

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 them.
- ☺ Call the Child Protection Helpline or police as soon as possible.
- ☺ Keep them away from the abuser.

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 workers called a **Joint Investigative Response Team (JIRT)** may 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) may be sought for the child.

Special new units called **Child Wellbeing Units** have been set up to help families with other abuse or neglect reports.

If you know someone who was sexually abused as a child, while they were in the care of an institution like a school, church, scouts, sports club, foster care or respite care, they can tell their story, in private, to the **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**.

Please call us on **1800 686 587** for more information.

Numbers you can call:

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

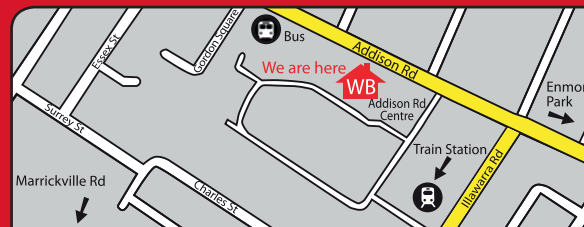
Child Protection Helpline
(the old DoCS Helpline)
132 111 (24/7)

Kids Helpline
1800 551 800 (24/7)

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
1800 099 340

Domestic Violence Line
1800 656 463 (24/7)

PROTECTING KIDS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE



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PROTECTING KIDS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE

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

If you are UNDER 16 years and you want some information about sexual assault, you should read our fact sheet 12 Bad Secrets just for kids.

What is child sexual abuse?

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

- ☞ Touching a child in a sexual way on the bum, breasts, penis or vagina.
- ☞ Making a child touch an adult on the bum, breasts, penis or vagina.
- ☞ Having sex with a child, including oral (mouth) sex.
- ☞ Filming or taking photos of a child in a sexual way, or filming a child doing sexual things.
- ☞ Making a child watch pornography (dirty movies).
- ☞ 'Flashing' or masturbating (touching of private parts) in front of a child.
- ☞ Sending pornography (dirty pictures) to a child by text message or email.

The law says that people UNDER 16 years of age CANNOT consent to sex.

Having sex or doing sexual things with a person UNDER 16 years of age 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, teacher 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. **This is called 'grooming'.**

- ☞ The offender might single the child out and buy them gifts or treats like lollies.
- ☞ The offender might also groom 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 the child to 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 the child normally feels comfortable with.
- ☞ Violent behaviour, lying and stealing.
- ☞ Unexplained bruises, scratches, pain and bleeding in the genital/private area.
- ☞ Unexplained new gifts, toys or lollies.

Turn over...