



Protect your child from sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse can seem like a very difficult subject to think and talk about. **But as adults, it's OUR responsibility to keep kids safe.** One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused by age 18. And it happens EVERYWHERE: child sexual abuse crosses all ethnic, economic, regional and gender boundaries.

How can I PREVENT child sexual abuse?

1. Be proactive and **talk to your children** about sexual abuse in age-appropriate ways. Teach them about their bodies, how to respect them, and that it is "against the rules" for adults to act in sexual ways or touch specific parts of their bodies.
2. Carefully **consider the safety of ANY one adult/one child activity.** Remember that most abusers try to form trusting relationships with children AND parents first, so even someone you would never suspect could be an abuser. 93% of abusers are trusted family members, friends or acquaintances.
3. If you do allow your child time alone with an adult, **drop in unexpectedly**, make sure the time is spent in public places and talk with your child when he or she comes back. Limit these one-on-one experiences and you can dramatically reduce the risk for sexual abuse.
4. **Insist on screenings** such as criminal background checks, interviews and professional references for adults who serve your children at places such as churches, sports camps, etc.

How can I RECOGNIZE child sexual abuse?

1. **Physical signs** of sexual abuse are not common, but redness, rashes or other ailments in the genital area as well as urinary tract infections can occur. If a child DOES have physical signs you suspect to be caused by abuse, have them examined by a doctor immediately.
2. More common physical signs are **symptoms associated with anxiety**, such as headaches, stomachaches, insomnia, bedwetting, etc.
3. **Emotional/behavioral signs** are most common, and vary greatly. Some children become depressed and withdrawn, others act out or become perfectionists. Any drastic behavior changes can be a sign.
4. **Sexual language and/or behavior** (especially when it occurs suddenly) can be a sign as well.
5. If your child suddenly **resists time with a specific adult**, listen to their concerns and talk openly about it.
6. Remember, some children have **NO SIGNS** of sexual abuse, which is why it is critical for adults to be alert.

How can I REACT when I suspect child sexual abuse?

1. First, **trust your instincts.** If you have even a small suspicion of sexual abuse, make a report. You only need suspicion to make a report, not proof!
2. If it is your child, sit down and **talk with them** when the suspected abuser is NOT present. Keep in mind sexual abusers often manipulate and threaten their victims, make them feel guilty, and confuse them about right and wrong.
3. If a child tells you about abuse, **remain calm** and respond in a positive way to make them feel safe. Think about how difficult and scary it would be for a child to talk about sexual abuse. Thank them for telling you and praise their courage.

HOW TO FIND HELP OR MAKE A REPORT IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA:

In ALEXANDRIA...

Report by calling CPS: 703-746-5800
Find help at Alexandria CAC: 703-746-6008

In ARLINGTON...

Report by calling CPS: 703-228-1500
Find help at Arlington CAC: 703-228-1500

In FAIRFAX...

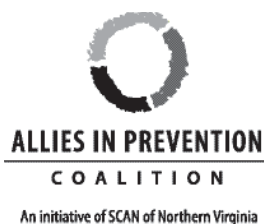
Report by calling CPS: 703-324-7400
Find help at Fairfax CAC: 703-208-1500

In LOUDOUN...

Report by calling CPS: 703-771-5437
Find help at Loudoun CAC: 703-779-5643

In PRINCE WILLIAM...

Report by calling CPS: 703-792-4200
After hours, call police: 703-792-6500



Learn more online at
www.scanva.org
or call the
VA 24-Hour Helpline:
888-552-7096