



Child Sexual Abuse: Info and Resources

With recent stories about child sexual abuse in the news, it can be hard to separate myths from facts. Below are some resources for parents and guardians and for survivors of sexual abuse themselves. No matter when someone comes forward, there is always support available. Rape Victim Advocates provides individual counseling and support groups for adult survivors of child sexual abuse; we also provide medical and legal advocacy for children who have been sexually abused, and we engage youth, parents and teachers in child abuse awareness and prevention education. Contact us at 312/443-9603 for more information on any of our services.

Parents & Guardians

How can I ensure that the program/sport/etc that I enroll my child in will be safe?

Ask questions. And if they don't have the answers, make a decision on whether you still want your child to be involved, and if so, help the program develop answers to your questions. For a guide on the 9 questions to ask before enrolling a child, check out Stop It Now's [tip sheet](#).

What are signs that my child has been sexually abused?

There are some [common signs](#) that a child may be a victim of sexual abuse, but it's also important to note that some children may not show any of these signs at all. Also, keep in mind that some of these signs may emerge during other periods of stress, such as divorce or death in the family. That's why it's important to keep regular, open dialogue with kids, and to let them know that it is always okay for them to tell you about anything they are uncomfortable with.

What should I do if a child reports that they've been sexually abused?

[Let them know you believe them, and that they are not alone](#). Help them develop a [safety plan](#). To report suspected abuse in Illinois, call 911 or 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). Outside of Illinois, call 1-800-422-4453.

For more tips for Parents and Guardians, go to http://www.stopitnow.org/parents_caregivers

Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

You are not alone, and it wasn't your fault. There are lots of resources in the Chicago metropolitan area to help you.

For children and their families:

[YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago's RISE Children's Center](#)

[Chicago Children's Advocacy Center](#)

[It's Never Your Fault: The Truth About Sexual Abuse](#), a publication for young people

For adult survivors of child sexual abuse:

Rape Victim Advocates provides free counseling and support groups for adult survivors of child sexual abuse and incest. You can contact our professional, highly trained counselors at 312/443-9603 for more information.

Any Illinois rape crisis center can help – to find your nearest one go to www.icasa.org.

The [Courage to Heal](#) is a terrific workbook that has helped many adults who were sexually abused as children – it can be used in conjunction with counseling, and is widely available.

If you're in crisis, call the Chicago Rape Crisis Hotline at 888/293-2080.

Preventing Child Abuse

The [National Sexual Violence Resource Center](#) has compiled a number of [online resources on preventing child abuse](#), including from [Stop It Now](#).

If you'd like a child sexual abuse prevention workshop for your school, block club, faith organization or other community group, contact our Education and Training Program at (312) 443-9603.