

If You Need Help

Here is what you should do if you need help:



1. Talk to an adult you trust. If one adult does not believe you or cannot help you, don't give up. Keep trying until you find an adult who believes you and can help you.
2. Practice saying **NO** loud and clear so adults know you really mean it.
3. Call the police immediately—dial 911.
4. Call the Child Abuse Hotline—dial 1-800-422-4453.

Things To Remember

There are some important things for you to remember if you are abused:

It's your body.

No one has the right to touch you. You can say no.

Abuse is never your fault.

Even if you don't say no, it is never your fault.

Abuse always hurts.

It can hurt your feelings or your body.

Keep telling until someone listens.

Even if the first person you tell doesn't help you, someone will. Telling the right person is how you stop abuse.

What happens next is not your fault.

When you tell someone about child abuse, things may be difficult for a while. But the abuse will end, and you and the abuser can both get help.

Resources for Information and Assistance

Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline

1-800-4-A-CHILD or 1-800-422-4453

www.childhelpusa.org

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

1-800-843-5678

www.missingkids.org

National Center for Victims of Crime

1-800-FYI-CALL or 1-800-394-2255

www.ncvc.org

National Children's Alliance Regional Children's Advocacy Centers

1-800-239-9950

www.nca-online.org

National Organization for Victim Assistance

1-800-TRY-NOVA or 1-800-879-6682

www.try-nova.org

National Runaway Switchboard

1-800-621-4000

Office for Victims of Crime Resource Center

1-800-627-6872

TTY 1-877-712-9279

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/ovcres/welcome.html

This brochure was developed by the National Center for Victims of Crime under a project supported by Grant No. 97-VF-GX-K007 awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.



What You Should Know About Child Abuse

(For Children Ages 6–11)

Office for Victims of Crime

OVC

Advocating for the Fair
Treatment of Crime Victims

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
Victims of Crime

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is when an adult hurts a child and it is not by accident. There are four kinds of child abuse:

- Physical abuse is when an adult hurts you by hitting or beating you.
- Emotional abuse is when an adult says things that make you feel like a bad person.
- Neglect is when an adult hurts you by keeping food, care, and shelter away from you.
- Sexual abuse is when an adult touches the private parts of your body or has you touch the private parts of his or her body. It also can happen if an adult tries to get you to take off your clothes or touches or kisses you in a way that scares you. Everyone likes to be hugged or touched by someone he or she cares for, but some kinds of touching are not good for you. If you aren't sure if a touch is good or bad, talk to an adult you trust about it.

Even if you have done something bad, that does not make it okay for an adult to hurt you!

Who abuses kids?

Most adults care about kids and never abuse them, but some adults lose their tempers or can't control themselves. Sometimes strangers abuse kids, but sometimes kids are abused by someone they know—a friend of the family, a neighbor, a teacher, a minister, or even a parent or stepparent.



Why would someone abuse a kid?

An adult who abuses children has a problem and needs to get help to stop hurting kids. Even nice people can do bad things. Sometimes, it is hard to believe that someone we love or someone who is nice can hurt kids.

Is it my fault if this happens to me?

No. Some kids blame themselves, but it is the adult who must be blamed. Adults might tell you that you are bad and the abuse is your fault. But no matter what, **if you are abused, it is never your fault.**

How can I stop it?

The way to stop abuse is to talk about it. Child abuse is against the law. Even if the abuse only happens once or seems like it is over, it is important to tell someone you trust.

Child abusers may tell kids that something bad will happen if they ever tell anyone. If the abuser is a family member, kids may be afraid the family will break apart if they tell the secret. Remember, the way to stop abuse is to tell someone. **You should not keep it a secret.**

Will anyone believe me?

Yes. There are adults who will believe you and who will help you. Some adults may not want to



believe that you have been abused. If an adult tells you to forget about it, tell someone else.

Keep telling until someone listens!

What will happen to the abuser if I tell?

The abuser may get the kind of help he or she needs to stop hurting children. A person who abuses children needs help. Most abusers need special counseling. If the abuser is someone in your family, you may see less of him or her for a while. Because child abuse is against the law, some abusers may go to jail.

If an abuser goes to jail, it is his or her fault—not yours!

Warning Signs

Here are some warning signs that you might be in danger:

- ⊗ Someone follows you home.
- ⊗ You are home alone when the phone rings, and someone says things that scare you.
- ⊗ You are home alone when a stranger comes to the door and tries to come inside.
- ⊗ Your parent, stepparent, or another adult gets angry and his or her behavior scares you.
- ⊗ Your father hits your mother, or your mother hits your father.
- ⊗ An adult tries to hurt you.