

# Key Concepts

## The Law

Maine's Public Law 20-A MRS §254, sub-§18 requires that all school administrative units in Maine with public pre-K through grade 5 programs have a written policy for child sexual abuse prevention education and response. This law requires the following:

- Child sexual abuse response and reporting procedures for individuals
- Child sexual abuse awareness training and prevention education for school personnel
- Age-appropriate child sexual abuse prevention education for students delivered by qualified instructors
- School district level child sexual abuse response and reporting procedures
- Resources a victim of child sexual abuse or non-offending caregivers may access for resources and support

The Children's Safety Partnership is a program of the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault in partnership with the Maine Department of Education, Maine's sexual assault service providers, and local schools across the state.

## What is Child Sexual Abuse?

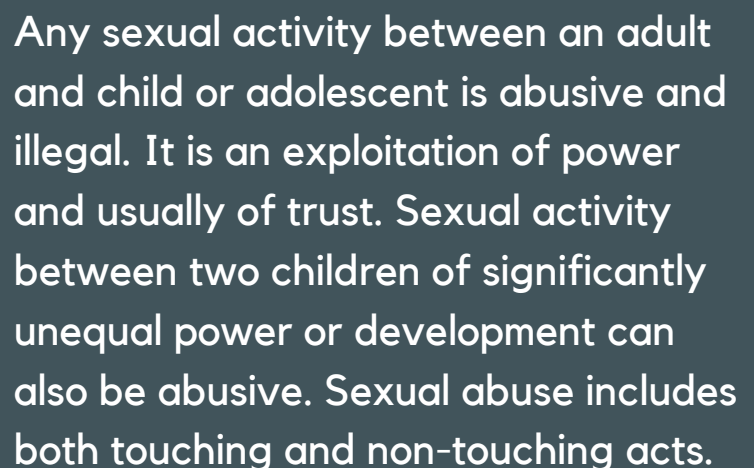
One in five girls and one in twenty boys experiences child sexual abuse.

The vast majority of sexual abuse is never reported.

False accusations only happen 4-8% of the time

- the same rate as other violent crimes

93% of the time, the child knows the offender.



Any sexual activity between an adult and child or adolescent is abusive and illegal. It is an exploitation of power and usually of trust. Sexual activity between two children of significantly unequal power or development can also be abusive. Sexual abuse includes both touching and non-touching acts.

# Common and Uncommon Sexual Behaviors Throughout Development

0-5 Years

**Common:**

- Thumbsucking, stroking/holding of genitals (masturbation)
- Wanting to touch other children's genitals
- Asking about or wanting to touch breasts, bottoms, genital of familiar adults
- Exploratory Play
- Enjoyment of being nude
- Interest in body parts and functions

**Uncommon:**

- Having knowledge of specific sexual acts or explicit sexual language
- Engaging in adult-like contact with other children
- Using objects in a sexual manner

**Common:**

- Masturbation to self-soothe
- Increased curiosity in adult sexuality (questions about babies, gender)
- Increased curiosity about other children's genitals
- Telling stories

**Uncommon:**

- Adult-like sexual interactions
- Having knowledge of non-reproductive based sexual acts
- Acting out in sexual ways in public
- Engaging in sexually explicit behaviors using technology
- Using objects in a sexual manner

5-9 Years

9-12 Years

**Common:**

- Will want to learn more and have questions about: relationships and sexual behaviors; sexual words, sexual acts and personal values, particularly with peers
- Menstruation and sperm production begins
- Self-stimulation/masturbation in private is expected to continue
- Increased curiosity and experimentation with sexual behaviors and romantic relationships

**Uncommon:**

- Adult-like sexual behaviors
- Acting out in sexual ways in a public place

**Common:**

- Knowledge and questions about: decision making, social relationships and sexual concerns, personal values and consequences of sexual behavior
- Self-stimulation/masturbation in private
- Menstruation and sperm production begin
- Sexual experimentation between similar aged peers
- Voyeuristic behaviors within peer groups
- First sexual intercourse occurs for 1/3 of teens

**Uncommon:**

- Masturbation in a public place
- Sexual interest/relationships beyond similar aged peers

13-16 Years

# Responding to Disclosures

It is important to stay calm if a child tells you they are being abused.

Thank the child for telling you and tell them you support them

Always follow your school's mandatory reporting procedures.

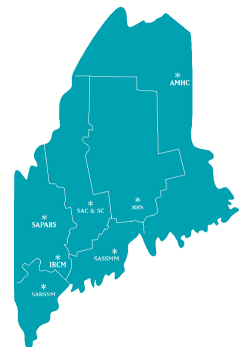
Don't ask a child 'why' they did or did not do anything about the abuse - it's never a child's fault when an abuser targets them.

Listen to them and do not blame them.

Do your best not to ask the child too many questions.

## Know Your Resources

For more information about sexual violence prevention education or responding to sexual abuse or assault, contact your local sexual assault support center.



For Department of Education Policy Questions, contact Susan Berry at [susan.berry@maine.gov](mailto:susan.berry@maine.gov)

For more information about preventing and responding to child sexual abuse, visit [childrenssafetypartnership.org](http://childrenssafetypartnership.org).



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