females

Children living in single parent households



Youth with physical, emotional or cognitive disabilities

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth



Children who have been sexually abused are more likely to:<sup>8</sup>

- Show physical aggression
- Experience behavioral health problems
- Attempt suicide
- Become delinquent
- Perform poorly in school
- Abuse alcohol or other drugs
- Become pregnant

## Who are the perpetrators?

Nearly **one-third** of victims are abused by family members.<sup>9</sup>

People who sexually abuse children look just like everyone else. Abusers can be neighbors, religious leaders, teachers, family members, or anyone who interacts with children.<sup>10</sup> The majority of children who are sexually abused DO NOT tell anyone about it. Many children are afraid of getting in trouble, worried about what people will think, or simply do not understand what is happening to them.<sup>11</sup>

## Did you know?

- The sexual preference of a perpetrator **does not** make them more likely to sexually abuse children.<sup>12</sup>
- There is **no research** that says a transgender person is more likely to sexually abuse children than someone who is not transgender.<sup>13</sup>
- Although men are consistently shown to commit the majority of child sexual abuse, **women are also abusers**.<sup>14</sup>
- In 2018, Georgia **mandated** age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness education for all students K-9<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>15</sup>
- Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention **Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG)** outlines sexual abuse prevention strategies.<sup>16</sup>

## Labeling Youth as Sexual Predators



- Juveniles represent **one-fourth** of all sex offenders and **one-third** of known offenders against other juveniles.<sup>17</sup>
- **40% to 80%** of juvenile sex offenders have **themselves been victims of sexual abuse**. These children are often responding to their own trauma.<sup>18</sup>
- Juvenile sex offenders are unlikely to commit another sex offense later in life.<sup>19</sup> Studies universally confirm that juvenile sex offense recidivism is relatively low with an estimated rate of 7%.<sup>20</sup> In addition, interventions for juvenile sex offenders have been shown to be particularly effective.<sup>21</sup>

## How Can I Help?

- Encourage community members to learn how they can prevent child sexual abuse. For example, consider taking a Darkness to Light Stewards of Children training. Learn more at [www.d2l.org](http://www.d2l.org).
- Educate adults, youth, and children about the harm caused by treating others as sexual objects.
- Develop relationships with your local state and federal representatives, and educate them about child sexual abuse and exploitation.

**If you suspect that a child is being abused, call the Division of Family and Children Services at 1-855-GACHILD immediately to report your concerns.**



## References for Child Sexual Abuse

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