



"Who Do You Tell?"™

Education & Safety Program on Child Sexual Abuse

FUNDED BY:



TO LEARN MORE

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE?

According to the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act of Alberta (CYFEA), a **child is defined** as anyone under the age of 18 years old.

The **definition of sexual abuse** is if the child is “inappropriately exposed or subjected to sexual contact, activity, or behaviour including prostitution related activities.” (CYFEA, Section (3) (c), 2019).

WHEN IS A CHILD IN NEED OF PROTECTION?

The CYFEA state that a child is deemed to be in a need of protective services if;

- 1 “The child has been or there is substantial risk that the child will be physically injured or sexually abused by the guardian of the child.”
- OR**
- 2 “The guardian of the child is unable or unwilling to protect the child from physical injury or sexual abuse.”

WHY CHILDREN ARE VULNERABLE TO SEXUAL ABUSE

- Children are **dependent** on adults/teens, both physically and emotionally [14]
- Adults/teens are more **powerful**, physically and psychologically [14]
- Cultural obsession with the **myth of “stranger danger”** takes focus and awareness away from building safety in regards to those who are known to the child [10]
- Children may **not know what child sexual abuse is**, or that it is harmful [1,16]
- Children may be **groomed or threatened** and tend to believe and trust adults who they see as authority figures [1,12]
- Children may be **isolated from community supports** [14]
- Children have less control over who they associate with [14]
- Children are often not believed or **no action is taken**, which makes them more vulnerable to continued or future abuse [1,10,16,29]
- “Who Do You Tell?”™ surveys reveal that children **often believe sexual abuse cannot happen to them** or that they would fight off would be offenders [16] Children may have more difficulty understanding that the abuse is wrong when the person who is abusing them is a **trusted adult** or in a position of authority [16]



For further information

www.alberta.ca/child-intervention.aspx

To access the CYFEA

www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/c12.pdf

WHY IS A CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE EDUCATION & SAFETY PROGRAM NEEDED?

PREVALENCE

The Report of the Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children and Youth indicates that in Canada **1 in 3 girls** and **1 in 6 boys** is sexually abused before the age of eighteen [7].

Many children never disclose their abuse even though (or perhaps because) **88% of sexual abusers are known and trusted by the children** who are victimized [9]. This abuse can have both immediate and long lasting negative impacts [9,11,28].

According to 2012 statistics [9]



Children and Youth make up 20% of the population of Canada....



... But represent 55% of all victims of a police-reported sexual offence.

POLICE REPORTED VS. SELF-REPORTED

In 2012, police services across Canada received approximately **14,000 reports of sexual offenses against children and youth** [9].

Studies that rely on self reporting generally find a higher rate of instances of child sexual abuse than studies that rely on statistics from police or other authorities [8]. Since many children never disclose their abuse to police [9], engaging in a study may be the first time they have felt they've ever had the chance to tell their story.



3% of all homicides against children and youth were motivated by sexual violence.



26% of all sexual offences which were police reported occurred in a previous year.

CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Childhood trauma of any kind may have lasting and recurring effects on the individuals who experiences it, however victims of childhood sexual abuse are “shown to present significantly more... symptoms than non-abused children, or than victims of other forms of trauma” especially in the areas of **post-traumatic stress and disassociation** [8].

Some of the specific symptoms that may manifest themselves in childhood, or later in adolescence or adulthood include:

- Withdrawal
- Depression
- Suicidal Feelings/Actions
- Nightmares/Flashbacks
- Engagement in High Risk Behaviours
- Fears and Anxiety
- Eating Disorders
- Difficulties with Anger
- Concentration and Learning Difficulties
- Self-Harming Behaviours
- Low Self-Esteem
- Substance Abuse [19,27,28]

Child sexual abuse is a life altering experience for children with consequences that continue into adulthood, especially when children do not feel safe to disclose the abuse or do not receive appropriate support from those they do tell [23,24].



CHILDREN CAN FIND IT HARD TO DISCLOSE

There are a number of reasons disclosing abuse to an adult can be difficult for a child, such as;

PERSONAL

- Children may not be able to disclose due to language, cognitive, or developmental limitations [16]
- Children are often uncomfortable, embarrassed or ashamed to talk about abuse [16]

RELATIONAL

- Children may feel that they cannot rely on their parents or be distrustful towards adults and professionals [30]
- Children often feel a sense of loyalty towards offender and want to protect them [16]
- Children may have been threatened [14, 16]
- Children could fear familial disruption or other negative consequences [16]
- Children may want to protect the non-offending caregiver from what happened and may not want to burden them with their disclosure [25]

SOCIO-CULTURAL

- Children might be afraid of not being believed or getting in trouble [1]
- Children often believe it is their fault or they are somehow responsible for the abuse [16]
- Male children find it particularly hard to disclose due to additional fear of stigmatization or that they will become perpetrators themselves as a result of the abuse they experienced [16, 20, 30]

Children often do not disclose abuse directly and clearly to an adult. Most disclosures of abuse from children are accidental (74%) and some children may recanted their statements (between 6% and 27% of validated child sexual abuse cases) only to re-affirm them later (93% of recantations) [31]. One study found that 72% of the children who had experienced child sexual abuse initially denied that anything had happened, and 78% were reluctant to discuss the abuse [31].



“WHO DO YOU TELL?”™ PROGRAM INFORMATION

“Who Do You Tell?”™ is a child sexual abuse education and safety program for elementary school aged children, their parents, and teachers. “Who Do You Tell?”™ was first introduced in Calgary in 1983, and CCASA has owned and offered the program since 1994. Since that time, the program has been evaluated, revised, and updated to ensure its continued effectiveness while also being delivered by trained professionals. The program has been evaluated continuously since 1995 by Dr. Leslie Tutty of the University of Calgary, who's research on “Who Do You Tell?”™ has been published in journals as recently as 2019. “Who Do You Tell?”™ has been offered in the Calgary Board of Education and the Calgary Catholic School District, as well as private and charter schools. CCASA is a non-profit charitable organization whose mission is to provide leadership to impact attitudes and actions around sexual abuse and sexual assault. “Who Do You Tell?”™ is one of many programs CCASA offers to the community.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Following the “Who Do You Tell?”™ program children will understand:

1 **BODY AUTONOMY**

Child sexual abuse is any inappropriate touching or viewing of the private parts of a child’s body by an older person, or when an older person has a child look at or touch their private parts.

2 **PRIVATE PARTS**

Children will be able to identify the private parts of the body and learn the correct terminology for the private parts (depending on their grade level).

3 **THEIR RIGHT TO SAY NO**

Children will know they have the right to respond assertively against any sexually abusive advance or behaviour.

4 **IT IS NOT THEIR FAULT**

Children will understand that child sexual abuse is never the child's fault, even if they were bribed or threatened.

5 **THAT THEY SHOULD TELL A TRUSTED ADULT**

Children will be able to name adults they can tell if they feel uncomfortable, threatened or if they have been abused.



COMPONENTS OF THE "WHO DO YOU TELL?"™ PROGRAM

"Who Do You Tell?"™ consists of the following three components that seek to educate teachers, parents and children about child sexual abuse.

1

Teacher/Staff Information Presentation (2 hours)

"Who Do You Tell?"™ educators are primarily responsible for the delivery of the program. However, teachers are an essential part and play an integral role in assuring the effectiveness of the program. The information presentation provides information concerning the issues of child sexual abuse, indicators of child sexual abuse, and how to respond effectively to possible disclosures. Teachers will also learn about what will happen in their class during "Who Do You Tell?"™ and what is expected of them while the program is being delivered.

2

Parent/Guardian Information Presentation (2 hours)

The presentation is offered to familiarize parents/guardians with the history, content and presentation methods of the "Who Do You Tell?"™ Program. Parents/guardians are also given information about child sexual abuse, how to talk to their children about child sexual abuse, and how to respond to disclosures. There will be an opportunity to discuss any questions and/or concerns. Parents/guardians must provide permission for their children to participate in the program.

3

Student Presentations Core Program: Kindergarten - Grade 6 (2 sessions, 1 hour each)

All grades will receive core programming which teaches children about child sexual abuse safety and education, and gives them key messaging around this topic. Students will be given the opportunity to ask individual questions and/or speak privately with "Who Do You Tell?"™ educators at the earliest time available following the lesson(s).



"Who Do You Tell?"™ is an education and safety program that aligns with best practice research, literature and the general outcomes of the Alberta Education - Health and Life Skills, and Wellness Education Curriculum.



"Who Do You Tell?"™ is tailored according to grade and developmental level and uses a variety of teaching tools (stories, videos, pictures and skits).



"Who Do You Tell?"™ is an effective early intervention program as it addresses both attitudes and behaviours related to child sexual abuse through regular and ongoing sessions, which increases knowledge retention.



"Who Do You Tell?"™ is interactive and participatory; gives specific attention to skills development, responds appropriately to children's disclosures and is of sufficient duration and intensity to produce change.



OPTIONAL: EXTENDED PROGRAM

CCASA offers an extended "Who Do You Tell?"™ program which includes the core content and covers additional topics and expands on child sexual abuse concepts.



Grade 1: (7 sessions total , 1 hour each)

- body ownership
- how to **understand feelings** in relation to child sexual abuse
- how to express those feelings to trusted adults

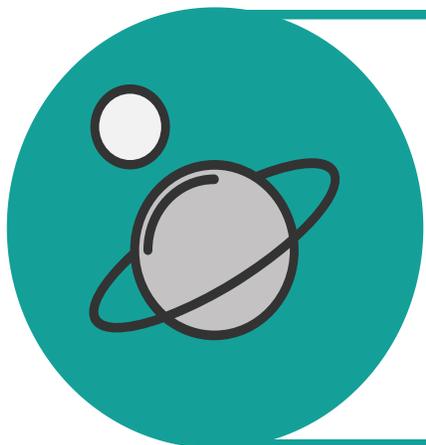
Grade 2: (5 sessions total, 1 hour each)

- body ownership
- understanding, expressing, and respecting boundaries and the **personal space** of themselves and others
- identify if a personal space boundary has been broken
- explore ways that boundaries can be set with others when they are feeling uncomfortable or unsafe



Grade 3: (3 Sessions total, 1 hour each)

- body ownership
- personal space boundaries (similar to grade 2)
- **online safety**



CCASA recommends the extended program as it allows for more in-depth discussion and greater content retention.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

COMMITMENT

Staff members, teachers, and administrators are committed to the safety of children in their care and are concerned for their wellbeing. However, studies have found that most teachers feel that they do not have adequate training in childhood abuse signs, symptoms, and reporting procedures [22].

Overall teachers report feeling under prepared and inadequately trained regarding the procedures, protocols, and their professional responsibilities around reporting child sexual abuse [22].

Despite this, teachers and school staff play an important role in detecting and reporting child sexual abuse [22]. They have ongoing contact with children and are in a unique position to observe concerning behaviours.

It is important for professionals who work with children to have all of the information that they need to feel confident to make a report to Alberta Children's Services. School staff should be informed on what steps to take in case a situation where a responsibility to report arises.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SCHOOL POLICY



In Alberta, every adult has a duty to report child abuse, and education staff members are considered mandated reporters. That means they have a **legal responsibility to report** suspected child abuse to Alberta Children's Services [17,18].



If your agencies and/or organizations falls outside of the School Board, then policies should be in place regarding reporting child abuse. Check with your supervisor if you need clarification or have a concern about a child.



Regardless of individual policies, the **individual receiving a disclosure has the primary responsibility to report** child sexual abuse to Alberta Children's Services [17].

DIFFUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Studies have shown that there is often a diffusion of responsibility within the education system.

Teachers may feel that someone else such as their principal or school councilor is responsible for making the report to Alberta Children's Services [22].

Because of this teachers are more likely to report concerns to school administration than to Alberta Children's Services. **When the responsibility for reporting to Alberta Children's Services is deferred, it is less likely to be reported** [22].

This means that they abuse is more likely to continue and therefore the child is put at greater risk of further abuse.

IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED AND HOW TO RESPOND

1

Monitor Behaviour

Monitor the child's behaviour, school performance, and absences and keep clear and precise documentation of each incident or concerning behaviour so that if reporting is required you will be able to give detailed information about your concerns.

2

Build Rapport

Build rapport with the child and provide a warm, trusting, and private atmosphere [21]. You might say, "You seem a little upset, is there anything that you want to talk about?" or, "I am always here for you to talk to and I will believe what you say."

3

Consult

Work within a team setting while respecting confidentiality. Consult with resource staff, i.e. School Principal, School Resource Teacher, school Councillor, etc.

4

Call Alberta Children's Services

Call Alberta Child Services, or call CCASA for consultation.

FEAR OF MAKING A FALSE REPORT

One of the most common reasons that teachers do not report potential abuse to Alberta Children's Services is fear of making an inaccurate or false report [22].

It is important for teachers, school staff, and others who work with children to understand that the person who reports the concern **does not need to prove the abuse; they only need to have reasonable and probable grounds to believe that abuse has occurred** [17].

CONFIDENTIALITY CONCERNS

All reports made to Alberta Children's Services are **confidential and protected** under section 126.1(1) of the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act of Albert [17].

You cannot be sued for reporting child abuse if you are reporting in good faith and without malice [17].

Your identity is confidential and its disclosure by Alberta Children's Services personnel is prohibited.

Any information which would identify you as the referral source "is not admissible in evidence in any action or proceeding before any court or an Appeal Panel or before any inquiry" without your consent (Section 126.1(1), GOA, 2019).

WHY TEACHERS UNDER REPORT?



ALBERTA CHILDREN'S SERVICES IS THERE TO HELP

Alberta Children's Services works with families to provide them the supports needed to keep kids safe. With the support from Alberta Children's Services, most parents are able to protect their children from harm.

For more information please consult *Responding to Child Abuse: A Handbook* open.alberta.ca/publications/5076101 or *The Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* <http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/C12.pdf>.

You can also contact Alberta Children's Services with any concerns or questions you may have regarding your professional responsibility.

INDICATORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Nearly one quarter of all child sexual abuse cases made to Alberta Children's Services agencies come from schools. It is believed that there are more cases which go unreported from schools than there are reported cases from all other sources combined [22].

The most significant indicators of child sexual abuse are symptoms related to dissociation and/or PTSD [8]. Though there is **not one clear indicator** or set of symptoms when it comes to child sexual abuse, symptoms that may indicate that the child has experienced (or be experiencing) some sort of trauma or abuse are explored below.

This list is not exhaustive, rather should serve as an example of the types of behaviours that teachers and other professionals should be aware of, **especially when observed in clusters** or when they are a significant change in behaviour from what would typically be expected for the child. Each child's situation should be assessed individually [13], but typically noticing these changes in a child should warrant documentation at the school level and may require consultation with Alberta Children's Services.



Indicators include [4][5][15];

Physical

- Regressive behaviours
- Frequent stomach aches and/ or head aches
- Soreness in the genitals
- Difficulty walking, sitting, or going to the washroom
- STIs/ STDs
- Binging/ Purging
- Self-harm

Affective

- New/ unexplained Fear (fear of the dark, fear of being alone, etc.)
- bizarre behavior
- Impaired trust
- Anxiety reactions
- sadness/ depression
- Acting-out without immediate cause
- Easily distracted
- Self-perceptions of helplessness

Verbal

- Sexualized language or play
- Direct disclosures
- Self- blame/ low self esteem
- Expressions of not trusting others

Sexual

- Sexualized play with dolls
- Sexual experimenting with other children drawing/ writing
- Sexual acts
- excessive masturbation

THE PROCESS OF ASKING FOR HELP

Disclosure is a process that children go through which *may* contain any combination of 5 key phases. [2,31]

1. DENIAL

The first phase may be to deny that the abuse occurred.

2. TENTATIVE DISCLOSURE

There may be tentative disclosures or reluctance to disclose. During this phase the child may use vague statements to “test the waters.” Those statements may sound like;

“I don’t like Mr. Smith anymore.”

“My dad’s weird.”

“I’m not getting along at home anymore.”

3. ACTIVE DISCLOSURE

The child may make a complete statement about the abuse or be more direct about what happened. This phase is often brought about by an outside motivation, such as taking part in a child sexual abuse program (such as “Who Do You Tell?”™) or being in a situation where the theme of child sexual abuse is activated for the child [21].

4. RECANT

Recantation of the allegations. This happens in up to 27% of child Sexual abuse cases.

5. REAFFIRM

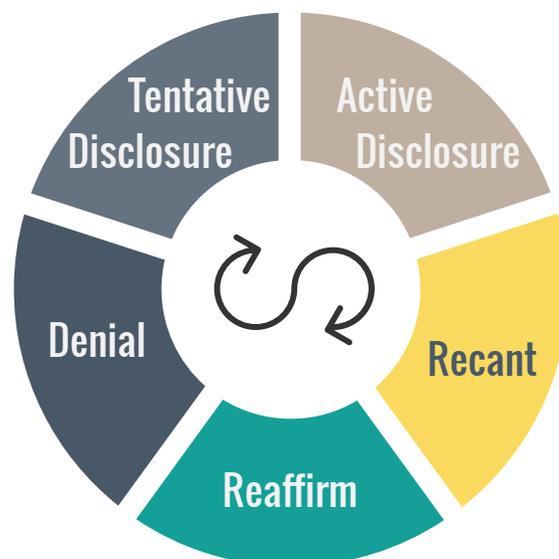
If the child does recant it is usually followed by them reaffirming the allegations (93% of those who recant) [2,25,31].

INVITATION TO CHECK IN

During the disclosure process children may think they have told, but statements like these are easily overlooked by adults.

Children may appear frequently confused, inaccurate, and uncertain [31]. The important thing is to ask questions that invite the child to talk about what is happening in their life. It may be nothing serious, but it needs clarification.

Disclosure is a process which requires discussion and as such children must be given an opportunity to talk [2]. Children do not often initiate conversations about matters that are scary, confusing, or secret so it is important that those conversations are presented for them.



RESPONDING TO A CHILD DISCLOSING SEXUAL ABUSE

Be Transparent About Your Reaction

Monitor the child's behaviour, school performance, and absences and keep clear and precise documentation of each incident or concerning behaviour so that if reporting is required you will be able to give detailed information about your concerns.

Listen

Listen, let the child tell you in their own words. Children find it less difficult to disclose if they perceive that they have an opportunity to talk [21]. Use open ended questions so as not to give the child language or lead the disclosure. Asking questions beyond this could jeopardize any future investigation.

Reassure

Reassure the child she/he has done the right thing by telling you and that you believe what they've told you [31]. Tell the child the abuse is not their fault. They may fear consequences as a result of the disclosure so it is important to reassure and support them [21]. Thank the child for telling you, and tell them that you will do your best to help, but avoid making promises to the child about what will happen next or what the outcome will be. For example, avoid statements like "you will never need to see that person again" or "That person is going to go to jail for a long time." Instead say thing like "I know it was hard but I'm really glad that you told me about this. I'm going to do my best to get you some help."

Be Mindful of Language

Use the child's terminology. If he/she calls a penis a "pee-pee", so should you in order to make the child as comfortable in the conversation as possible. If you need to make a report to Alberta Children's Services it is important that you are able to let them know the terminology that the child has used for their private parts.

Alberta Children's Services

Report the abuse to Alberta Children's Services and get further instructions from them. You do not need a detailed disclosure to make a report. You only need to get enough information to establish a reasonable belief that abuse has occurred. Do not call the parents before consulting with Alberta Children's Services.

[21] Jensen, Gulbrandsen, Mossige, Reichelt, & Tjersland, 2005 [31] Sorensen, & Snow, 1991

GET HELP!

After receiving a disclosure, be sure to get support for yourself. You will probably experience strong emotional reactions when a child tells you about sexual abuse. Acknowledge your own feelings. It is normal to feel overwhelmed. It may be difficult to hear what the child has to say. Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence is a good resource for support or information (see resources on page 15)



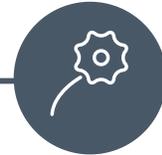
HELPING A SEXUALLY ABUSED CHILD IN THE CLASSROOM



Following the disclosure it is important to continue supporting the child by showing them appropriate signs of affection and approval.



Remain as consistent and predictable as possible. Their home and family life may be changing drastically, so it is important that they feel stability and structure at school.



Give the child positive and self-esteem building feedback about themselves.



Continue to give the child opportunities to talk to you privately and build on your conversations with them a little at a time so as to not overwhelm them [21].



Continue to reaffirm appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in the classroom.



Treat the child like you did before; like you would treat any other child.

[21] Jensen, Gulbrandsen, Mossige, Reichelt, & Tjersland, 2005

“ All kids need is a little help, a little hope and someone who believes in them. ”

Magic Johnson



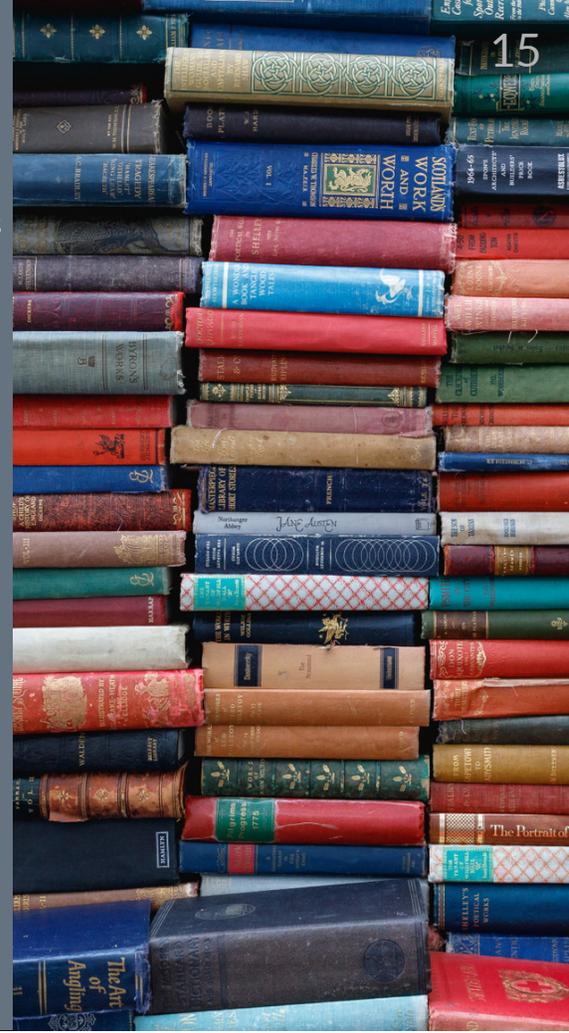
INFORMATION NEEDED FOR REPORTING

Essential Information required for making a report to Alberta Children's Services are:

- The child's name
- Contact information (even if that is just the school they attend)
- What your concerns are in regards to possible abuse or neglect

Additional Preferred Information for Alberta Children's Services (however, if you do not have this information you can still report to Alberta Children's Services):

- Child's age (birth dates preferred)
- What happened/ why are you calling? (does not need to be detailed, just an indication of what has caused you to be concern)
- Who abused the child and does that person have access to the child?
- Child's address and phone number
- Parents' names (and address/ phone number if different than the child's)
- When the abuse happened? (approximate e.g. last week or last year)



RESOURCES

Alberta Children Services

403.297.2995
Consultation & Reporting



Alberta Health Services, Child Abuse Unit

403.428.5320
Information and Referrals

CCASA

403.237.5888
Supporting and Information



Canadian Centre for Children Protection

www.cybertip.ca
Cyber Sexual Exploitation

Alberta's One Line for Sexual Violence

1.866.403.8000
assas.ca
Support: Call/Text/Chat



Kids Help Phone

1.800.668.6868
Support for Kids

Calgary Police Services Non-Emergency

403.266.1234
Non-Emergency Police Matters



Calgary and Area Child Advocacy Centre

403.428.5300
Counselling, Police and Court,
Support for Children

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