

How can you help to protect
your sons and daughters
from sexual abuse?

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What you need to know:

- How to prevent abuse through information
- How to recognise adult sex offender behaviour and the grooming methods they use
- The difference between normal curiosity & abuse
- How to recognise signs that a child has been abused
- What to report to the Child Abuse Report Line/police
- Where to get help for yourself and an abused child
- Where to get help for a child exhibiting inappropriate sexual behaviours

Males don't report sex abuse because they:

1. don't recognise it as reportable abuse
2. enjoy paedophiles' ego boosting and treats
3. enjoy the early sexual touching
4. are sexually curious
5. feel privileged to access the secrets of adult male sexuality
6. don't know what to report or how to do it
7. are blamed and blame themselves
8. worry about their sexuality – “I was chosen because I'm gay”
9. are embarrassed, fear violent retribution, being teased as gay and being disbelieved
10. Don't want to upset their mothers

Children with disabilities are at greater risk of abuse than non disabled when

- Dependent on others for day-to-day care & hygiene
- Inadequately protected by protection and legal system
- Deprived of adult affection and approval
- They cannot communicate about sexual matters
- They lack knowledge of their rights, confidence and ability to complain
- Disadvantaged by volume of touch
- Assessed by professionals who lack specialist skills
- **Without justice & therapy there is an increased risk of re-abuse by multiple carers**

Children and young people with disabilities are at greatest risk of:

- Sexual abuse and other violence
- Being offered drugs and pornography
- Sexual abuse by carers and relatives
- Sexual abuse by multiple offenders
- Abuse that continues into adulthood

Risk substantially decreases if they have an explicit child protection AND sexuality education program that involves carers, parents and school.

Why sex offenders target victims with disabilities

They are safe: if caught, police are unlikely to charge them if there are no other witnesses

Victims often don't know what is abuse and reportable

They may lack friends and respond to grooming (feigned affection, attention and approval)

Offenders lack a conscience, telling themselves that 'it does no harm because they don't understand'

Adults are least likely to believe a child with an intellectual disability

They stand out in a crowd, are often eager to please and are the easiest to deceive

Practice together

- Step back, hold out arms and say ‘Stop that, Its not allowed’ using a big loud
- Saying ‘No’ assertively in a big loud voice.. Louder still
- Responding assertively to persuasion & blackmail :
- ‘You know you like it’
- ‘I thought you were my special friend. (‘yes I am your friend but it’s not allowed/wrong/I don’t want you to do it.
- **DO NOT** teach children to say, ‘I’ll tell’ because that results in threats such as ‘If you do that I’ll kill you/your mum’ – or ‘I’ll go to jail and it will be your fault’.

Sex offenders rely on secrecy to stay safe

- Put a sign '**WE ARE A NO SECRETS FAMILY**' on the fridge to remind everyone including carers
- Emphasise that we must always tell **bad** secrets that make us feel worried, sad, afraid, unhappy
- We must never keep secrets about **touching**

Explain that people tell kids to keep secrets because they know they are doing something wrong and are scared of getting into trouble.

Practice working out examples of which are good secrets to keep (Xmas gifts) and bad ones to tell.

Practice how and who to tell – using phone – 000 – Kids Helpline

Victims may give hints such as:

He wears funny underpants (Ask 'Where do you see them? What is he doing?')

I don't want to go to X's house any more (Why?)

X is mean (What does s/he do?)

I don't like the games he plays (How does he play them?)

He's funny/silly sometimes (What does he do?)

I don't like the way he teases me (What does he do?)

I don't like his milk/ice cream. Its yucky (Where does it come from)

I have a secret (You must tell a secret if it's not a happy one)

I don't want to go to grandad's today (Why?)

Signs associated with abuse

- Stains on underwear or garments missing
- Redness confined to anus or vaginal opening
- Love bites or bruises in unusual places
- Difficulty walking after rape
- Difficulty swallowing when used for oral sex
- Children expose sex knowledge beyond their years
- Returns to wetting or soiling
- Nightmares, night fears, shows fear of abuser
- Clings to safe person

Other indicators associated with sex abuse

Deliberate or accidental disclosures (eg when reprimanded for seeking oral sex says, 'Well dad does it')

Unhealthy or obsessive sexual interest

Sexually explicit drawings

Re-enacting abuse with others, pets or dolls

Obsessive masturbation

'Promiscuous' behaviour with same sex as abuser

Self destructive behaviours

Children's healthy sexual behaviour

'Show me yours and I'll show you mine' – equal sharing between friends; visual rather than tactile

Not obsessive; easily distracted

Peeking rather than touching

Same age and same or opposite sex

Accompanied by giggling and silliness or 'I dare you...'

Playing at doctors and nurses/ mummies and daddies

Embarrassed when caught

Easily distracted

What leads to problem sexual behaviour

- They've experienced sex abuse (more than 50%)
- Witnessing disturbing adult sex eg mother with multiple partners
- Living in sexually violent homes
- Witnessing excessive, disturbing porn
- Living in a dysfunctional family environment
- Seeing prostitution for money or drugs
- When it is part of other violent criminal behaviour

Ask questions when a child

- shows an obsessive interest in sex
- seeks or offers oral sex/kissing genitals ('Who showed you how to play that game?')
- inserts fingers, objects or penis into genitals
- simulates sexual intercourse
- bullies others into doing sex things
- uses coercion, tricks, bribes, blackmail or chooses younger and more vulnerable victims
- imposes secrecy and/or threats ('What will happen if you tell? Who else knows the secret?')
- uses adult porn language eg golden showers

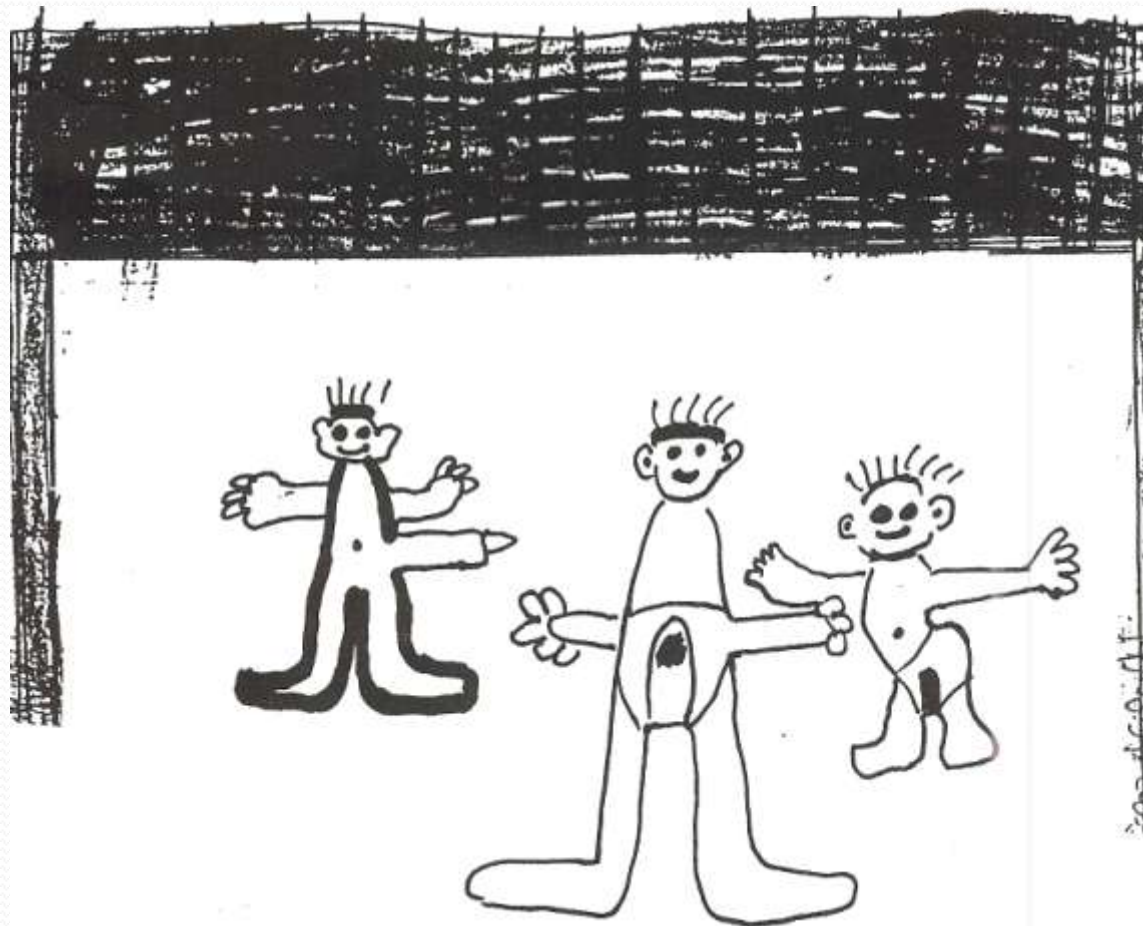
Young children are likely to be re-enacting their own sexual abuse when there is an imbalance of power and, for sex, they use

- force, violence
- threats that bad things will happen if victim tells
- tricks to get the victim alone
- blackmail or bribes
- younger, smaller or disabled vulnerable children
- adult or porn language (eg golden showers)
- bullying to make others abuse while they watch
- angry denial when caught
- demands or offers oral sex

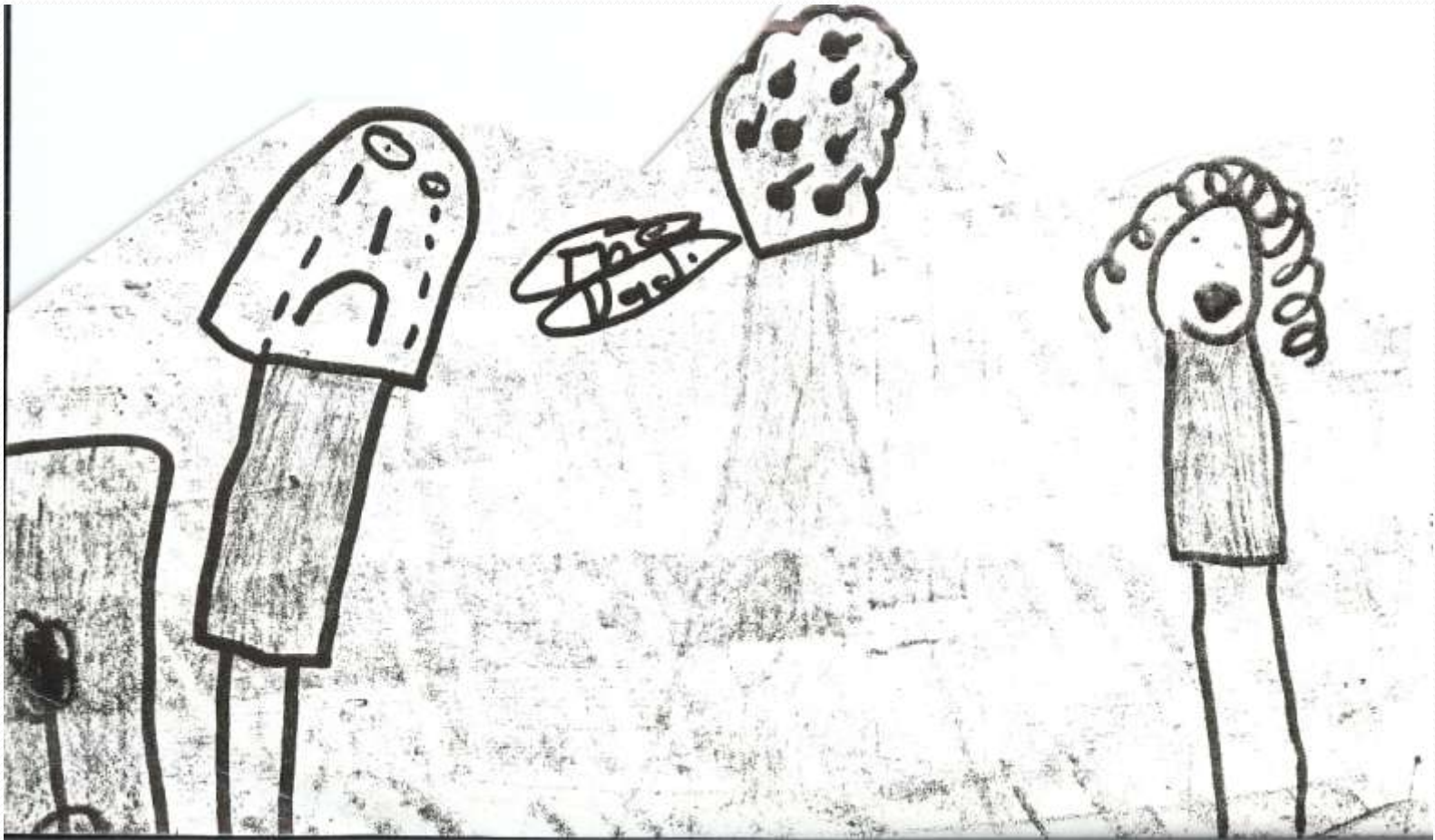
Victims may express themselves through drawings when they can't verbalise sexual abuse

- Obsession with sex or genitals in pictures
- Angry colours used when there is a free choice
- Armless or faceless self portraits when they draw arms and faces on other people
- Insidious grin on offender's faces
- Sad expressions on self portraits
- Bizarre immature drawings
- Oval mouths and sharp exaggerated teeth (oral sex)
- Use of phallic symbols
- Explicit sex

Boy, aged 10 displayed inappropriate sexual behaviour to teacher. He constantly wrote about sports and illustrations involved entire sports teams with erections. The teacher didn't notice and wrote 'Good work Paul' saying, "I only looked at his spelling'



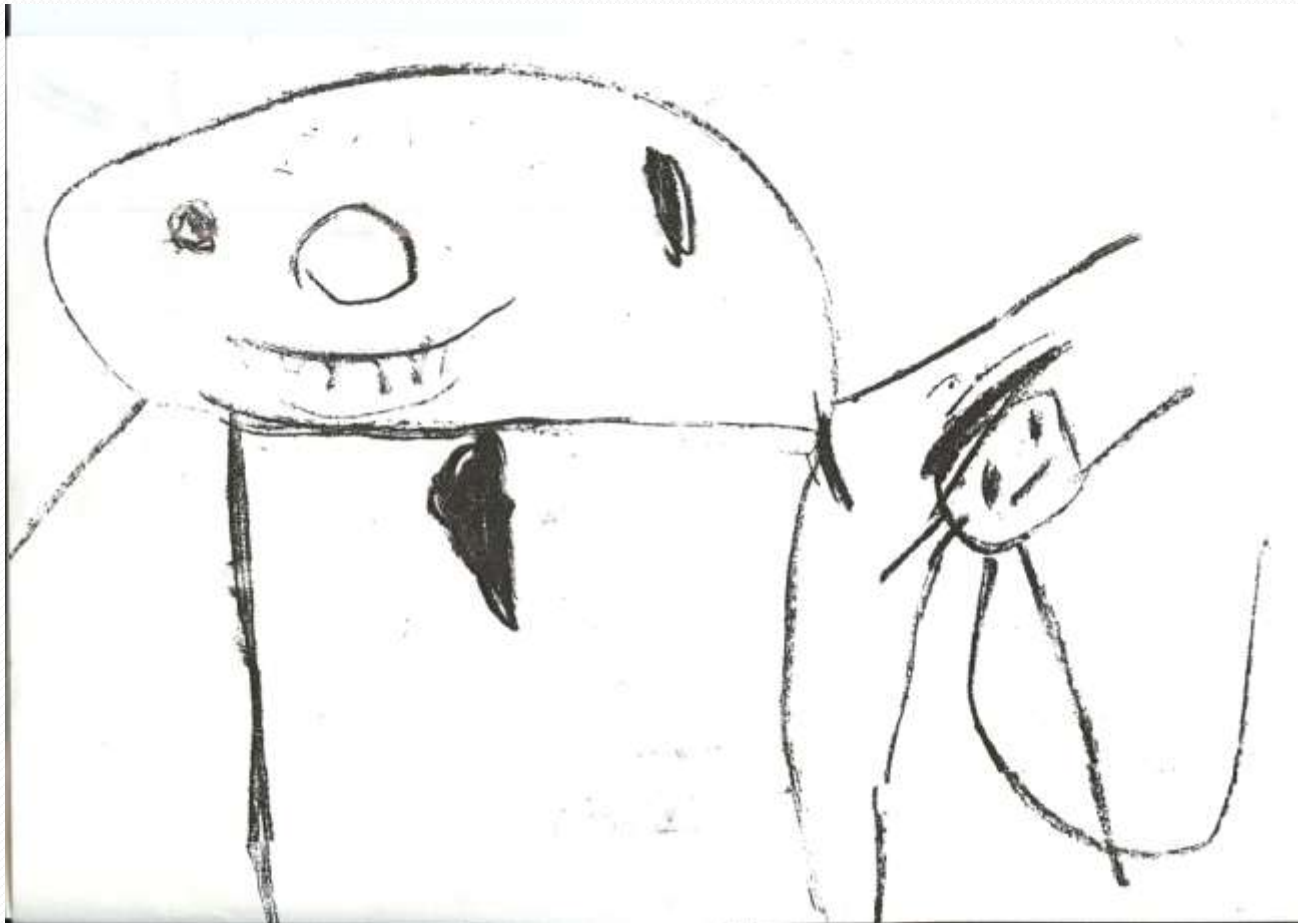
‘The Dad’ presented as a penis and herself as armless. He was sad because she said no to rape



. Boy aged 8 gave teacher this picture saying 'This is a man with his pants down and that's his dick going up to his chin'. She did nothing!



Abuser & victim drawn by the same boy. Pictures were mounted on the school wall



Obsession with genitals in drawings was dismissed by staff as
'Boys will be boys'



4 year old's picture of his abuser



Grooming methods used by paedophiles

- Gets to know and develops the trust of those responsible for the safety of the targeted victim
- Investigates and fills carers' needs eg. father replacement figure, lodger, minder, odd jobs
- Plays at child's own level and becomes popular
- Makes target feel special & loved so they won't be rejected when sex is introduced
- Provides valued treats, gifts or services OR
- Abuses their authority, using violence, control and terror eg priests, paedophile rings, close relative
- REMEMBER - IF HE SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, HE PROBABLY IS: STEP IN AND STOP IT NOW!

Even if the child enjoys it, intervene and stop contact when someone:

- engages in excessive, boisterous play involving touching: eg. tickling, throwing the child around
- introduces massage over or under clothes
- lives alone or with his mother and offers to babysit or take the child or young person camping, fishing etc
- spends much of his time with kids, not adults
- finds way to be alone with the targeted victim
- introduces secrecy eg. with gifts
- introduces sex talk or pornography

Why the 1976 Protective Behaviours (PB) can't prevent or stop sexual abuse

- It relies on children recognising sexual touching as unsafe; 43% of abused boys enjoyed fondling & oral sex and they perceive 'unsafe' as traffic related, not people or sex
- Paedophiles excel at making victims feel safe & special
- PB doesn't say clearly what is wrong, reportable behaviour
- It is unreliable to talk about good and bad touch because fondling may not feel bad
- PB doesn't tell children which secrets to tell
- 78% of male victims thought their abuse was normal
- PB is vague yet complex; messages have to be clear and explicit without being frightening

Institutions should provide

- child protection policies written with parents and read by visitors before accessing children
- community, parent and staff education to dispel myths about disability, sexuality and abuse
- child protection programs with repetition, practice and reinforcement of safety strategies
- trained, monitored supervisors that inadequate supervision and sloppy security assist sex offenders
- support for staff and parents
- IF NOT PROVIDED, PARENTS SHOULD ASK WHY AND IF NECESSARY REPORT TO MANAGEMENT

Challenges for carers; the child/young person has

- already learned to comply with adult demands
- developed a poor body image and poor concepts of personal space
- no knowledge of rights and not given choices
- become dependent on adults and lacks opportunities for independence
- already been sexually abused
- Has low self esteem, shame, guilt, confusion
- over-protective families who do everything for them

ALL OF THE ABOVE INCREASE THE RISK OF ABUSE

Develop problem-solving skills

Identify relevant problem. Frame questions around it:

“Just suppose that.... What could somebody do to stay safe?”

“What else could they do?” eg Just suppose that.....

- they got lost at - (a beach, sports event, show department store, etc) Suppose that a lady offered to take them home?
- they are offered pills that would make them feel great
- a man sits too close to you on the bus
- a boy/man unzips his pants and shows you his penis
- someone dares you to smoke marijuana, sniff adhesives or steal from a shop.
- an adult shows you sex/dirty/rude pictures/videos
- WHAT COULD YOU DO?

Develop self esteem and start young

Given that abuse is about power, start to develop confidence, independence and self esteem when children are young.

Teach:

- Self-help skills: toileting, hygiene, dressing, eating
- Safety and self protection: safety with water, fire, electricity, drugs, traffic, people; how to get help when needed; develop and practice problem-solving and accurate reporting skills; identify and avoid dangers
- Health –how bodies work, practice body privacy, use correct names, respect and care for each other
- Identify and practice safe behaviours & consequences of unsafe; learn address & phone no. Learn about help lines. Develop social skills
- Effective communications –personal space – eye-to eye contact

Teach body privacy including the mouth

Nobody is allowed to put anything stinky or yucky in your mouth

Children do not associate oral sex with “touching”

They see touching as involving hands

When abuse is suspected

- Say ‘I’m concerned. I know that something is bothering you. Is it something..or somebody?’
- At home or at school?
- Is it a secret? (If so) Who else knows the secret? (Don’t ask what the secret is)
- Secrets that worry us must always be told – is someone giving you a wrong touch?
- Can you point to where they’re touching?
- If abuse is disclosed, thank the child – say it isn’t their fault – the abuser knows it isn’t allowed and you want to help.

Discuss ideas for how to

- distinguish good and wrong touch for those dependent on others for personal hygiene
- empower them by increasing choices
- develop safety concepts in those who lack communication skills
- teach body privacy without causing alarm
- use ACTIVITIES, puppets and role-play for learning
- handle an adult whose behaviour makes you feel uncomfortable
- question a child when you suspect he may have been abused