

## FACTS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE

Most parents find it difficult to believe that sexual abuse could happen to their child, yet statistics reveal that sexual abuse is very common.

- One in four girls and one in six boys will experience sexual abuse before they reach age 18.
- Over 90% of sexual abuse is committed by someone the child knows.
- Sexual abuse does not discriminate by race or socioeconomic background.
- Only one in ten children who are sexually abused ever tell anyone. Those who do tell often tell months or years after the abuse began.

## TO REPORT ABUSE CALL...

**Baltimore City Police:** 911  
**Baltimore City Child Protective Services:** 410.361.2235  
**Baltimore County Child Protective Services:** 410.853.3000  
**Other Maryland Counties:** 800.332.6347



Baltimore Child Abuse Center

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## TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT ABUSE

BCAC trains the staff of youth-serving organizations on how to protect themselves as well as the organization from the failure to report abuse and the failure to provide appropriate safeguards and environments.

To schedule a training at your child's school, day care, or youth group, contact 443.923.7017 or email [ProfessionalDevelopment@bcaci.org](mailto:ProfessionalDevelopment@bcaci.org).

Have other questions? Contact BCAC at 410.396.6147



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[www.bcaci.org](http://www.bcaci.org)

 [www.twitter.com/childabusecentr](https://twitter.com/childabusecentr)  
 [www.facebook.com/4BCAC](https://www.facebook.com/4BCAC)



Intervention



Treatment



Education



Advocacy



Research shows that an educated child is more likely to deter an offender because an educated child is more likely to break the silence.

### TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD...

Let your child know they can ask you anything!

**On-going communication** in the family can help to nurture qualities within children that render them less likely to be targets of abuse.

**Use natural teaching moments** to talk about sensitive topics such as child abuse or substance abuse. Depending on the age of your child, comment or ask for their thoughts when you see stories on the television, news or hear songs that address healthy or unhealthy relationships.

**Show your child that you value** their thoughts while also sharing your values with them.

**Teaching children the proper names** for their private body parts will help them communicate with you.

**Talking with children calmly** and matter-of-factly about body parts demonstrates that you as the parent feel comfortable talking about these parts. The most natural time to teach children this language is when they are toddlers and are learning the names for the other parts of their bodies.

**Teach and model** characteristics of healthy relationships and boundaries in your own life.

**Encourage your child** to come to you with questions about the body and touch.

**Abuse is never the child's fault.** Help your child understand that they will not get in trouble if they tell you about a touching secret and that it is never too late to tell.

### Know the signs and know what to do if your child tells you he or she has been abused...

**Children very rarely make up stories of abuse.** While it may be hard to hear, trust your child is telling you something that needs to be told.

**Remain calm.** An appearance of shock, fear, anger or disgust can frighten a child.

**Listen carefully** and avoid interrupting.

**Show love and support** as you normally would with words, gestures, and physical affection.

**Support your child.** Tell them they did the right thing by sharing, that they showed great courage, and that you will be there to help them in any way that you can.

**Reassure your child** that he or she has done nothing wrong and that what happened was not their fault.

**Call Child Protective Services or the Police to report the abuse.** They will work with you to help make sure your child is safe.

**Do not confront the offender.** By confronting the offender you provide an opportunity for that person to make up an excuse, threaten your child or other victims, or escape the situation.

**Do not interrogate the child.** After the initial disclosure, let your child talk about it at their own pace as they need to. Consider the need for counseling for your child and your entire family.

### Signs of possible abuse

- Change in child's behavior, for example, a talkative child becoming quiet or withdrawn
- Stated desire not to be around a particular adult
- Copying adult sexual behavior
- Sexualized play or has a sexual knowledge beyond normal maturity
- Swelling or bleeding around genitals or mouth
- Urinary tract infections
- Sexually transmitted disease

*If a child displays these signs, they may be an indicator of abuse or something else occurring. Be sure to take action and help.*

