

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is the exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or caregiver. Sexual abuse includes both touching and non-touching offenses.¹

PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Child sexual abuse is often underreported.² As such, the following data points likely underestimate the frequency of sexual abuse.



1 in 4 girls experience sexual abuse.³



1 in 20 boys experience sexual abuse.⁴



Of the children removed from their home in 2024,* **6%** were removed for reasons of sexual abuse.⁵

*A child may be removed for more than one reason.

TYPES OF OFFENSES

Touching Offenses:

- Fondling
- Sodomy
- Rape
- Intercourse
- Masturbation

Non-touching Offenses:

- Child pornography
- Indecent exposure

WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

90% of children know their abuser.⁶

Certain groups of children and youth are more at risk of being sexually abused:^{7, 8, 9}



Females



LGBTQ+ youth



Youth with physical, emotional, or cognitive disabilities



Children living in single parent households

Children who have been sexually abused are more likely to:^{10, 11, 12}

- Show physical aggression
- Experience behavioral health problems
- Attempt suicide
- Engage in delinquent behavior
- Abuse alcohol or other drugs
- Become pregnant

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WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS?

Among child victims of sexual abuse, more than **half** are abused by family members. ¹³

People who sexually abuse children look just like everyone else. Abusers can be neighbors, religious leaders, teachers, family members, or anyone who interacts with children. Child sexual abuse frequently goes unreported, as many victims DO NOT tell an adult about what happened. Children may feel guilty or responsible for the abuse, worry they will not be believed, and are concerned about how it will affect their relationships with their families and how they are perceived by their peers. ¹⁴

DID YOU KNOW?

- LGBTQ individuals are **not** more likely to sexually abuse children than someone who is heterosexual. ¹⁵
- Although men are consistently shown to commit the majority of child sexual abuse, **women are also abusers**. ¹⁶
- In 2018, Georgia **mandated** age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness education for all students K-9th grade. ¹⁷
- Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention **Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG)** outlines sexual abuse prevention strategies. ¹⁸

LABELING YOUTH AS SEXUAL PREDATORS



- Juveniles represent **one-fourth** of all sex offenders and **one-third** of known offenders against other juveniles. ¹⁹
- **40% to 80%** of juvenile sex offenders have **themselves been victims of sexual abuse**. These children are often responding to their own trauma. ²⁰
- Juvenile sex offenders are unlikely to commit another sex offense later in life. ²¹ Studies universally confirm that juvenile sex offense recidivism is relatively low with an estimated rate of 7%. ²²

HOW CAN I HELP?

- Encourage community members to learn how they can prevent child sexual abuse. Learn more at GeorgiaCenterForChildAdvocacy.org.
- Educate adults, youth, and children about the harm caused by treating others as sexual objects.
- Develop relationships with your local state and federal representatives, and educate them about sexual abuse and exploitation.

If you suspect that a child is being abused, call the Division of Family and Children Services at 1-855-GACHILD immediately to report your concerns.

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