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# THE PARENT PAMPHLET

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A Guide for Families

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Children of all genders can be victims of child sexual abuse.  
The abusers can be any gender.



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## INTRODUCTION

This guide provides basic information about the issue of child sexual abuse and services available for your child, yourself and your family.

When your child is sexually abused, you want to be helpful, but you may not know how to handle the problem or what to expect from the agencies that may become involved in the case. If parents of child sexual abuse survivors understand what has happened to their child and know what to expect, they are often better able to help their child recover from the abuse.



## WHAT TO DO?

One of the most helpful things you can do is find information and support for yourself and your child.

Being informed will help you make good decisions. It is also helpful to talk with your child and let them be involved in decisions. This will help the child regain a sense of control.

Remember that even though your child may not have physical injuries, your child may be upset, afraid or worried. It is not easy to discuss the abuse, but your child may not worry as much if you talk about it. Your child needs to know that you are not afraid and that you are listening to what is said.

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# WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

**In the broadest definition, child sexual abuse may refer to:**

- Any forced or coerced sexual activity involving a child;
- Sexual contact between a child and another person (whether it is an adult or another child) in which treats, bribes or other tricks are used to get the child to participate in the activity;
- Any sexual contact between an adult and a child.

**Some sexual abuse is not physically violent. It can include:**

- Sexual talk;
- Exposure of sexual body parts or exposure to sex acts;
- Voyeurism or peeping activities;
- Child pornography;
- Encouraging or promoting child prostitution.

You should take any of these behaviors seriously and report them to law enforcement.

Often, the abuser will persuade the child to cooperate and to keep the abuse a secret. This persuasion may involve the promise of special treats or privileges or threats of physical punishment and other consequences to loved ones or pets.



## THE OFFENDERS?

People who sexually abuse children come from all economic, ethnic, social and educational backgrounds. You cannot recognize abusers by their appearance. They do not fit any stereotypes. They can be married or single. They can be old or young. They can be any gender.

**About 80% of all sexual abuse of children is perpetrated by someone known to the child.** Many abusers are people the child loves and trusts.

Although it is often difficult for adults to believe, children sometimes sexually abuse other children. If the behavior between the children seems unusual or abusive, parents should intervene.



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# THE EFFECTS ON YOUR CHILD ...

After the abuse, the behavior of your child may change for a time. You may notice any of the following:

- Heightened fear or anxiety;
- Increased tearfulness or crying;
- Disturbed sleeping patterns such as fear of going to bed, fear of sleeping alone, nightmares and bedwetting;
- Loss of appetite;
- Irritable nature, losing patience easily;
- Temper tantrums;
- Isolation or secrecy;
- Difficulty at school.

The absence of these symptoms doesn't mean the abuse didn't occur. While you should be aware of any changes in your child's behavior or attitude, some children are not visibly changed by the experience.

## HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

There is no set timeframe for recovery from sexual abuse. Symptoms you can see may last a few weeks or much longer. The reaction by parents and others can impact the recovery. If the child feels especially loved and protected during this time, recovery from the trauma may happen more quickly.

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# HOW SHOULD I RESPOND?

After learning your child has been sexually abused, try to respond with patience and kindness to your child, yourself and your family. Try these suggestions:

- **Help** your child to express their feelings.
- **Do not blame** the child for what has happened.
- **Be honest** with your child. Share what you know.
- **Restore** your child's sense of control. Allow the child to help decide what to do.
- **Do not push** your child to talk about the experience. If the subject comes up, discuss it honestly and openly.
- **Maintain routines** and return to your family's usual activities as soon as possible. Don't become too protective of your child.
- **Give** your child safety information. Help the child identify safe people to go to when scared or sad.
- **Pay attention** to the needs of other children in your household. Give them the information and support they need.
- **Discuss** your feelings with someone you trust, such as a friend, relative or counselor. This is not a time for you to be "tough." It is a good time to seek support for yourself.



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# WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

## FROM A RAPE CRISIS CENTER ...

You can call a rape crisis center for advice and help. Phone numbers are listed at the end of this booklet. Each crisis center has workers that can help you get medical care and legal advocacy. Centers also provide case management and ongoing individual and family counseling services. These services are free and confidential.

Crisis center staff and volunteers can help you report the abuse to police and DCFS and can provide emotional support for you, your child and your other family members. Crisis center advocates can go with you to meetings with law enforcement, the prosecutor and the DCFS caseworker, as well as attend court with you and your child. Crisis center counselors can assist you and your family in the healing process after sexual abuse.

## FROM A DOCTOR OR HOSPITAL ...

Your child may not appear to be injured, but a medical exam is needed to check for injuries, sexually transmitted infections or other evidence of sexual abuse. It is important to preserve any medical evidence of the abuse. Therefore, a sexually abused child should have a complete physical exam by a doctor as soon as possible after the incident occurs, even if you don't learn of the abuse until months later.

## FROM THE POLICE OR DCFS ...

Child sexual abuse is a crime and should be reported to your local police department. If the abuser is a parent, teacher or other caretaker, call the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services at 1-800-25-ABUSE. The hotline worker will tell you if DCFS can help with your child's case.

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# WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

## AT THE HOSPITAL ...

The hospital emergency room has special kits and procedures to use in sexual abuse cases. You can ask that the hospital call a rape crisis center advocate to provide support for you and your child. Medical staff will examine your child, fill out a report and do certain lab tests that may be used as evidence in court.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Your child may also need to see a medical provider for follow-up care. Unless your child is eligible for Medicaid, you should receive a voucher to pay for follow-up care related to the sexual abuse. The voucher is good for 90 days after the emergency room visit. Follow the instructions of the hospital staff.



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## WITH THE POLICE/DCFS ...

When you call the police, they will take an initial report and schedule an interview, which may be conducted at a Child Advocacy Center (CAC). A child protective services caseworker may also be assigned to the case.

The investigator needs to know:

- What happened;
- Where;
- When; and
- Who else was present at the time.

This information will help the investigator decide what to do next. The child's statement may be recorded.

The investigator will also ask you and your child if you know the offender and if they are a relative. Sometimes survivors won't remember every detail in every setting, so don't be alarmed if your child's story of the abuse varies with each telling.

## AT COURT ...

If a suspect is arrested, your child may have to go to the courthouse to speak with a prosecutor. The prosecutor will review the results of the medical examination and lab tests. He or she will read the statement your child gave to the police and review other information about the incident. The prosecutor will decide whether to file charges against the person who is accused of abusing your child. To make it easier for children to testify against their abusers, testimony may be taken in private, rather than in open court, and transmitted via closed-circuit television equipment. A rape crisis advocate can help you and your child prepare for the case. A recording of your child's interview at the police department or CAC may also be used.

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**NOTES ...**



# RAPE CRISIS SERVICES IN ILLINOIS ...

## ○ NORTH

### **Addison\***

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago  
Patterson/McDaniel Family Center  
24 hrs. 888-293-2080

### **Arlington Heights**

Northwest CASA  
24 hrs. 888-802-8890  
www.nwcasa.org

### **Aurora**

Mutual Ground, Inc.  
24 hrs. 630-897-8383  
www.mutualground.org

### **Belvidere\***

Rockford Sexual Assault  
Counseling, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-636-9811

### **Berwyn\***

Fillmore Center  
24 hrs. 708-482-9600

### **Chicago Heights\***

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago  
South Suburban Center  
24 hrs. 888-293-2080

### **DeKalb**

Safe Passage, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-756-5228  
www.safepassageadv.org

### **Dixon\***

YWCA of the Sauk Valley  
24 hrs. 815-288-1011

### **Elgin**

Community Crisis Center  
24 hrs. 847-697-2380  
www.crisiscenter.org

### **Freeport**

VOICES of Stephenson County  
24 hrs. 815-232-7200  
www.voicesofsc.org

### **Galena**

Riverview Center  
24 hrs. 888-707-8155  
www.riverviewcenter.org

### **Gurnee**

Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center  
24 hrs. 847-872-7799  
www.zcenter.org

### **Hickory Hills**

Pillars Community Health  
24 hrs. 708-482-9600  
www.pillarscommunityhealth.org

### **Joliet**

Sexual Assault Service Center  
Guardian Angel Community  
Services  
24 hrs. 815-730-8984  
www.gacsprograms.org

### **Kankakee**

Clove Alliance  
24 hrs. 815-932-3322  
www.clovealliance.org

### **Kewanee\***

Freedom House  
24 hrs. 800-474-6031

### **LaGrange\***

Pillars Community Health  
Constance Morris House  
24 hrs. 708-482-9600

### **McHenry\***

Northwest CASA  
The Care Center of McHenry  
County  
24 hrs. 800-892-8900

### **Morris\***

Sexual Assault Service Center  
24 hrs. 815-730-8984

### **Mount Carroll\***

Riverview Center  
24 hrs. 815-244-7772

### **Oregon\***

Rockford Sexual Assault  
Counseling, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-636-9811

### **Ottawa\***

Safe Journeys  
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

### **Peru\***

Safe Journeys  
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

### **Plainfield\***

Sexual Assault Service Center  
24 hrs. 815-730-8984

### **Pontiac\***

ADV & SAS  
24 hrs. 800-892-3375

### **Princeton**

Freedom House  
24 hrs. 800-474-6031  
www.freedomhouseillinois.org

### **Quad Cities**

Family Resources, Inc.  
24 hrs. 309-797-1777  
www.famres.org

### **Rockford**

Rockford Sexual Assault  
Counseling, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-636-9811  
www.rockfordsexualassaultcounseling.org

### **Sandwich\***

Safe Passage, Inc.  
24 hrs. 815-756-5228

### **Skokie\***

Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center  
24 hrs. 847-872-7799

### **Sterling**

YWCA of the Sauk Valley  
24 hrs. 815-626-7277  
www.ywsauk.org

### **Streator**

Safe Journeys  
24 hrs. 800-892-3375  
www.safejourneysillinois.org

### **Watseka\***

Clove Alliance  
24 hrs. 815-932-3322

## ○ CHICAGO

**Chicago 24-Hour Hotline**  
1-888-293-2080

### **Resilience**

www.ourresilience.org  
• Stroger Hospital\*  
• Austin\*  
• Northside\*

### **Mujeres Latinas En Acción**

www.mujereslatinasenaccion.org  
• North Riverside\*  
• South Chicago\*

### **YWCA Metropolitan Chicago**

www.ywcachicago.org  
• Cynthia B. Lafuente Center\*  
• Parks and Francis Center\*  
• Roseland Center\*  
• Medical District Center\*

# RAPE CRISIS SERVICES IN ILLINOIS ...

## ○ CENTRAL

### **Bloomington**

Stepping Stones  
Sexual Assault Services  
YWCA McLean County  
24 hrs. 309-556-7000  
[www.ywcamclean.org](http://www.ywcamclean.org)

### **Charleston/Mattoon**

Sexual Assault Counseling  
& Information Service  
24 hrs. 888-345-2846  
[www.sacis.org](http://www.sacis.org)  
• SACIS Main\*  
• SACIS Counseling\*

### **Cuba\***

WIRC/CAA Victim Services  
24 hrs. 309-837-5555

### **Danville**

Survivor Resource Center  
24 hrs. 866-617-3224  
[www.survivorresourcecenter.org](http://www.survivorresourcecenter.org)

### **Decatur**

Growing Strong Sexual  
Assault Center  
24 hrs. 217-428-0770  
[www.growingstrongcenter.org](http://www.growingstrongcenter.org)

### **Galesburg\***

WIRC/CAA Victim Services  
Knox County  
24 hrs. 309-837-5555

### **Jacksonville\***

Prairie Center Against  
Sexual Assault  
24 hrs. 217-753-8081

### **Macomb**

Western Illinois Regional  
Council/Community Action Agency  
Victim Services  
24 hrs. 309-837-5555  
[www.wirpc.org/victim-services](http://www.wirpc.org/victim-services)

### **Mt. Sterling\***

Quanada  
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

### **Paris\***

Survivor Resource Center  
24 hrs. 866-617-3224

### **Peoria**

Center for Prevention of Abuse  
Sexual Assault Services  
24 hrs. 309-691-4111 or  
800-559-SAFE  
[www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org](http://www.centerforpreventionofabuse.org)

### **Pittsfield\***

Quanada Pike County  
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

### **Quincy**

Quanada  
Sexual Assault Program  
24 hrs. 800-369-2287  
[www.quanada.org](http://www.quanada.org)

### **Rushville\***

Quanada Schuyler County  
24 hrs. 800-369-2287

### **Springfield**

Prairie Center Against  
Sexual Assault  
24 hrs. 217-753-8081  
[www.prairiecasa.org](http://www.prairiecasa.org)

### **Taylorville\***

Prairie Center Against  
Sexual Assault  
24 hrs. 217-753-8081

### **Urbana/Champaign**

Rape, Advocacy, Counseling and  
Education Services  
24 hrs. 217-384-4444  
[www.cu-races.org](http://www.cu-races.org)

## ○ SOUTH

### **Alton\***

Metro East  
Every Survivor Counts  
24 hrs. 618-397-0975  
[www.metroeasteverysurvivorcounts.org](http://www.metroeasteverysurvivorcounts.org)

### **Belleville**

Metro East  
Every Survivor Counts  
24 hrs. 618-397-0975  
[www.metroeasteverysurvivorcounts.org](http://www.metroeasteverysurvivorcounts.org)

### **Carbondale**

Survivor Empowerment Center  
24 hrs. 618-529-2324 or  
800-334-2094  
[www.survivorempowerment.org](http://www.survivorempowerment.org)  
• Northeast – Eurma C. Hayes  
Community Center\*

### **Centralia\***

Sexual Assault and  
Family Emergencies  
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

### **Effingham\***

Sexual Assault and  
Family Emergencies  
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

### **Marion\***

Survivor Empowerment Center  
24 hrs. 800-334-2094

### **Mt. Vernon\***

Sexual Assault and  
Family Emergencies  
24 hrs. 800-625-1414

### **Olney\***

Counseling & Information  
for Sexual Assault/Abuse  
24 hrs. 866-288-4888

### **Robinson\***

Counseling & Information  
for Sexual Assault/Abuse  
24 hrs. 866-288-4888

### **Vandalia**

Sexual Assault and  
Family Emergencies  
24 hrs. 800-625-1414  
[www.safecrisiscenter.org](http://www.safecrisiscenter.org)

*\*Designates satellite and  
outreach offices of main centers.*

**FOR SERVICES AND INFORMATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY  
CONCERNING SEXUAL ASSAULT OR SEXUAL ABUSE,  
CONTACT:**

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**100 N. 16th Street  
Springfield, IL., 62703**

**Phone: (217) 753-4117   Website: [www.icasa.org](http://www.icasa.org)**