

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE STATISTICS Perpetrators

FACT:

Those who molest children look and act just like everyone else.

There are people who have or will sexually abuse children in churches, schools, and youth sports leagues.

Abusers can be neighbors, friends, and family members. People who sexually abuse children can be found in families, schools, churches, recreation centers, youth sports leagues, and any other place children gather. Significantly, abusers can be and often are other children.

About 90% of children who are victims of abuse know their abuser. ^{12,13}

Only 10% of sexually abused children are abused by a stranger.¹²

Approximately 30% of children who are sexually abused are abused by family members. ^{12, 13}

The younger the victim, the more likely it is that the abuser is a family member. Of those molesting a child under six, 50% were family members. Family members also accounted for 23% of those abusing children ages 12 to 17.⁹

About 60% of children who are sexually abused are abused by the people the family trusts. ^{12,13}

Homosexual individuals are no more likely to sexually abuse than heterosexual individuals.¹⁵



FACT:

Most adolescent sex offenders are not sexual predators and will not go on to become adult offenders.

Most adolescent offenders do not meet the criteria for pedophilia and do not continue to exhibit sexually predatory behaviors.³⁹

Adolescent sex offenders are more responsive to treatment than adults. They do not appear to continue to re-offend into adulthood, especially when provided with appropriate treatment.²⁹

DARKNESS TO LIGHT

FACT:

Not everyone who sexually abuses children is a pedophile.

Child sexual abuse is perpetrated by a wide range of individuals with diverse motivations. It is impossible to identify specific characteristics that are common to all those who molest children.

Situational offenders tend to offend at times of stress and begin offending later than pedophilic offenders. They also have fewer victims (often family), and have a general preference for adult partners.¹⁶

Pedophilic offenders often start offending at an early age, and often have a large number of victims (frequently not family members).¹⁶

70% of child sexual offenders have between one and 9 victims, while 20% have 10 to 40 victims.¹⁴

FACT:

As many as 40% of children who are sexually abused are abused by older, or more powerful children.¹²

The younger the child victim, the more likely it is that the perpetrator is a juvenile. Juveniles are the offenders in 43% of assaults on children under age six. Of these offenders, 14% are under age 12.⁹

Juveniles who commit sex offenses against other children are more likely than adult sex offenders to offend in groups, to offend at schools, and to have more male victims and younger victims.¹¹

The number of youth coming to the attention of police for sex offenses increases sharply at age 12 and plateaus after age 14. Early adolescence is the peak age for youth offenses against younger children.¹⁴

A small number of juvenile offenders – one out of 8 – are younger than age 12. Females constitute 7% of juveniles who commit sex offenses.¹⁴

References

- 9 Snyder, H. N. (2000). Sexual assault of young children as reported to law enforcement: Victim, incident, and offender characteristics. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved January 12, 2009 from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/saycrle.pdf>
- 11 Greenfeld, L.A. (1997). Sex Offenses and Offenders An Analysis of Data on Rape and Sexual Assault. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ-163392
- 12 Finkelhor, D. (2012). Characteristics of crimes against juveniles. Durham, NH: Crimes against Children Research Center.
- 13 Whealin, J. (2007-05-22). "Child Sexual Abuse". National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, US Department of Veterans Affairs.
- 14 Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R., Chaffin, M. (2009) Juveniles who commit sex offenses against minors. Juvenile Justice Bulletin, OJJDP, Office of Justice Programs
- 15 Jenny, Carole, Roesler, Thomas A., Poyer, Kimberly L. (1994) Are children at risk for sexual abuse by homosexuals? Pediatrics, Vol. 94 No. 1, pp. 41-44.
- 16 Abel, G. G., Mittleman, M. S., & Becker, J. V. (1985). "Sex offenders: Results of assessment and recommendations for treatment." In M. H. Ben-Aron, S. J. Hucker, & C. D. Webster (Eds.), Clinical Criminology: The assessment and treatment of criminal behavior (pp. 207-220).
- 29 Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA). (2000). The effective legal management of juvenile sex offender. Retrieved from www.atsa.com/ppjuvenile.html
- 39 McLeer, S. V., Dixon, J. F., Henry, D., Ruggiero, K., Escovitz, K., Niedda, T., & Scholle, R. (1998). Psychopathology in non-clinically referred sexually abused children. Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 37, 1326 – 1333.

