

fact sheet 11

What should I do if a child tells me that they have been abused?

- ☞ Tell the child that you believe them
- ☞ Tell them that it's not their fault
- ☞ Comfort, reassure and support
- ☞ Call the Child Protection Helpline (the old DoCS) or police as soon as possible.

What happens when I report the abuse?

What action is taken will depend on how serious the abuse is. If the abuse is really bad, a special team of police and Community Service (this used to be called DoCS) workers called a Joint Investigative Response Team (JIRT) will investigate. They will interview the child and make a decision about what legal steps to take. The offender may be charged and/or an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) is sought for the child.

Special new units called Child Wellbeing Units have been set up to help families with abuse or neglect that is not that serious.

Please note that DoCS is now called Community Services NSW.

Contacts:

Child Protection Helpline
(the old DoCS Helpline)
132 111 (24/7)

Kids Helpline
1800 686 587 (24/7)

Lifeline 131 114 (24/7)

Youthline (02) 9633 366 (24/7)

Domestic Violence Line
1800 656 463 (24/7)

Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre
1800 686 587 or
(02) 9569 3847

PROTECTING KIDS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE



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PROTECTING KIDS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

This factsheet is about the sexual assault of children and it is for adults to read.

If you are younger than 16 years old and you want some information about sexual assault, you should read the other factsheet just for kids.

What is child sexual abuse?

It is when an adult, or someone bigger, than a child uses his/her power to make the child do sexual things. It can include:

- ☞ touching the child in a sexual way on the backside, breasts, or penis/vagina
- ☞ making the child touch the adult on the backside, breasts, or penis/vagina
- ☞ having sex with a child, including oral sex
- ☞ filming a child in a sexual way, or a child doing sexual things
- ☞ making a child watch pornography (dirty movies)
- ☞ 'flashing' or masturbating in front of a child
- ☞ sending pornography (dirty pictures) to child by text messages or email.

The law says that people younger than 16 years old CANNOT consent to sex.

Having sex or doing sexual things with a person younger than 16 years old is a CRIME.

Who are the offenders?

Most offenders are people close to the child like relatives, family friends or other people like a coach or a neighbour. It is hardly ever a stranger.

Grooming

Offenders will use all sorts of tricks, bribes and threats to gain a child's trust to abuse them. The offender might single the child out and buy gifts or treats. This is called 'grooming'.

The offender also grooms the child's family. For example, the offender might offer to babysit a lot and use this chance to get close to the child.

Keeping it a secret

The offender will use lies and force to make the child keep the abuse a secret.

Always listen to what a child is trying to tell you about someone. Sometimes they will give you hints about the sexual abuse.

If you are worried about a child, call the Child Protection Helpline.

What are the signs of sexual abuse?

- ☞ Moodiness, depression, anxiety and clinginess
- ☞ Nightmares and bedwetting
- ☞ Loss of interest in friends, school or sport
- ☞ Sexual play or talk that is too old for the child
- ☞ Sudden fear of an adult that he/she normally feels comfortable with
- ☞ Violent behaviour, lying and stealing
- ☞ Unexplained bruises, scratches, pain and bleeding in the genital/private area.

Turn over...