

Child sexual abuse is scary, and it's even scarier to think that a child you know may be in danger. Do you know how to respond if you discover or suspect child sexual abuse is occurring? This decision chart will help you figure out a responsible reaction.

1 in 10 children
will be sexually abused before they turn 18



How Should I React?

For more information, visit D2L.org

There are 3 reasons to react to child sexual abuse:

DISCLOSURE

A child reported sexual abuse to you

Offer Support

The three most important words you can say:
"I believe you."

Remain Calm

Don't overreact or show anger.

Is the child "troubled" or a "behavior problem"?

YES

NO

Child sexual abuse can contribute to a variety of emotional, physical, and behavioral issues.

But sometimes, there are no outward signs.

You've discovered child sexual abuse.

REPORT

Contact the police or child protective services (CPS).*

You reinforced a child's boundaries and created a safer environment. Thank you!

DISCOVERY

You witnessed a sexually abusive act

The act was by an adult

The act was by another youth

I found photos in print or on the Internet that show child pornography.

Is the alleged offender or boundary violator:

a trusted friend, colleague, or supervisor?

a parent or family member of the child?

another youth?

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The person continues violating boundaries.

The behavior stops.

Move On

"Chloe, let's go see what the other kids are up to."

SUSPICION

You witnessed red flag behaviors.

You see someone testing limits or crossing a child's physical boundaries and creating a situation that makes the child vulnerable.

60% of abusers are trusted acquaintances like friends, youth workers, or community leaders.

30% of abusers are immediate or extended family.

40% of child sexual abuse is by older or larger youth.

BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

Describe the Behavior

"It looks like you're making Chloe kiss and hug. She looks uncomfortable."

Set a Limit

"Please stop. We let her decide when and how she wants to show affection."

* Report any form of child pornography to the police or to the Cyber Tipline at 1-800-THE-LOST or missingkids.com. In some states, CPS goes by another name. Find out the agency that serves your state by searching the Internet for "child protective services" along with your state and county names. To find a children's advocacy center near you, contact the National Children's Alliance at 1-800-239-9950 or nationalchildrensalliance.org.