

You can't tell if a person has committed a sex offense just by looking ...

According to Indiana Code, convicted sex offenders are required to register with the Indiana Sex Offender Registry for up to 10 years.

Any offender who knowingly or intentionally fails to register commits a felony.

No One Deserves To Be Raped. Rape Is Never The Victim's Fault.

Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault

**To connect with the crisis line
in your area, call:**
1-800-656-HOPE
(Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network [RAINN])

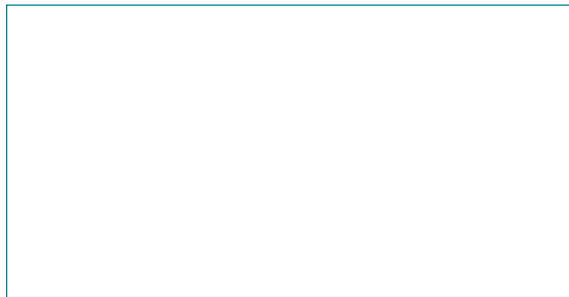
For more information:

INCASA
26 North Arsenal, Third Floor
Indianapolis, IN 46201

317-423-0233
1-800-691-2272

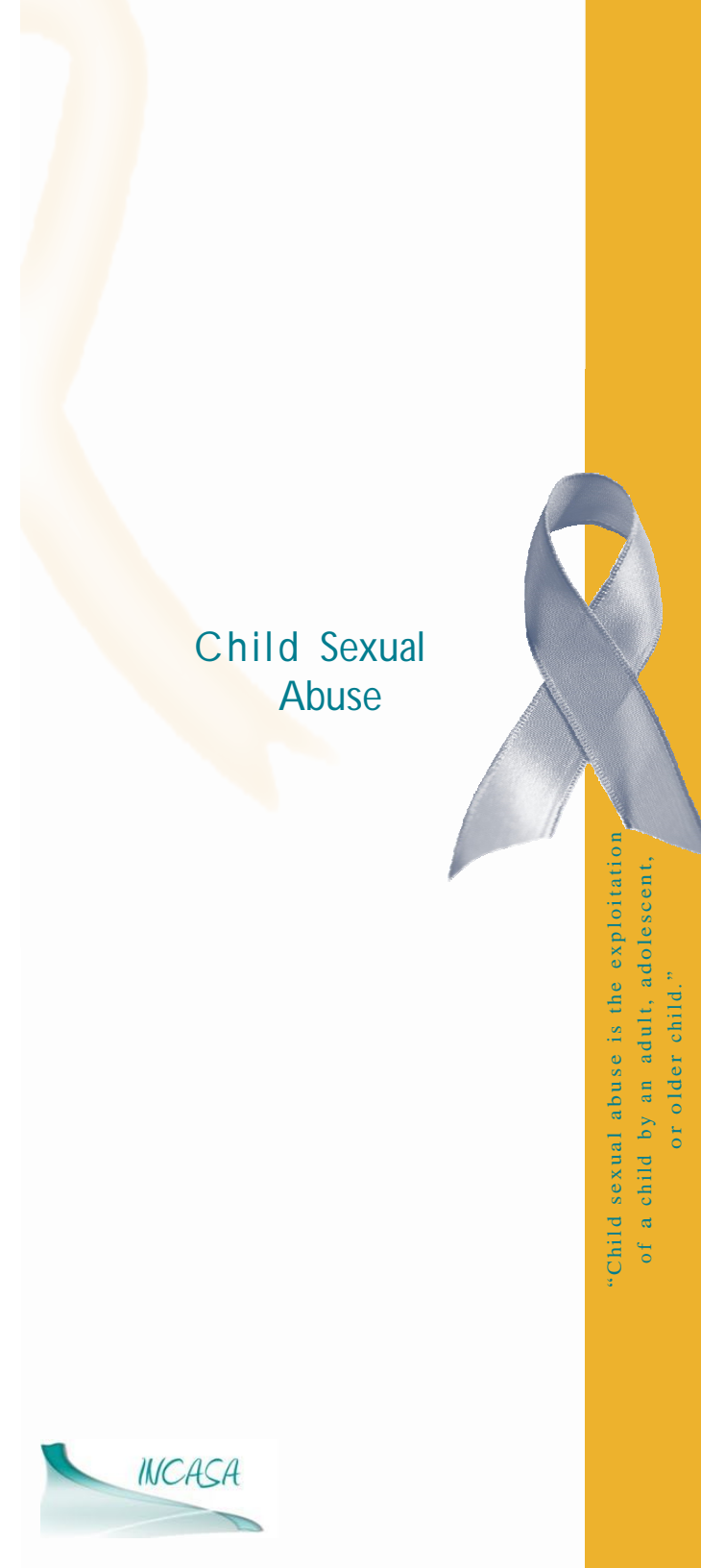
email: incasa@incasa.org
website: www.incasa.org

Family Wellness Helpline Indiana
State Department of Health V/TDD
1-800-433-0746



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INCASA is an equal opportunity/equal access organizations.



**Child Sexual
Abuse**

“Child sexual abuse is the exploitation of a child by an adult, adolescent, or older child.”



Understanding The Issue

Child sexual abuse is the sexual exploitation of a child by an adult, adolescent, or older child. Sexual abuse includes oral penetration, fondling, voyeurism, obscene phone calls, and use of pornography. The abuse often begins with nonviolent acts such as fondling.

Children are most commonly sexually abused by someone they know or trust. When these acts occur within a family, the sexual abuse is called incest. Since most children seek approval from adults, they are vulnerable to abuse. Child victims often do what is asked without question.

There may be a single occurrence, but most likely the abuse will continue over a period of time, often for years. Victims may be confused by the lies offenders use to legitimize their abuse. Frequently, victims believe they are responsible for their abuse.

Looking For Signs

Since the majority of children do not initially reveal sexual abuse, it is imperative adults are aware of behaviors indicating a child may have been sexually abused.

Signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Change in a child's feelings, awareness, and behavior regarding sexuality.
- Sudden knowledge about sex. The child may pretend to have sex or may engage in sexual behavior with other children.
- Strong reactions to physical contact—either withdrawal or excessive sexual play.
- Regression to an earlier phase. This includes abrupt and significant negative changes in sleeping habits, eating, school performance, bowel and bladder control, and social relationships.
- Decline in school performance: disciplinary problems, avoiding assignments, withdrawal or aggression.
- Emotional stress: worry, fear, sensitivity, nervousness, irritability, anger, depression, and stress-related physical problems.

Knowing The After Effects

Sexual abuse can affect a child in many ways. A child may experience fear, hostility, guilt, shame, depression, low self-esteem, poor self-image, sleep abnormalities, physical ailments, sexual behavior disturbances, and poor social functioning. In adulthood there may be long-term effects that may include depression, prostitution, alcoholism, substance abuse, emotional disorders, suicide, sleep disorders, low self-esteem, sexual disturbances, problems with interpersonal relationships, and revictimization.

The severity of these effects varies, and is influenced by such factors as the number of abusers, frequency of abuse, relationship with the abuser, developmental level of the child at the time of abuse, how the family and society react to disclosure of the abuse, and other family circumstances such as alcoholism. (Developmental Consideration for the Effects of Childhood Abuse)

Communicating With The Child After Abuse

- Try to remain calm and nonjudgmental. When children disclose, they are often re-traumatized by others' reactions.
- Tell children they did the right thing by confiding in you.
- Reassure children they are not bad if they kept the abuse a secret for some time.
- Tell children you are sorry the abuse happened to them.
- Tell children they are not alone, that unfortunately, abuse happens to many children.
- Children always feel guilty about abuse. They need to be assured again and again that it was not their fault. Explain the offender broke the law and requires help.
- Prepare children for what is going to happen as a result of the disclosure.
- Do not promise children they will be safe and nothing bad will ever happen again.

The Facts

- Current statistics suggest approximately one in four females is sexually abused by the time she reaches age 18, and approximately 57 percent of perpetrators are family members. (Finkelhor)
- Studies have also shown that by age 18 one in seven boys will be sexually assaulted.
- Girls with stepfathers are seven times more likely to be sexually abused than other girls. (Urquiza & Keating).
- Boys are more often abused by unrelated males. (Levesque, 1994)
- Children are often groomed for sexual abuse. The grooming process includes building trust, bestowing favors, alienating others, demanding service, and violating boundaries. (The Incest Effects)
- Every incident of child sexual abuse costs the victim and society \$99,000. (Miller, Cohen, & Wiersma, 1996)
- In 38 percent of day care cases, the offender was not a child care worker, but another person, such as a bus driver or a family member of the day care operator. (Finkelhor)
- In Indiana, 4,088 cases of child abuse were substantiated. (FBI, 1998)

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