

STATISTICS:

Research estimates that approximately 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused before the age of 18. ¹

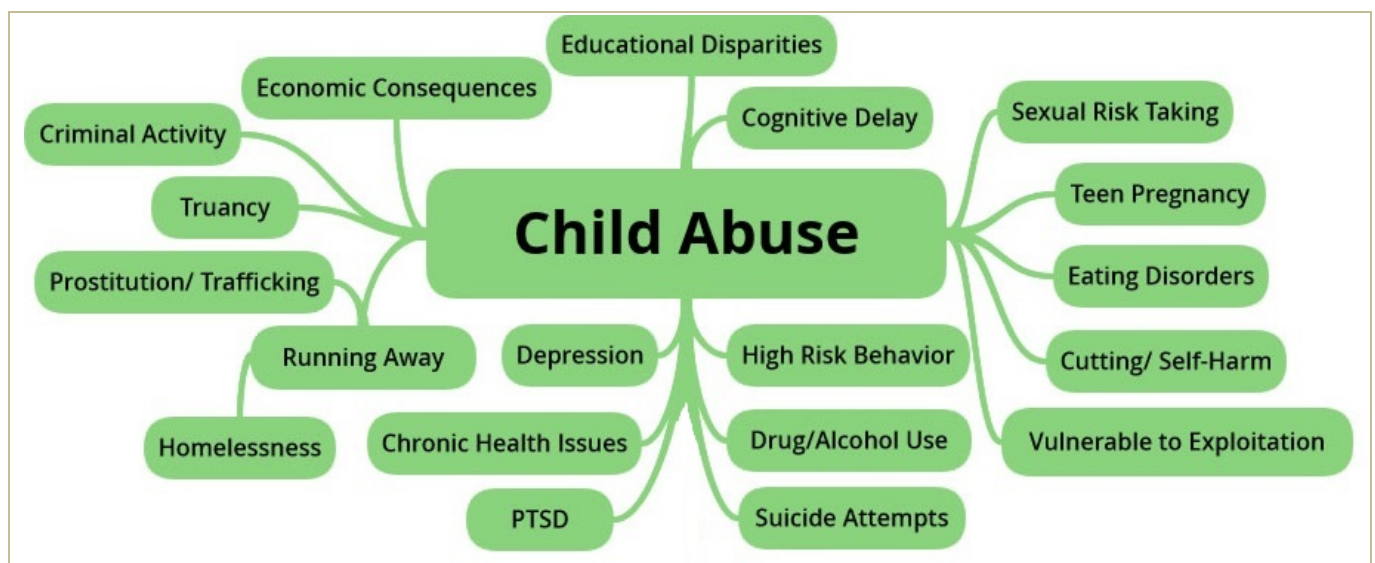
In as many as 93 percent of child sexual abuse cases, the child knows the person who commits the abuse (acquaintances, family members). ²

90% of sex offenders who abuse minors are male, though women also commit sexual abuse crimes. ³

POTENTIAL WARNING SIGNS OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE:

PHYSICAL SIGNS	BEHAVIORAL SIGNS	EMOTIONAL SIGNS
Depression, anxiety	Sleep disturbances, nightmares, fatigue	Unusual anxiety about being left by parent
Frequent headaches, stomachaches, targeted pain	Displays knowledge/interest in sexual acts inappropriate to age	Mood swings/ Irritability
Sleep problems	Self-destructive behaviors: alcohol and/or drug use, eating disorder, self-harm/cutting	Flashbacks
Difficulty walking or sitting, Bruised/bleeding vaginal or anal area	Running away, sexual risk-taking	Inability to concentrate
Weight gain or loss	Isolating, reluctance to participate in activities previously enjoyed	Depression
Sexually transmitted infections or pregnancy, esp. under age 14	Bedwetting, regression to earlier developmental stage	Suicidal thoughts/attempts

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF UNTREATED TRAUMA IN CHILDHOOD:



¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/prevalence.html>

² <http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/factsheet/pdf/childhoodSexualAbuseFactSheet.pdf>

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GROOMING STRATEGIES USED BY ABUSERS:

Most child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child knows and trusts. The abuser uses a process of to gain the trust of the child and the child's caregivers/parents, as a way to ensure access to the child. The steps are:

- Gain the trust of victims and their family/caregivers
- Introduce and desensitize the child to touch, escalating to sexual touch and inappropriate behavior
- Manipulating the child through threats or trickery to keep the sexual abuse secret.

Those who abuse children are often:

- charming and helpful
- offer gifts, affection and attention to the child
- make the child (and parents) feel special
- may attempt to create peer relationships with those who are much younger
- fail to respect clear boundaries set by the parents and the child
- seek one-on-one time with the child

WAYS TO REDUCE THE RISKS FOR CHILDREN:⁴

- **Know the warning signs.** Become familiar with the warning signs of child sexual abuse, and notice any changes with your child, no matter how small.
- **Get to know the people in your child's life.** Know who your child is spending time with, including other children and adults.
- **Encourage children to speak up.** When someone knows that their voice will be heard and taken seriously, it gives them the courage to speak up when something isn't right. Start having these conversations with your children as soon as they begin using words for feelings or emotions.
- **Teach your child about boundaries.** Let your child know that no one has the right to touch them or make them feel uncomfortable — this includes hugs from grandparents or even tickling from mom or dad. It is important to let your child know that their body is their own.
- **Teach your child how to talk about their bodies.** From an early age, teach your child the names of their body parts. Teaching a child these words gives them the ability to come to you when something is wrong.
- **Be available.** Let your child know that they can come to you if they have questions or if someone is talking to them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- **Let them know they won't get in trouble.** Many perpetrators use secret-keeping or threats as a way of keeping children quiet about abuse. Remind your child frequently that they will not get in trouble for talking to you, no matter what they need to say.
- **Give them the chance to raise new topics.** Give your child a chance to bring up their own concerns or ideas by asking open-ended questions like "Is there anything else you wanted to talk about?"

⁴ <https://rainn.org/get-information/sexual-assault-prevention/protecting-a-child-from-sexual-assault>