

## Forms and Types of Child Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is **any sexual act** between an adult and a child. Such acts include:

- + **Behavior involving penetration** – *vaginal or anal intercourse and oral sex.*
- + **Behavior not involving penetration** - *prolonged kissing, cuddling, French kissing, and excessive touching. Looking at children either with or without clothes with the intent to be sexually aroused can also be included. The collection of any photographs or images of children taken by others in suggestive poses is illegal.*
- + **Fondling** – *Touching, fondling or kissing a child's genitals, making a child fondle an adult's genitals.*
- + **Violations of privacy** – *Forcing a child to undress, spying on a child in the bathroom or bedroom.*
- + **Exposing children to adult sexuality** – *Performing sexual acts in front of a child, exposing genitals, exposing oneself nude for the sexual gratification of the adult, telling "dirty" stories, videotaping, or filming of children with the intent to create sexual stimulation.*
- + **Exploitation** – *Exposing a child for sexual purposes on the internet; selling a child's services as a prostitute; having a child perform in pornography; exchanging or purchasing child pornography.*

**Any efforts to seduce a minor into a sexual relationship**, whether the act is accomplished or not, will likewise be considered a form of child sexual abuse, and will result in severe legal consequences. **Inappropriate intimacy with children will also be regarded as child sexual abuse.**

It's important to understand that no matter what the adult says in defense of his or her actions, the child did not invite the sexual activity and the adult's behavior is wrong. **Sexual abuse is never the child's fault regardless of the child's level of maturity or the child's behavior.** By law, the age of the person who sexually abuses a child solely dictates whether the person is culpable of child sexual abuse.

Children are psychologically unprepared and unable to handle sexual stimulation. Even toddlers, who haven't formulated the idea that the sexual abuse is wrong, will develop problems resulting from the overstimulation.

Older children who know and care for their abusers know that the sexual behavior is wrong, but they may feel trapped by feelings of loyalty and affection. Abusers warn their victims not to tell, threatening children with violence or ostracism, and the shame associated with the sexual activity makes the child especially reluctant to tell.

When sexual abuse occurs within the family, children may worry that other family members won't believe them and will be angry with them if they tell — as is often the case. The layer of shame that accompanies sexual abuse makes the behavior doubly traumatizing...**even more so if the child is subsequently placed in foster care**