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available: pckaky.org

PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (CSA)

*A guide for parents,
caregivers, professionals
and community members*



**Prevent Child Abuse
Kentucky™**



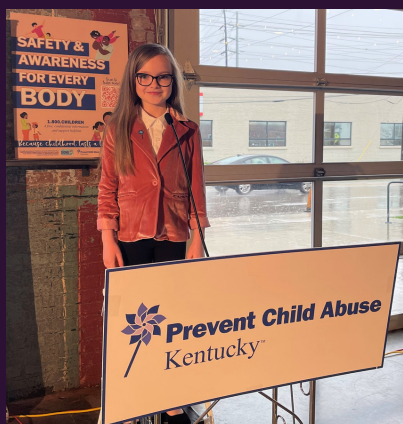
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It can be difficult to talk about child sexual abuse, but in order to prevent it from happening and keep Kentucky's children safe, we have to talk about it!



“WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT IT!” – CHARLOTTE, AGE 10

Hear more from Charlotte about how YOU can help prevent child sexual abuse:



Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky wants to provide you with tools to help prevent, identify, and report instances of child sexual abuse to ensure a safe and thriving environment for Kentucky's children and youth. The information in this guide speaks frankly about difficult topics. It may make you feel uncomfortable or leave you with additional questions.

All Kentuckians are mandated reporters of suspected child maltreatment. What if EVERYONE chose to be a COMMUNITY SUPPORTER prior to abuse or neglect ever occurring? If you believe a family is struggling with basic needs, stress, or lack of support, reach out and see what help you can provide! If you believe a child to be a victim of child maltreatment or if a child has disclosed abuse to you, make a report! Always believe a child if they disclose abuse.

Contact the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services Centralized Intake Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. at 1-800-752-6200 or the Statewide Hotline at 1-877- KYSAFE1 (1-877-597-2331) after hours, holidays, and weekends to submit a report.

IF AT ANY POINT, YOU NEED IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CALL 988, A STATEWIDE CRISIS LINE.

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?



Child sexual abuse (CSA) refers to any sexual activity between an adult and a child under the age of 18, even if it doesn't involve penetration, force, pain, or touching. Sexual activity between children can also be sexual abuse if there is an age gap, developmental differences, or size differences between the children.

KNOW THE FACTS

91% of CSA is committed by someone the child or the child's family knows.

CSA happens to children of all ages, but it is preventable.

Nationwide, one in four girls and one in 13 boys will be sexually abused at some point during their childhood.



But only 38% of child victims disclose they have been sexually abused. Sadly, 62% of survivors will never disclose their abuse.

Because most abusers are known or trusted by families, CSA often involves grooming.

Grooming is a process where an abuser slowly builds a trusting relationship with a child and/or the child's family. By grooming both the child and their family, the abuser attempts to gain access to the child.



GROOMING BEHAVIORS MAY INCLUDE...

Special attention, outings, and gifts

Isolating the child from others

Filling needs and roles within the family

Filling the child's unmet needs

Treating the child as if they are older

Using secrecy, blame, or other threats to maintain control

BE ON THE ALERT FOR SIGNS OF GROOMING

For more information on grooming go to pcaky.org/are-they-good-for-your-kids

ONLINE GROOMING AND CSA



In the digital age, it's increasingly important to be aware of children and teens' online activities.



Some perpetrators may use online communication to groom children with the intent to abuse them online or in-person. These abusers may communicate with children using social media, gaming devices, communication apps, and more.



Abuse can occur completely online. Typically, this involves a perpetrator acquiring sexual images or videos of children or youth, usually by establishing a relationship and requesting them. Perpetrators may pretend to be someone they are not to solicit inappropriate content.



Online abuse sometimes takes the form of "sextortion." This is a form of blackmail perpetrators use to coerce children and youth into sharing more content, engaging in sexual activities, or to gain material things from the child.

Learn more about online crimes against children at: ncmec.org or report a cyber crime at 1-800-843-5678.

YOUTH WITH SEXUAL BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS



While individuals who sexually abuse children are often thought to be adults and referred to as “pedophiles” or “predators” in the media, a substantial portion of CSA is committed by other minors (children under 18). It can be especially difficult to talk about CSA perpetrated by juveniles. However, given 40% of CSA victims were abused by another minor, it is important to understand this form of abuse.

KNOW THE FACTS



Research shows the number of youths identified by police as having committed a sexual offense increases at age 12 and levels after age 14. Youth in this age range experience many changes with the onset of puberty, and some may exhibit problematic sexual behaviors.



Youth who exhibit problematic sexual behaviors show a significant decrease in these behaviors after short-term outpatient treatment and have very low rates of additional problematic acts. Most won't become adult offenders. Once identified, it is important to appropriately address these behaviors.



Most youth with problematic sexual behaviors have no known history of abuse, and most CSA survivors do not go on to become abusers.

If you are a parent or caregiver concerned about your child's sexual behavior, contact your local Child Advocacy Center for information. Children with problematic sexual behaviors can get treatment and live safe and healthy lives.

PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Talking to Children

Talking with children early, often, and openly is one of the best things parents and caregivers can do to prevent child sexual abuse. We have to talk about it! These talks should be about personal safety, body safety, identifying safe adults, and using anatomically correct names for body parts. Encouraging the use of accurate language can help protect children against CSA and help them talk about it if they are abused.

Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky has many resources to help start conversations about body safety.

HEALTHY CHILD
DEVELOPMENT TRAINING



SAFETY & AWARENESS
FOR EVERY BODY



BODY SAFETY
VIDEO



GUIDE TO CSA
PREVENTION



"MY BODY WHEN"
TIP SHEETS



PREVENTING CSA – FAMILIES



While it's important to empower children to protect themselves, adults play the most important role in prevention. Beyond being open and honest with your child, there are steps caregivers can take to decrease their child's risk of being sexually abused.

1

Assess your child's activities. Between school, sports, and clubs, your child likely comes into contact with many adults and older youth. Before you entrust your child to an organization, ask questions about their prevention policies. Find recommended questions here: tinyurl.com/59syatmu.

2

Learn more about CSA. You can take our on-demand training, *Understanding Healthy Child Development: A Tool to Prevent CSA*, here: tinyurl.com/3eda9u2c.

3

Help ensure your child's online privacy. It can be difficult to assess the safety of everything they do online. Download our *Internet Safety Toolkit* here: tinyurl.com/5ewc7b3c.

4

Ask yourself if a new partner or friend is good for your kids before you introduce them. View our checklist in our *Are They Good For Your Kids?* Brochure here: tinyurl.com/26zaypzp.

PREVENTING CSA – SERVICE PROVIDERS

Those who work with families and children play a key role in protecting them from CSA. When you provide support and education to families, it helps to keep children safe. Ensure you're doing what you can to keep children and youth safe by doing the following:



Educate parents and caregivers on the importance of communicating about body safety and CSA prevention. You can order or download free resources to make these conversations easier at tinyurl.com/4269kbuf.



Bring a training to your organization on preventing CSA, or other important topics. PCAK is available to discuss your training and education needs with you. Email pcaky@pcaky.org to get in touch.



Take an online assessment geared toward organizations looking to decrease risk of CSA, and read the Child Sexual Abuse Risk Reduction Protocol for Youth-Serving Organizations to learn ways to implement positive change at tinyurl.com/4z6wwut3.



GET HELP

Identifying and Reporting Abuse

Children may disclose abuse in different ways. While some children may disclose directly, others may share indirectly. Understanding the different ways children talk about CSA will help you react and respond appropriately and ensure every child is heard, believed, and helped.

TYPES OF DISCLOSURE

Direct

child speaks directly about abuse, or indicates abuse through play or with art.

Indirect

child uses vague or unclear language to reference abuse or makes statements implying abuse.

For more information on types of disclosure and on responding to CSA in Kentucky, check out PCAK's brochure "What Should I Do? When a Child Talks About Child Sex Abuse."

It is important to listen, respect, and support children who talk to you about sexual abuse. There is no perfect way to talk to them and you may feel uncomfortable. You should always believe a child disclosing sexual abuse. False allegations of abuse are very rare.

RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE



If a child does disclose abuse, whether directly or indirectly, the following list will help you respond appropriately.



- Believe the child.
- Stay calm and try not to appear shocked or angry. Children may confuse adult reactions to their disclosure of abuse by believing they did something wrong.
- Let them know you are sorry this happened, and you are glad they told you.
- Let them talk at their own pace.
- Do not promise things you cannot control.
- Do not blame the child for what happened.

REPORTING ABUSE

Kentucky is a mandated reporter state. If you believe a child is being abused or neglected, you are obligated to report this to the Department for Community Based Services or local law enforcement.



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

National Sexual Assault Hotline - 1-800-656-4673

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

Children's Advocacy Centers of Kentucky - cackentucky.org

Kentucky Association of Sexual Assault Programs - kasap.org



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