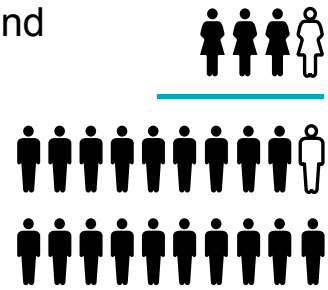
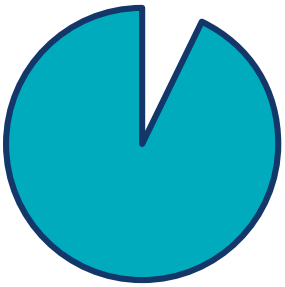
LET'S TALK ABOUT BODY SAFETY

What Parents and Guardians Need To Know About Child Sexual Abuse

1 in 4 girls and **1 in 20 boys** experience child sexual abuse.[1]





Over 90% of victims are abused by someone they know.[2]

[1]Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Fast Facts: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse (2024).

[2]RAINN - Children and Teens: Statistics (2000).

You can take steps to increase your child's safety and reduce the risk of abuse.

Child sexual abuse is defined as sexual activity between **an adult** and **a child** or sexual activity between **two minors** if there is a significant *age, size, or power difference*. It can include a range of activities such as sexual touching, sexualized talk, exposure to genitals, rape, involvement in pornography, or prostitution. A sense of bodily autonomy (that your body belongs to you) can help prevent child sexual abuse.

Teach children:

- The anatomical **names** of their private parts (buttocks, breasts, penis, vulva).
- About **safe secrets** (like birthday presents) and **unsafe secrets** (about private parts touching).
- If they don't want to be touched or hugged, saying "**No**" to anyone, **including adults, is OK**.
- **To tell a trusted adult** if someone asks them to keep an unsafe secret, and to **keep telling trusted adults** until they get help.
- To ask before touching others (**get consent**).
- About **safe touch** (hugging, high-fives) and **unsafe touch** (private part touching, hitting).
- To say "**No**" to requests for nudes, unsafe showing, or touching of private parts.
- Unsafe talking, showing, or touching of private parts is **never their fault** and they **will not get into trouble** for talking about it.
- To talk with you about anything that bothers them, including unsafe touching, that you will **believe them** and do everything you can to protect them from harm.
- People online are not always who they say they are; they **should never share** personal or private information, images, or videos with **strangers online**.

Version 2, updated 8/2025

How To Have Body Safety Talks With Youth

For children in grades PreK-2:

- Demonstrate and practice respecting one another's boundaries.
- Teach your child ways to say "**No**" to unwanted and unsafe touches, including hugging or excessive physical play that causes pain or makes them uncomfortable.

You can say:

"Swimming suits cover the parts of the body that are private, which means they are not for other people to see or touch."

"It's OK to say, 'Stop, I don't like that!' if something hurts or makes you feel uncomfortable."

For children in grades 3-5:

- Look for teachable moments. If your child tells you about an unwanted or unsafe touch (hitting, kicking, tickling), it's a great time to talk about safe and unsafe touches.
- Assist your child in identifying safe and trusted adults (ideally at least three) to whom they can turn for help at school, at extracurricular activities, and within your family.

You can say:

"You should not touch, or be forced to touch, or look at the private parts of someone else."

"If someone tells you 'no' or 'stop,' listen to them."

"Do not take or share pictures of private body parts, online or in person."

"If anyone makes you feel uncomfortable or breaks a safety rule, you can always let me know, and I will help you."

For children in grades 6-12:

Empower your child to protect themselves. Let them know:

- Communicating clearly about boundaries and consent is essential for a healthy relationship.
- Realizing that anyone who does not respect their body, feelings, or sexual limits is an unsafe person.
- Knowing that they deserve respect and should treat others with respect.
- Engaging in sexual activity without consent is a crime, and no one under age 14 can consent to sex.
- Understanding that no matter what a person is wearing or doing, no one deserves to be harassed or abused.
- Sharing of nudes, explicit images, videos, or messages can lead to sextortion (online blackmail).

You can say:

"It's important to protect your friends, too. If you witness something inappropriate or unsafe, say something."

"It's never acceptable for someone to control you using your feelings or sex. If this happens, tell them that and then come talk to me about it."

"You have the right to say 'no' at any time, even if you previously said 'yes.' Your feelings and safety are what matter most."

"Relationships can be tough. If you ever want to talk about how things are going, I'm here for you."

"Whatever happens online, or if you make a mistake, I'm here to help. Come to me, no questions asked, and we'll work it out."

A child who knows they are in control of their body is less likely to be a victim and more likely to tell someone if they are abused.

When you see any of these signs, ask your child if anything is bothering them.

Warning Signs

After sexual abuse, many children will not show any signs, and they may delay disclosing their abuse, often for prolonged periods. Signs of **stress** can be an indicator of abuse.

- Fear of a certain person or place.
- Unexplained bruising, physical markings, or sexually transmitted infections.
- Disturbed sleeping or eating patterns.
- Changes in behavior (e.g., anxiety, clinging, aggressiveness, withdrawal, depression).
- Sexualized play, drawings, or knowledge (inappropriate for their age).
- A child abusing other children.

Responding to Disclosures

If your child tells you about an unwanted touch, talk, or showing of private parts:

- Stay calm and let them know you are proud of them for coming to talk to you.
- Ask what happened and how they felt.
- Tell them you believe them.
- Remember, unsafe talking, showing, or touching of private parts is **never the child's fault**.
- Know that if you or your child needs support, assistance is available both in school and in the community.
- Check with your school's counselors or administrators for support.
- Call Child Welfare Services or the police.

GROOMING is a manipulative process in which an individual builds trust and an emotional connection with a child, and often with the adults around them, with the intent of gaining access for potential sexual abuse. Recognizing the early signs of grooming can help parents intervene before interactions become harmful or sexually inappropriate. Grooming is not limited to adult predators; it can also occur between youth, such as older teens targeting younger or more vulnerable children.

- Being overly interested in babysitting or other opportunities to be alone with your child.
- Encouraging your child to spend time with them in secret (in-person or online).
- Insisting on physical contact with your child (such as hugging, touching, or tickling).
- Normalizing or minimizing inappropriate interactions with children; refusing to let a child set their own boundaries.
- Giving your child or family members gifts, private lessons, or privileges no one else receives.
- Talking with your child about sexual fantasies or adult relationship problems.
- Befriending your child by acting like a peer, best friend, or cool adult.
- Frequently walking in on or undressing in front of your child.

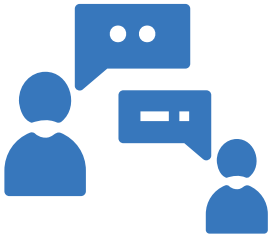
Look for behavior patterns of child isolation, boundary testing, and sexualized interactions to tell the difference between the actions of a caring adult and someone grooming your child for abuse.

To Keep Children Safe

Supervise your child's activities and **make careful choices** about who is alone with your child.

Monitor device use and online gaming activity. Set safety guidelines, such as **no devices in the bathroom**.

Regularly **check in** about their feelings toward the adults and children in their lives and changes in their behavior.



Statewide Survivor Services

24-Hour Hotlines by Island

If someone you know has experienced sexual violence, please call your local sex assault hotline for information and confidential support. In an emergency, call 911 or the Child Welfare Services 24-hour number at 808-832-5300.

Hawai‘i: 808-935-0677 **Kaua‘i**: 808-245-6362 **Maui & Lāna‘i**: 808-873-8624

Molokai: 808-495-3340 **O‘ahu**: 808-524-7273

Hawai‘i’s Sexual Assault Centers

Provide confidential counseling, sexual violence prevention education, assistance with police reporting, and medical care/evidence collection.

Hawai‘i Island	**Kaua‘i**	**Maui, Molokai & Lāna‘i**	**O‘ahu**
Sexual Assault Support Services, *YWCA*	Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services, *YWCA*	Maui Sexual Assault Center, *Child and Family Service*	The Sex Abuse Treatment Center, *Kapi‘olani Medical Center for Women & Children*
Phone: 808-935-7141	Phone: 808-245-5959	Phone: 808-877-6888	Phone: 808-535-7600
www.ywcahawaiiisland.org	www.ywcakauai.org	www.childandfamilyservice.org	www.satchawaii.org

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bit.ly/HIDOE-BodySafety

Scan here for more resources and the HIDOE SVP website.

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