

Adults Taking Responsibility

What can I do to protect my child?

Recognize that abuse exists - In 90 percent of child sexual abuse cases, the perpetrator is someone the child knows and trusts. It may be a family member or close friend. Often, this person will work to gain the trust of the family first, and then the child. Sometimes a child will say, "I don't like it when Uncle John kisses me" or "I think Mr. Wilson is kind of creepy." Respect your child's feelings. Don't force a child to kiss a relative or friend, or go with an adult he or she feels uncomfortable with.

Talk about abuse - If you talk about the possibility of abuse with your children and other parents, you can share information and help prevent abuse by being vigilant about actions that may indicate that someone is an abuser.

Teach boundaries and safety - Teach your child about safety. Help children learn about privacy and teach your child that adults must respect his or her limits when it comes to physical touching. Practice this behavior yourself by respecting your child's "no" when it comes to tickling or hugging. If your child doesn't want to kiss Uncle John, let him or her shake hands instead.

Develop a safety plan - Talk about whom your child can go to if he or she does not feel safe, and whom to talk to if something happens that he or she needs to talk about. If your child walks to school, identify houses or places where your child can go to call you if he or she feels unsafe. You may want to develop a safety plan that includes other families in your neighborhood, so that you can all help each other to keep your children safe.

Signs that someone may be an abuser - Someone you know may be someone who has a problem. Sometimes this person may say or do things that worry or confuse you. If someone you know behaves in a way that bothers you, talk to them about it. You may be able to help them get the help they need. Child sexual abuse happens in an atmosphere of silence and secrecy. Abusers count on us to keep silent. Only by breaking that silence can we end child sexual abuse.

Behaviors that may indicate a problem:

- Prefers the company of children to that of adults
- Doesn't respect children's limits—hugs, kisses, tickles, etc. even when child does not want it
- Buys children expensive gifts
- Doesn't respect a child's privacy
- Regularly offers to baby-sit for free, or takes children on overnight outings alone
- Asks children to keep secrets
- Talks about children in a sexual way
- Talks about sexual fantasies involving children
- Looks at child pornography
- Has a "special" child friend

(Taken from What can I do to protect my child? from the 2006 Sexual Assault Awareness Month Resource CD from the Virginia Sexual Assault & Domestic Violence Action Alliance)

Click [here](#) to see
**7 Steps To Protecting
Our Children: A Guide
For Responsible Adults**



PARENTS CAN HELP PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Click [here](#) to
see this article
or click on
the link below:



[http://www.nationalcac.org/
professionals/organizations/
parents_prevent.html](http://www.nationalcac.org/professionals/organizations/parents_prevent.html)

Sex Offender Registry

Click [here](#) to see information
on the VA Sex Offender
Registration & Notification



PROTECT.ORG
National
Association
to Protect
Children

If you are concerned about a specific child, or if you have questions about this material, call the Collins Center at (540)434-2272.



PO Box 1473, 165 S. Main St. Suite D
Harrisonburg, VA 22801
Web: www.thecollinscenter.org
Email: casa-hburg@ntelos.net



*This resource is a project of the Collins Center, serving Harrisonburg & Rockingham County, VA
Funded by the Virginia Department of Social Services Family Violence Prevention Program SVC-06-046-02*

Tips For Parents & Adults

- How can I start talking to children about sexual abuse?
- I want children to be able to tell me if they are sexually abused. How can I be an approachable and “askable” adult?
- I’ve heard the Internet can be a dangerous place for children and that many can be sexually solicited online. How big of a problem is this and what can parents do to keep kids safe online?
- Now that I’ve learned that sexual abuse can be prevented by teaching children about healthy sexuality, I want to know how to actually have those conversations.
- I suspect that my child has been sexually abused and want my child to get medical attention. What can I do?
- A child has verbally disclosed to me that he/she is being sexually abused. What do I do now?
- I am concerned about a situation about sexualized behaviors in an adult or a child, but I don’t have any hard evidence that sexual abuse has occurred or feel I can report a suspicion. Is there anything I can do?
- Can sexual abuse happen between siblings? What resources are there to help a parent when sexual abuse happens within the family?

Child Sexual Abuse is Not Inevitable, It’s Preventable



Stop It Now!

The Campaign to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

Click [here](#) for brochure about the Stop It Now! Helpline

Child Exploitation on the Internet: Resources for Parents & Teachers



Click [here](#) to view online resources



Important Phone Numbers

Harrisonburg Police Department
434-2545

Rockingham County Sheriff
564-3800

Child Protective Services
574-5100

Rockingham Memorial Hospital
433-4100

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Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

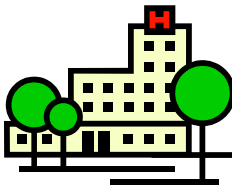
Who are mandated reporters in the state of VA?

Click [here](#) to view brochure from Child Protective Services.



VA Dept. of Social Services

Click [here](#) to view the hospital protocol for victims of child sexual assault



Important Phone Numbers

Harrisonburg Police Department
(540) 434-2545

Rockingham County Sheriff
(540) 564-3800

Child Protective Services
(540) 574-5100

Rockingham Memorial Hospital
(540) 433-4100

If you suspect child sexual abuse, there are three organizations in addition to the Collins Center that can assist you. These organizations work in collaboration with one another, and if at any time you have a question about reporting child abuse, call the Collins Center's 24-hour Hotline at 434-2272. A victim advocate may be available to accompany a victim through this process.

Child Protective Services (CPS) - The goal of Child Protective Services (CPS) is to identify, assess and provide services to children and families in an effort to protect children, preserve families (whenever possible) and prevent further maltreatment. CPS is non-punitive in its approach and is directed toward enabling families to provide adequate care for their children. CPS primarily responds to incidents where the abuser is a care-taker. Anyone may report suspected child maltreatment to CPS and callers will only be asked information about the alleged victim, perpetrator and others having knowledge about the suspected abuse or neglect – the caller may remain anonymous. All reports may trigger an investigation by the local CPS social worker, who will investigate and make an assessment about the child's immediate safety and family's needs. The local CPS office can be reached at (540)574-5100, or calls can be made 24-hours a day on the statewide CPS hotline: (800)552-7096(in-state); (804)786-8536(out-of-state); (800)828-1120 (hearing impaired).

Law Enforcement - Both the Harrisonburg Police Department and Rockingham County Sheriff's Office are also available to assist those dealing with child sexual assault. If at any time you or the child is in danger, immediately call 911. If the situation is not an emergency, the Harrisonburg Police Department can be reached at (540)434-2545 and the Rockingham County Sheriff's Office can be reached at (540)564-3800. Most often, people call law enforcement if they want to "press charges" – that is if they want the alleged perpetrator taken to court and tried for a crime. If that is the case, a police officer can set up an appointment with you where he or she will interview you about the details of the assault and begin an investigation – the first step in the court process. It is best to call the department corresponding to where the assault occurred, not based on where the victim lives (i.e. if the assault happened in Harrisonburg City, but the victim lives in Rockingham County, you should still call the Harrisonburg Police Department).

Rockingham Memorial Hospital - If there are injuries associated with the abuse, or if the victim needs immediate medical attention, the Emergency Room at Rockingham Memorial Hospital (RMH) is available to provide services. If the assault occurred within the last 72 hours, RMH is the best place to receive assistance. RMH is located at 235 Cantrell Avenue in Harrisonburg and can be reached by calling (540)433-4100 or (800) 543-2201. Once you arrive at RMH, a victim advocate from the Collins Center will automatically be called to assist you in receiving the proper care. For more information on the protocol that RMH follows in attending to victims of child sexual assault, [click here](#).

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