



## CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE STATISTICS Reporting Abuse

### FACT:

Only about one third of child sexual abuse incidents are identified, and even fewer are reported.

Researchers estimate that 38% of child victims disclose the fact that they have been sexually abused.<sup>5,6</sup> Of these, 40% tell a close friend, rather than an adult or authority.<sup>7</sup> These “friend-to-friend” disclosures do not always result in reports. This means that the vast majority of child sexual abuse incidents are never reported to authorities, though research suggests that disclosure rates to authorities may be increasing.<sup>24</sup>

Child protective service agencies investigate about 55% of the child sexual abuse incidents reported to them. The rest are “screened out” for lack of adequate information or for other reasons. Of those reports investigated, only a portion meets the criteria for “substantiated.”<sup>3</sup>

Child protective service agencies investigate only 20% of the incidents/children identified and reported by school personnel.<sup>3</sup>

School personnel identify 52% of all identified child abuse cases classified as causing harm to the child, more than any other profession or organizational type, including child protective service agencies and the police.<sup>3</sup>

Two-thirds of teachers do not receive specific training in preventing, recognizing, or responding to child sexual abuse in either their college coursework or as part of their professional development.<sup>25</sup>

24% of school personnel have never received any oral or written guidelines on the mandated reporting requirements of their state.<sup>3</sup>

### CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE REPORTS

SHOULD BE  
MADE TO  
THE  
STATES’  
CHILD  
PROTECTIVE  
SERVICES  
AGENCY,  
THE POLICE



OR BOTH

 DARKNESS TO LIGHT

### FACT:

Research shows that child sexual abuse perpetrators re-offend at a lower rate than other types of offenders, including those convicted of rape.

Rapists had a lower rate of re-arrest for a new felony and a lower rate of re-arrest for a violent felony than most categories of probationers with convictions for violence.<sup>11,28</sup>

Released rapists were found to be 10.5 times as likely as non-rapists to be re-arrested for rape.<sup>11</sup>

Research suggests that incest offenders re-offend at approximately half the rate of “acquaintance” child molesters.<sup>28</sup>



# DARKNESS TO LIGHT

## FACT:

A large number of those arrested for child sexual assault are convicted and serve time in prison or jail.

Of those charged, about 80% of rape offenders (including rapists of adults) are convicted.<sup>27</sup>

An estimated 48% of rape defendants (including rapes of adults) were released from detention prior to the disposition of their case. Only defendants charged with murder had a lower rate of release (24%) than those for whom rape charges were pending.<sup>11</sup>

About 14% of those convicted of rape were convicted in a jury trial, but for most defendants (82%), conviction followed a guilty plea. The remaining 4% were convicted following a bench trial.<sup>11</sup>

Overall, 87% of convicted rapists (including rapists of adults) were incarcerated, and about 13% received a sentence to probation supervision in the community.<sup>11</sup>

For convicted rapists sentenced to prison (not local jails), the average term imposed was just under 14 years. An estimated 2% of convicted rapists received a term of life imprisonment.<sup>11</sup>

For each convicted rape offender in a prison or jail, there are nearly 3 rape offenders under probation or parole supervision in the community.<sup>11</sup>

## FACT:

False reports of child sexual abuse made by children are rare.

It is estimated that only 4 to 8% of child sexual abuse reports are fabricated. Most of the fabricated reports are made by adults involved in custody disputes or by adolescents.<sup>26</sup>

## NATIONAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE HELPLINE Darkness to Light 1-866-FOR-LIGHT

Darkness to Light provides a toll-free number for individuals living in the United States who need local information and resources about sexual abuse. Any individual, child, or adult who needs resources about sexual abuse can call the Helpline.

All calls are confidential and will be answered by a trained information and referral service representative. Helpline availability varies according to state and call center.

For more help related to child sexual abuse, please visit:  
<http://www.d2l.org/gethelp>

## References

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