

PREVENT

Child Sexual Abuse



The 5 Steps™

1 LEARN THE FACTS

- **Child sexual abuse** is any sexual act between an adult and a minor or between two minors when one uses power over the other.
- **Child abusers often go out of their way to appear trustworthy** to gain access to your child, and in most cases of abuse, children and/or families know the abuser. The majority of time, the abuser is someone the child lives with, likes or loves.

2 MINIMIZE OPPORTUNITY

More than 80% of sexual abuse instances occur in isolated one-adult/one-child situations.

What can I do to reduce risk and protect my child?

- Create a group situation.
- Have multiple adults supervise.
- Make it observable.
- Plan for someone to drop in or interrupt.

3 TALK ABOUT IT

Have age-appropriate conversations about our bodies, sex and boundaries. Abusers target children who are not able to talk about their body parts or do not have knowledge about sex.

Talk with your child openly and often.

- Use proper names for body parts, such as vagina, penis and breasts.
- Model caring for your own body and teach children how to care for theirs.
- Let children know that they have the right to make decisions about their bodies.
- Educate children that secrets can be harmful. If someone asks them to keep a secret, they should tell you or another trusted adult about it.
- Give them permission to say "no" if they do not want to touch others, or to be touched.
- Review safety and touching boundaries anytime a child is in a new situation.



**Children's
Trust Fund**

Missouri's Foundation For Child Abuse Prevention

ctf4kids.org

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Ending Child Abuse Now

missourikidsfirst.org

4 RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

Some child sexual behaviors indicate more than harmless curiosity and are considered behavior problems. These behaviors may pose a risk to the safety and wellbeing of the child and other children:

- Physical signs of sexual abuse are not common, although redness, rashes/swelling in the genital area, urinary tract infections, chronic stomach pain or headaches, may occur.
- Emotional signals are more common. From “too perfect” behavior, to withdrawal and depression, to unexplained anger and rebellion.
- Sexual behavior and language that are not age-appropriate can be a red flag.
- Sudden extreme behavior changes and/or secretive behavior may be cause for concern.
- Some children may have no signs whatsoever.

5 REACT RESPONSIBLY

Understand how to respond to risky behaviors and suspicions or reports of sexual abuse.

If you suspect a child is being sexually abused call the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect 24-hour Hotline 1-800-392-3738. If a child tells you he or she has been sexually abused, remain calm, avoid asking multiple questions and call Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. In case of emergency call 911.

It is an **adult responsibility** to protect kids.



COMMUNITY RESOURCES for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse in Missouri

Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline
800-392-3738

HELPLINES

National Domestic Violence Hotline
800-799-7233

National Sexual Assault Hotline (RAINN)
800-656-4673

ParentLink
800-552-8522 En Espanol 888-460-0008

School Violence Hotline
866-748-7047

CyberTipline (NCMEC)
800-THE-LOST

LEGAL RESOURCES

Missouri Bar Association
573-635-4128

VICTIM ADVOCACY

Network of Child Advocacy Centers
missourikidsfirst.org

Advocates for Victims of Crimes
ago.mo.gov

RESOURCES FOR HEALING

Mental Health Services
missouri.networkofcare.org

WEBSITES: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND TRAUMA

Darkness to Light
darkness2light.org

National Children's Alliance
nationalchildrensalliance.org

Child Welfare Information Gateway
childwelfare.gov

National Child Traumatic Stress Network
nctsn.net

Prevent Child Abuse America
preventchildabuse.org

Making proactive choices, even when it makes us uncomfortable, and **supporting each other** are the foundation of preventing child sexual abuse.