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Who am I?

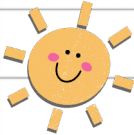
Nicole Huson
Education and Outreach
Coordinator
Dakota Children's Advocacy Center

Huson Family Summer 2024

- Mom of 4
- Wife
- Dog mom of 3
- Kindergarten-8 Grade Teacher for 20 years
- Master's of Education in Trauma and Resilience
- Passion for those impacted by trauma and helping them heal

2

What is Dakota Children's Advocacy Center?



The mission of the DCAC is to provide a safe, family-friendly environment that promotes hope, health, and healing to traumatized children and their families.



The DCAC is part of the National Children's Alliance (NCA). It is a nationwide not-for-profit membership organization whose purpose is to empower local communities to provide comprehensive, coordinated, and compassionate services to victims of abuse.

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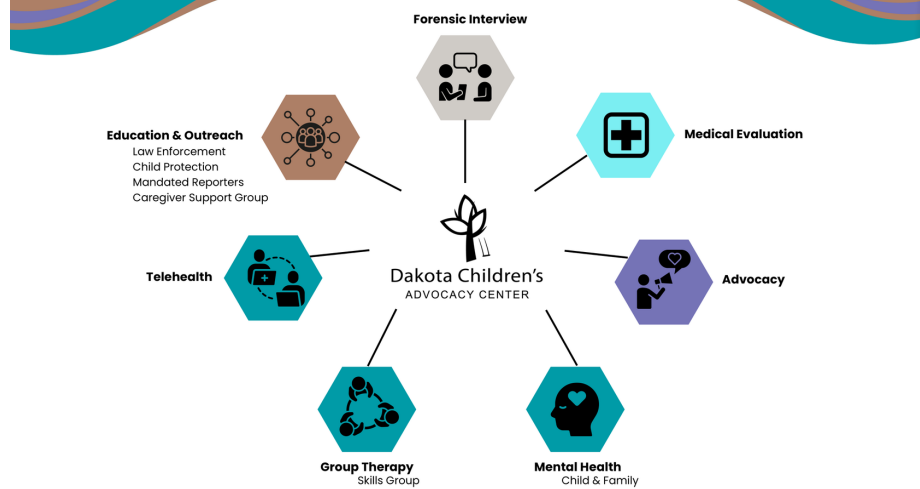


Dakota Children's
ADVOCACY CENTER



4

What do we do at the DCAC?



5

Goals for Today

Gain

- Gain an understanding of what the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) is and what services the CAC provides

Learn

- Learn about child sexual abuse

Learn

- Learn team responses to child abuse allegations

Respond

- Need to report suspected abuse

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Disclaimer

- We are going to talk about some difficult subject today
- I will not slime you with detailed stories
- But some of this information can still be triggering
- It is okay if you need to step out
- I will be available afterward if someone needs to talk

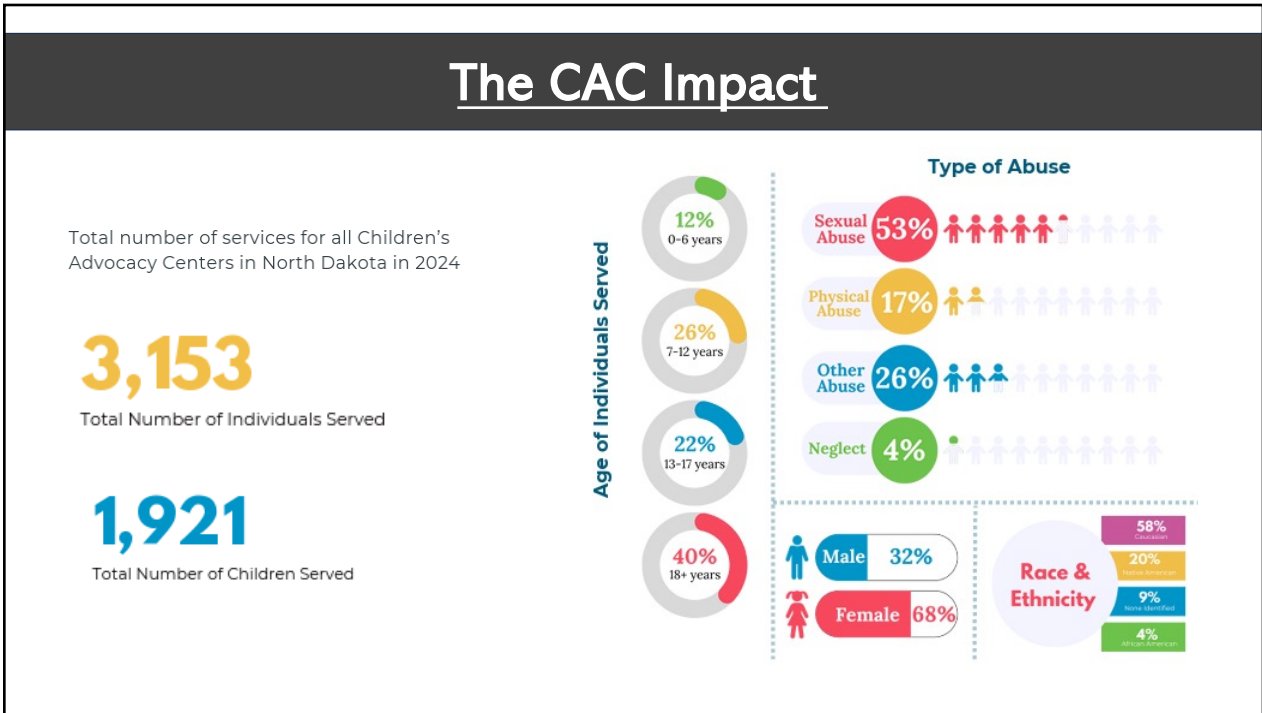
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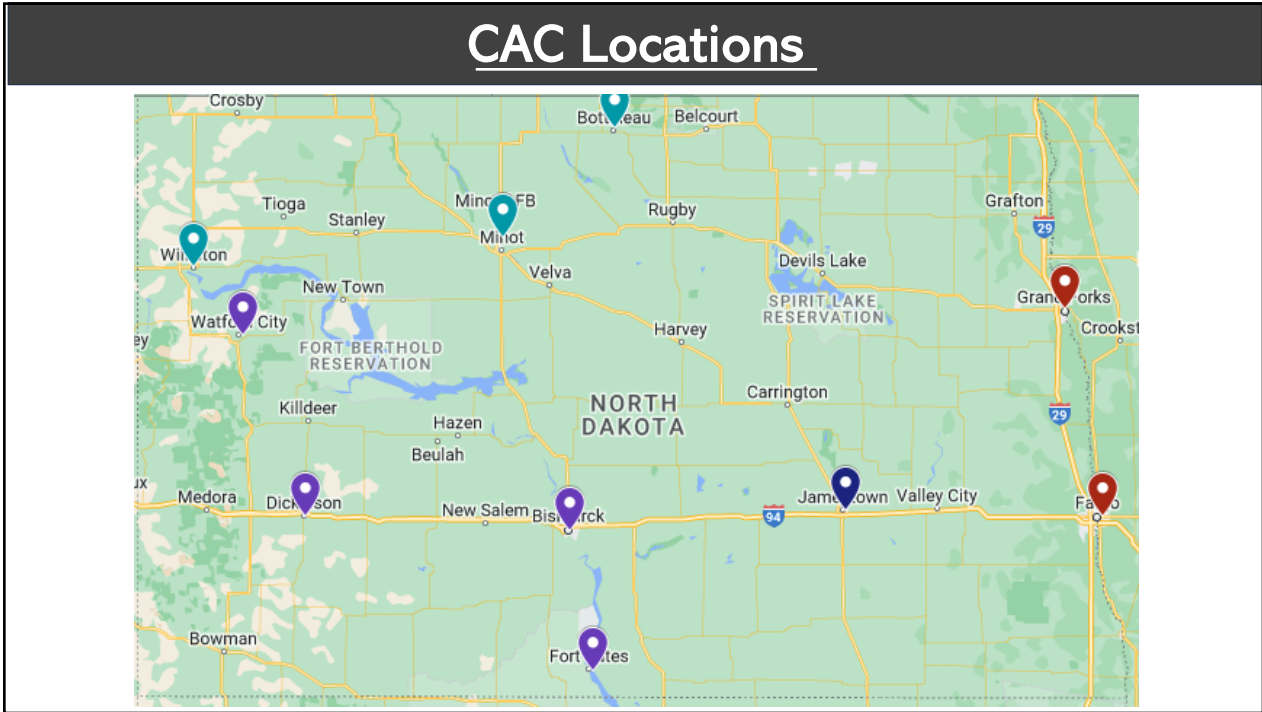
What is a
Children's
Advocacy Center?

One Child, One Place, One Time

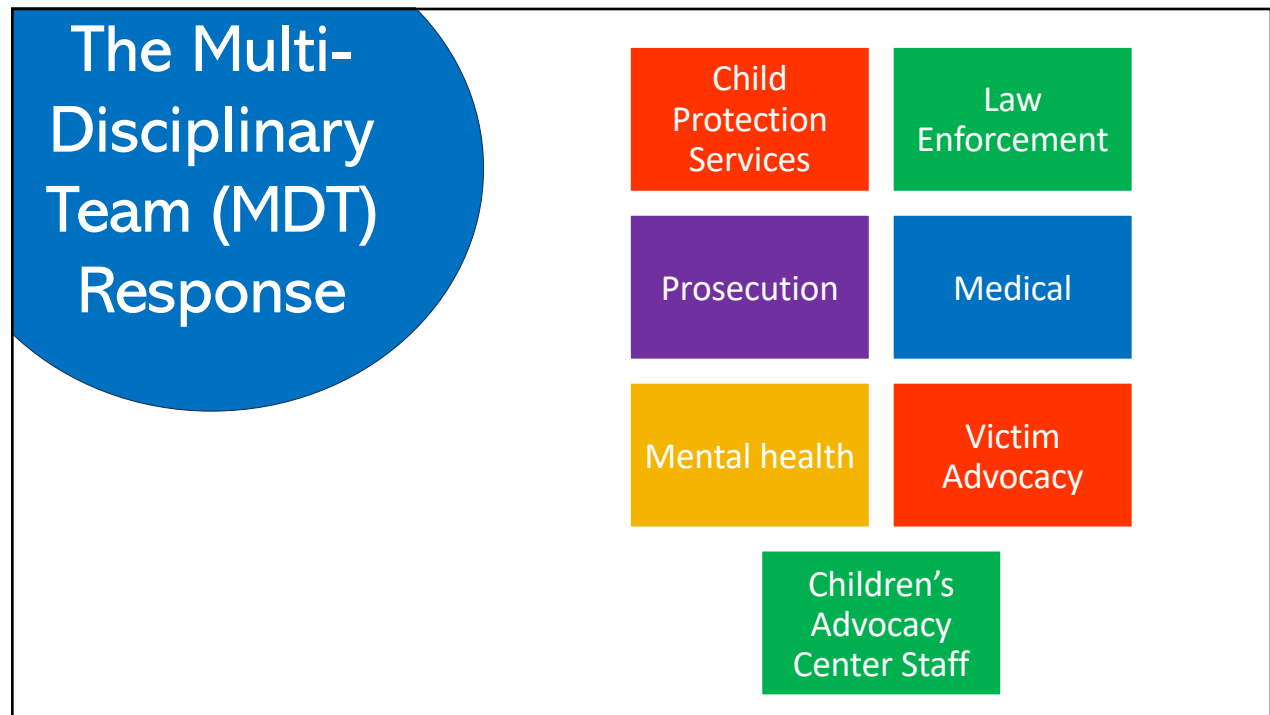
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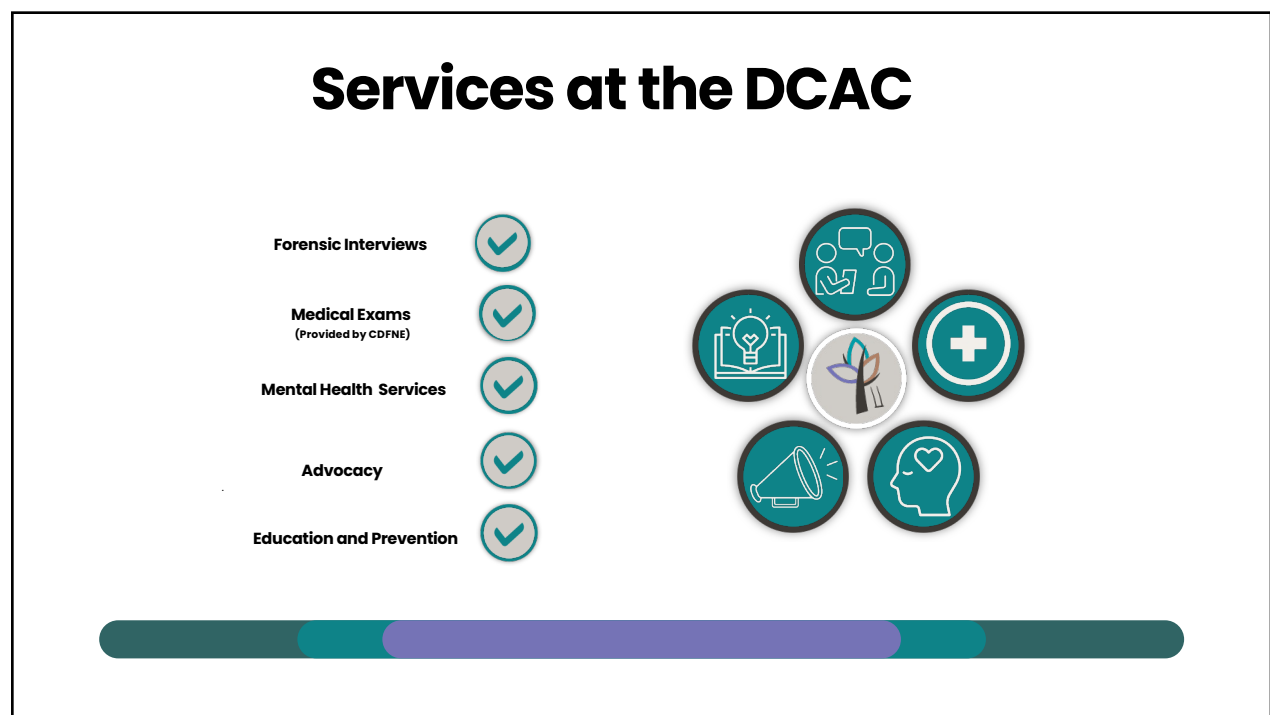
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Forensic Interview

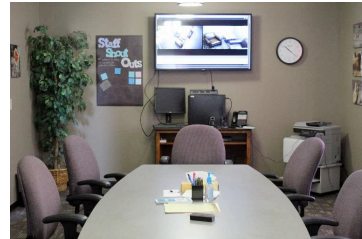
- The child receives **one interview** done by a specialist in child forensic interviewing.
- At every interview, we require a member of **law enforcement** and a **child protection worker**.
 - They are NOT in the interview room.
 - Law enforcement and CPS listen and watch in the observation room, taking notes, writing questions, and giving feedback



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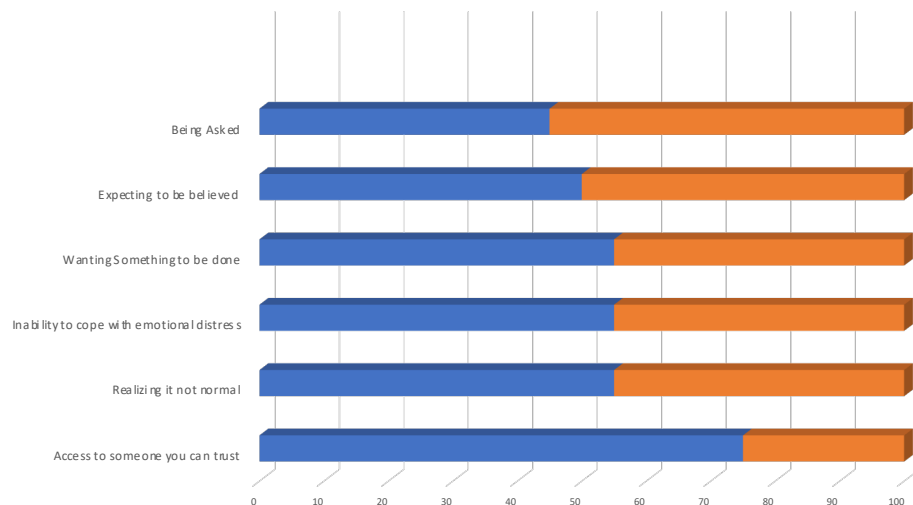
Forensic Interviews

Highly trained professionals, guided by research and best practices, ask age-appropriate questions to gather evidence and allow kids to share their story of abuse.



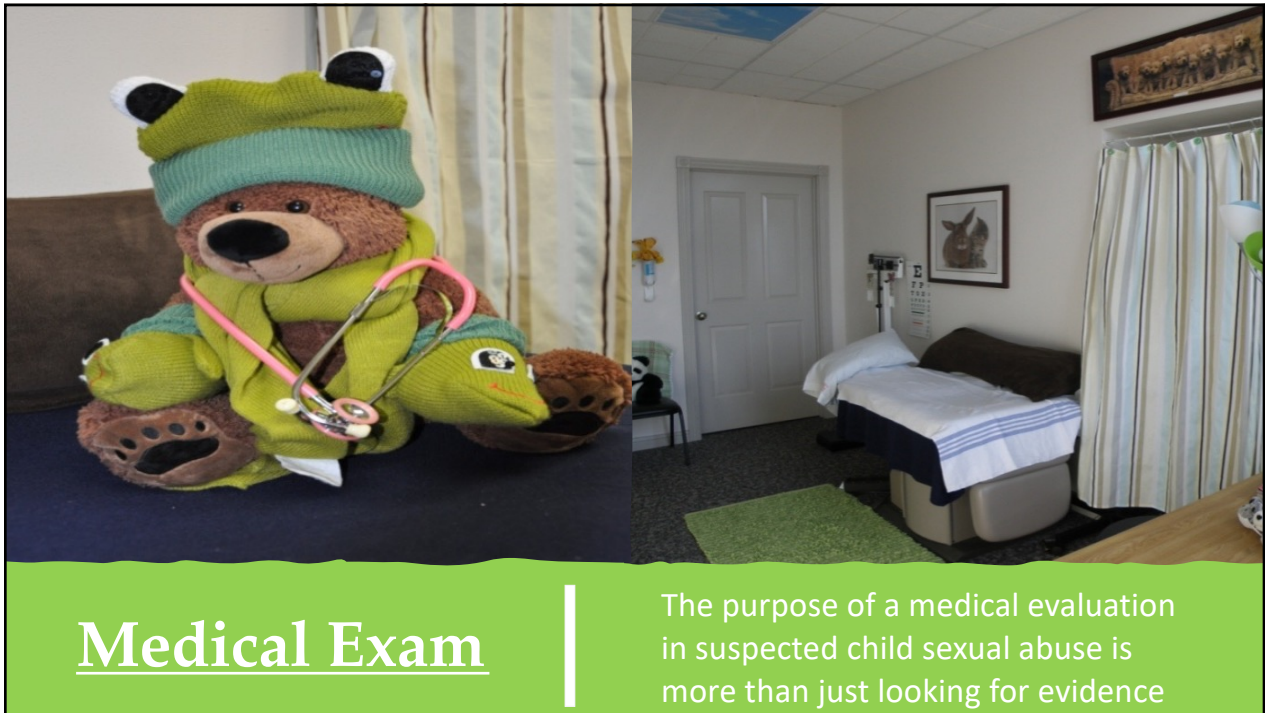
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What Helps Children Tell



Brennan & McElvaney, 2020

14



Medical Exam

The purpose of a medical evaluation in suspected child sexual abuse is more than just looking for evidence

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Medical Exam

- The medical exam is a well-child check
- Provides abuse-specific follow-up care and appropriate referrals
- Helps to reassure the child and family
- Gives a child an opportunity to ask questions
- Document the findings
- Provides an additional opportunity for disclosure

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Medical Services

Trained medical professionals ensure the health and safety of children while identifying any evidence of sexual or physical abuse. These medical services are referred out to our partners.

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Family Advocate

- Pre-advocacy services
- Meets with non-offending caregiver(s) while the child is being interviewed
- Offers support, education, referrals for services, guidance on the process
- Mental Health Screening and safety planning for the child
- Follows up with the family after the interview to see what they need and continues to maintain contact with the family throughout the life of the case
- Helps prepare child and family for court and attends court with the family for support



27,401

Victim Advocacy

With a compassionate, listening ear, advocates provide needed support, resources, referrals, and information—from the first day, throughout the court process, and beyond.

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Therapy

- The DCAC provides evidence-based Mental Health Services
 - Screening and Assessment
 - TF-CBT (Trauma Focused)
 - AF-CBT (Alternatives for Families)
 - PSB-CBT (Problematic Sexual Behaviors)
 - CPT (Cognitive Processing Therapy)
 - PCIT (Parent Child Interaction Therapy)
 - CFTSI (Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention)
 - SPARCS (Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress)



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Prevention and Education



Visit our **website**:

<https://www.dakotacac.org/training-and-events/>

Sign up for our **newsletter**:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/wig7488>

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CHILD ABUSE

Many of the cases that are referred to DCAC are because of some type of child abuse. We do see cases where a child has witnessed a major traumatic event (homicide). The majority of the cases we see are child sexual abuse cases.

There are typically 4 types of child abuse:

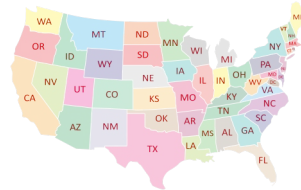
- 1-Physical
- 2-Emotional
- 3-Sexual
- 4-Neglect



Some states also list other acts as child abuse. This IS the case in North Dakota.

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NATIONWIDE, NEGLECT IS THE MOST COMMON FORM OF ABUSE.

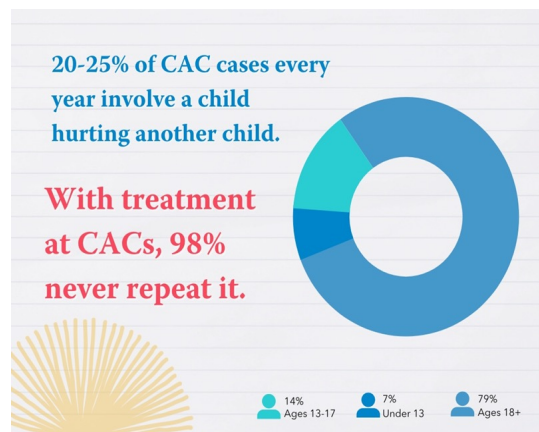


AT THE CAC, THE MOST COMMON SEEN IS SEXUAL ABUSE. ABOUT 65% OF OUR CASES ARE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE, 30% PHYSICAL ABUSE, AND 5% NEGLECT.

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Child Abuse Facts

- More than 600,000 children are abused in the U.S each year
- 1 in 10 children will be sexually abused by their 18th birthday
- In 2021, approximately 1,820 children died from abuse and neglect in the U.S.
- 29% of offenders were under the age of 18
- Highlighting the need for PSB services



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IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT ABUSE CAN HAPPEN
TO ANY CHILD.

Sexual abuse does not discriminate - not with race, religion,
socioeconomic status, ethnic or cultural background, or any
other factor.

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1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before
their 18th birthday.

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Child abuse can be very subtle and you may not even see signs.
Look for changes in behavior and trust your instinct.



Unexplained injuries

Visible signs may include unexplained burns or bruises in the shape of objects.

Changes in behavior

Children who have been abused often appear scared, anxious, depressed, withdrawn, or more aggressive.

Changes in eating

The stress, fear, and anxiety caused by abuse can lead to changes in a child's eating behaviors, which may result in weight gain or loss.

Fear of going home

Apprehension or anxiety about leaving school or about going places with the person who is abusing them.

Returning to earlier behaviors

Children may display behaviors from when they were younger such as thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, fear of the dark or strangers.

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Continued:

Changes in school performance and attendance

Children may have difficulty concentrating in school or have excessive absences.

Risk-taking behaviors

Children may engage in high-risk activities such as using drugs or alcohol or carrying a weapon.

Inappropriate sexual behaviors

Children who have been sexually abused may exhibit overly sexualized behavior or use explicit sexual language.

Changes in sleeping

Children who have been abused may have frequent nightmares or have difficulty falling asleep, and as a result may appear tired or fatigued.

Lack of personal care or hygiene

Abused and neglected children may appear uncared for. They may present as consistently dirty and have severe body odor, or they may lack sufficient clothing for the weather.

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What Can We Do?

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5 Steps to Protecting Children



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Safety Starts at Home



Promoting an open-door policy in common areas during daytime and especially during playdates and parties can help reduce situations that are out of view of others

Respecting a person's right to privacy when using the bathroom, changing, or sleeping should be understood.

Giving children the choice to be affectionate when they feel comfortable reinforces their right to personal autonomy.

With 30-40% of abuse being perpetrated by juveniles it is essential to acknowledge the potential for abuse between siblings, cousins, and peers. Following body safety rules is important between children as well as adults.

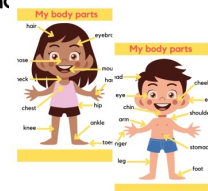
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BUILD A BODY SAFETY CIRCLE

It takes a village to protect children from abuse. Extended family, parents of friends, teachers, coaches, caregivers, etc. all should be educated in sexual abuse prevention and how to promote best practices for safety.

Activities that allow others to be alone with a child— a doctor's appointment, music lesson, tutoring, etc. should be held in places where parents are welcome and in view of others, if not, they should be avoided.

Ask about training and policies that your school and youth serving organizations have implemented to prioritize safety and proper handling of reporting requirements.



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EMPOWER CHILDREN

Secrets are not safe- Abusers have been known to use innocent happy secrets to groom a child for abuse. Surprises are OK because they are eventually shared

Bribes, threats, or tricks- are how some abusers lure and blackmail their targets. Children should know it's always OK to ask for help even if they've been convinced to do something they knew was wrong, and especially if they've been threatened.

Listening and supporting children- when they do not feel comfortable around a person can help teach them to follow their instincts and prioritize their safety.



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Be Vigilant



Pay attention to how your child talks about others, especially the adults in their life. Ask open-ended questions to gain a sense of the relationship dynamic.

Red flag behavior may include adults that spend more time with children than adults, seem to have a favorite child, touch children excessively, communicate with children privately and/or inappropriately, or seem overly interested in being helpful or involved with a family or child.

Changes in behavior are common in children experiencing abuse. Oftentimes it's misdiagnosed or overlooked, which is why it is import to be upfront and ask children from time to time if anyone has ever broken a body safety rule, even if everything seems fine.

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Do Kids Lie About Sexual Abuse?

Children rarely lie about being sexually abused.

- False allegations are more likely to come from adults than children.
- False Allegations from children range from .05% to 5%
- Children are more likely to deny something that did happen than lie about something that didn't.

Young children are not sophisticated liars

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Puberty and Sexual Reproduction

A child being naive about sex is often used to the predator's advantage. Experts recommend that between the age of 7-9, children should be educated in a factual manner regarding the functions of sex and human reproduction.

Reading a book or watching an education video together can help take off some pressure to explain everything, and provide positive support for children and parents for the upcoming physical and emotional changes.

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Signs to be aware

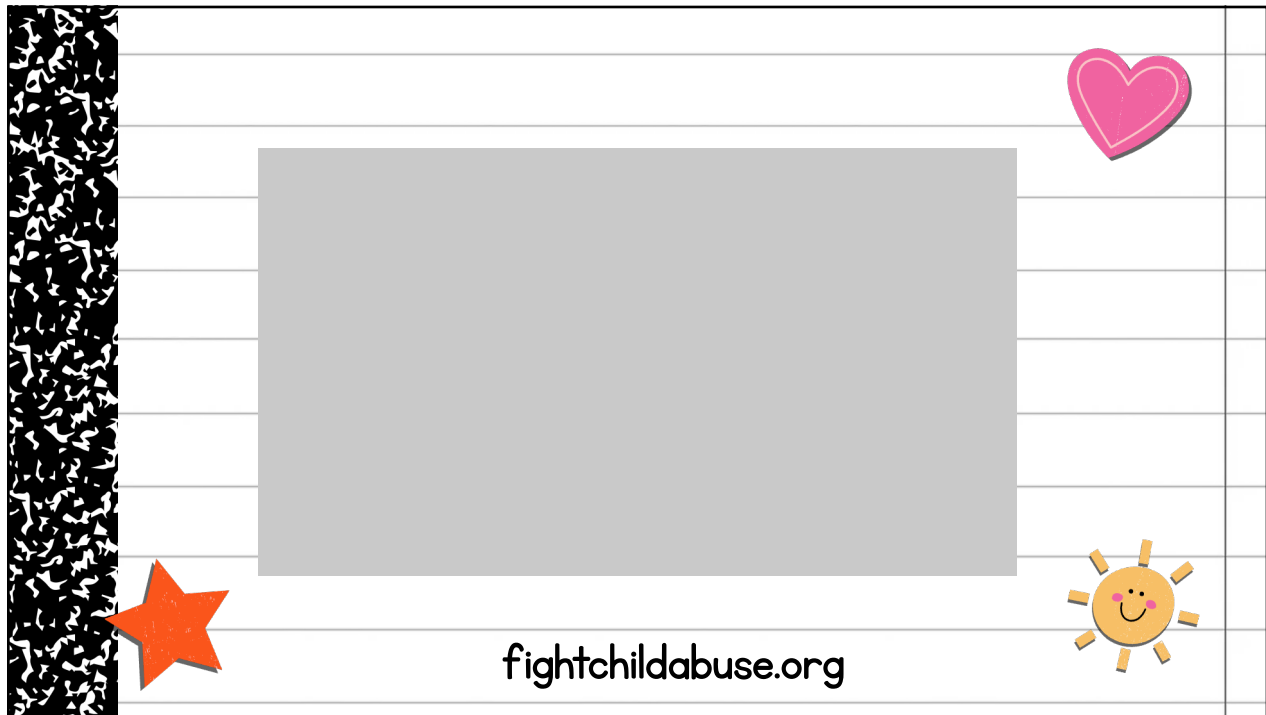
Unexplained Injuries	Unexplained burns or bruises in the shape of objects. Unconvincing explanations of a child's injuries
Changes in behavior	Sudden changes in child's behavior. Unexplained fears and emotions such as anxiousness & depression Withdrawn or more aggressive
Changes in eating	Changes in a child's eating behaviors Unusual weight gain Unusual weight loss
Fear of going home	Apprehension or anxiety about leaving school or about going places with the person who is abusing them
Lack of personal care or hygiene	May appear uncared for. Consistently dirty Have severe body odor Lack sufficient clothing for the weather

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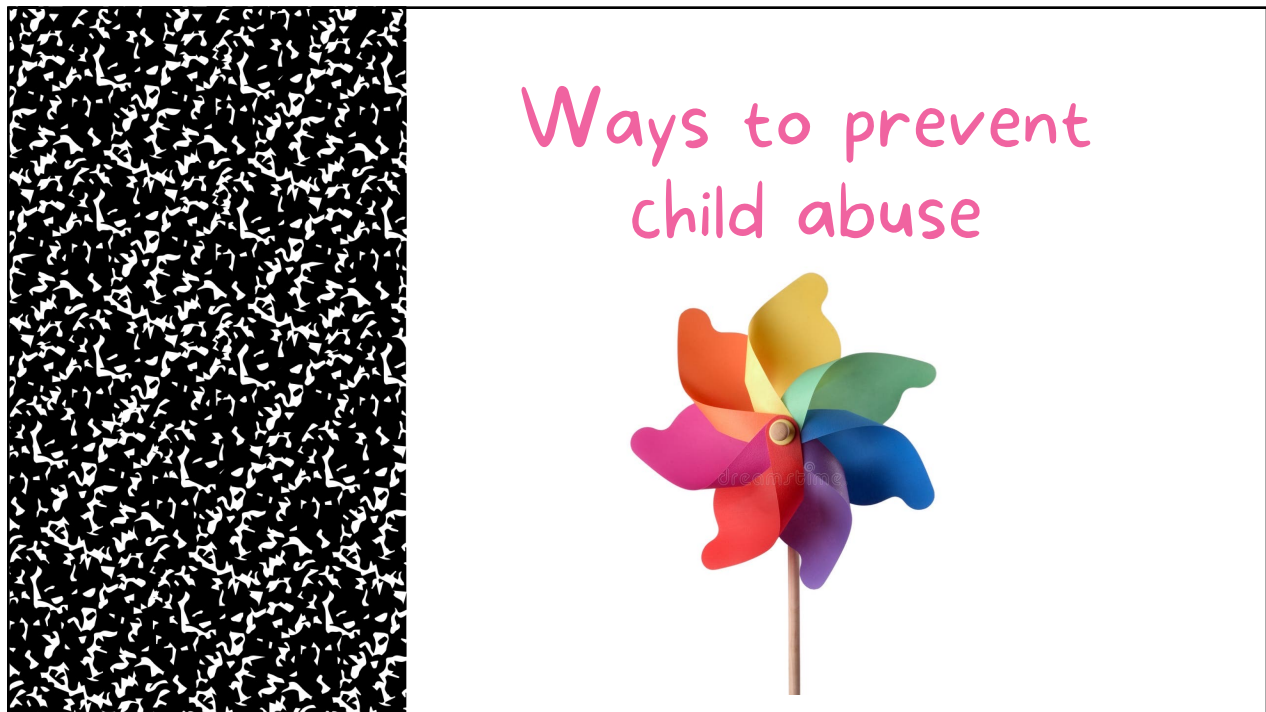
Signs to be aware of

Returning to earlier behaviors	Displaying behaviors shown at earlier ages, such as thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, fear of the dark or strangers Loss of acquired language or memory problems may be an issue
Changes in school performance and attendance	Difficulty concentrating in school Excessive absences, sometimes due to adults trying to hide the child's injuries from authorities
Risk-taking behaviors	Engaging in high-risk activities Using drugs or alcohol or Carrying a weapon Getting in trouble with the law
Inappropriate sexual behaviors	Exhibiting overly sexualized behavior Using explicit sexual language More knowledge about sex than expected for age
Changes in sleeping	Frequent nightmares Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep May appear tired or fatigued

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	1. Be a nurturing parent
	Children need to know that they are special, loved, and capable of following their dreams.
	2. Help a friend, neighbor, or relative
	Being a parent isn't easy. Offer a helping hand to take care of children, so the parent(s) can rest or spend time together.
	3. Help yourself
	When the big and little problems of your everyday life pile up to the point you feel overwhelmed and/or out of control--take a time out. Don't take it out on your child.

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	4. If your baby cries...	
	It can be frustrating to hear your baby cry. Learn what to do if your baby won't stop crying. Never shake a baby. Shaking a child can result in severe injury or death.	
	5. Get involved.	
	Ask your community leaders, clergy, library and schools to develop services to meet the needs of healthy children and families.	
	6. Help to develop parenting resources at your local library.	
	Find out whether your local library has parenting resources, and if it does not, offer to help obtain some.	
	7. Promote programs in school.	
	Teaching children, parents and teacher prevention strategies can help keep children safe.	

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8. Monitor your children's TV, video, and internet viewing and usage.

Excessively watching violent films, TV programs, and videos can harm young children.

9. Volunteer at a local child abuse prevention program.

For information about volunteer opportunities, call 1-800-CHILDREN or contact your local Prevent Child Abuse America Chapter.

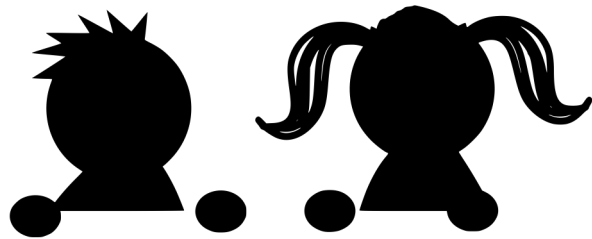
10. Report suspected abuse or neglect.

If you have reason to believe a child has been or may be harmed, call your local department of children and family services or your local police department. You can call anonymously at 1-833-958-3500

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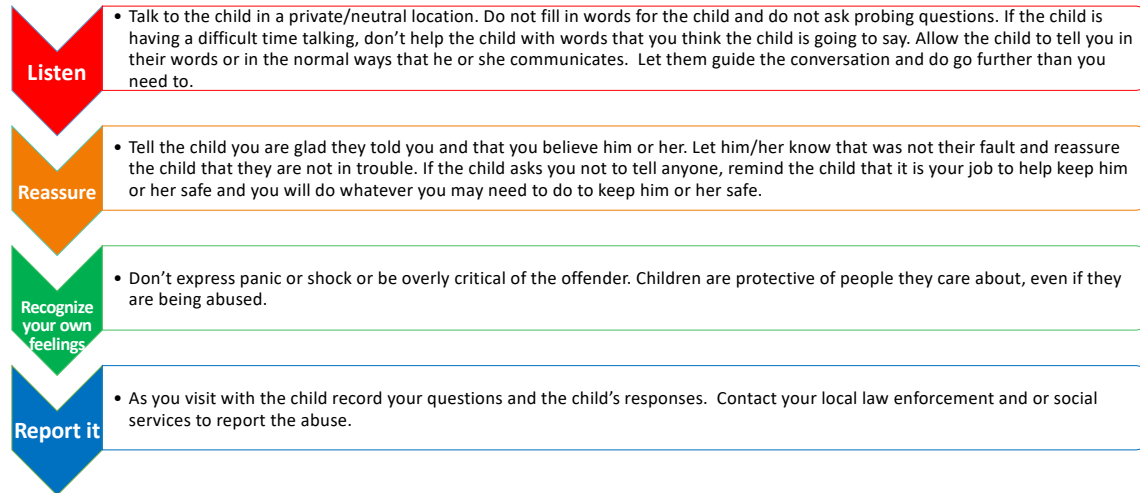
How to respond to child abuse cases...

- The Multi-Disciplinary,
- Best Practice,
- Team Approach.



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What do I do if a child discloses?



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Minimal Facts Interview



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GUIDELINES FOR AGE-APPROPRIATE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Age	Who	What	Where	How	Time of Year	Time of Day	# Times	How Long	How Often	When/Month
3										
4										
5 to 6										
7 to 8										
9 to 10										
12 +										

***Blue indicates that a developmentally on target child MAY be able to answer those types of questions.

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Go to statements or questions when more information is needed

- You said _____. Tell me more about that.
- You said _____. Help me understand _____.
- You said _____. What does _____ mean?
- NEVER ask a kid to “show” you



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Reporting Abuse

It's our responsibility to react appropriately to suspicion, disclosure, or discovery of abuse. Only 4% to 8% of reports of all sexual abuse are false.

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What if you suspect abuse


In North Dakota, anyone **may** report suspected child abuse or neglect to Child Protection Services (CPS). However, certain professionals **must, by law**, report suspected child abuse or neglect—in other words, they are **mandated reporters**. It's a Class B misdemeanor when a mandated reporter chooses **not** to report suspected abuse. To fulfill the mandate, reports **must** be made directly to a county social service agency.

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NEW N.D. Child Protection Services (CPS) Intake Process

IMPORTANT

If it's an **EMERGENCY** and a child is in imminent **DANGER**
CALL 9-1-1 NOW.




To report suspected child abuse or neglect, Call North Dakota's new toll-free

Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Line
1-833-958-3500

NEW Statewide toll-free Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting Line
1-833-958-3500

*Available 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. Central Time (7 a.m.- 4 p.m. MT), Monday - Friday, **STARTING Jan. 4, 2021.***

Key Benefits:


 *A dedicated team of specialized CPS intake professionals will gather all needed facts so CPS workers can act more quickly to protect children.*

- Ensures consistent quality service.
- Reduces phone tag because intake workers are available to take your call.
- Uses a NEW enhanced intake process with focused questions to better target actions.
- Allows local child welfare professionals to devote more quality time to strengthening and supporting families to keep more children safely at home.

Law Enforcement or Medical Personnel:

- **If you need a Child Protection Worker to respond to your location immediately, continue to call your local Human Service Zone office directly.**
- **You can provide supporting documents to the CPS Intake Unit by fax: 701.328.0361.**

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Dakota Children's
ADVOCACY CENTER

- ▶ Children under the age of 18 – or adults as requested
- ▶ Interview children ages 3 and up
- ▶ Sexual, emotional, physical abuse & neglect
- ▶ Witnesses to violence
- ▶ Interviews and Medicals are scheduled at the earliest available time
- ▶ 24 hr. on call for emergency medical cases
- ▶ Need demographic and insurance information
- ▶ Referrals can be made to the CAC for services even if the child did not receive a forensic interview at the CAC
- ▶ **Families will never receive a bill for our services**

(701) 323-5626

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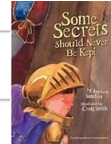
Children's Books



My body Belongs to Me from My Head to My Toes by Pro Familia



Some Secrets Should Never be Kept by Jayneen Sanders



Some Parts are Not for Sharing by Julie K. Federico



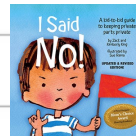
Body Boundaries Make Me Stronger by Elizabeth Cole



54



I Said No by Zack and Kimberly King



Not Everyone Is Nice by Frederick Alimonti & Ann Tedesco, Ph.D.



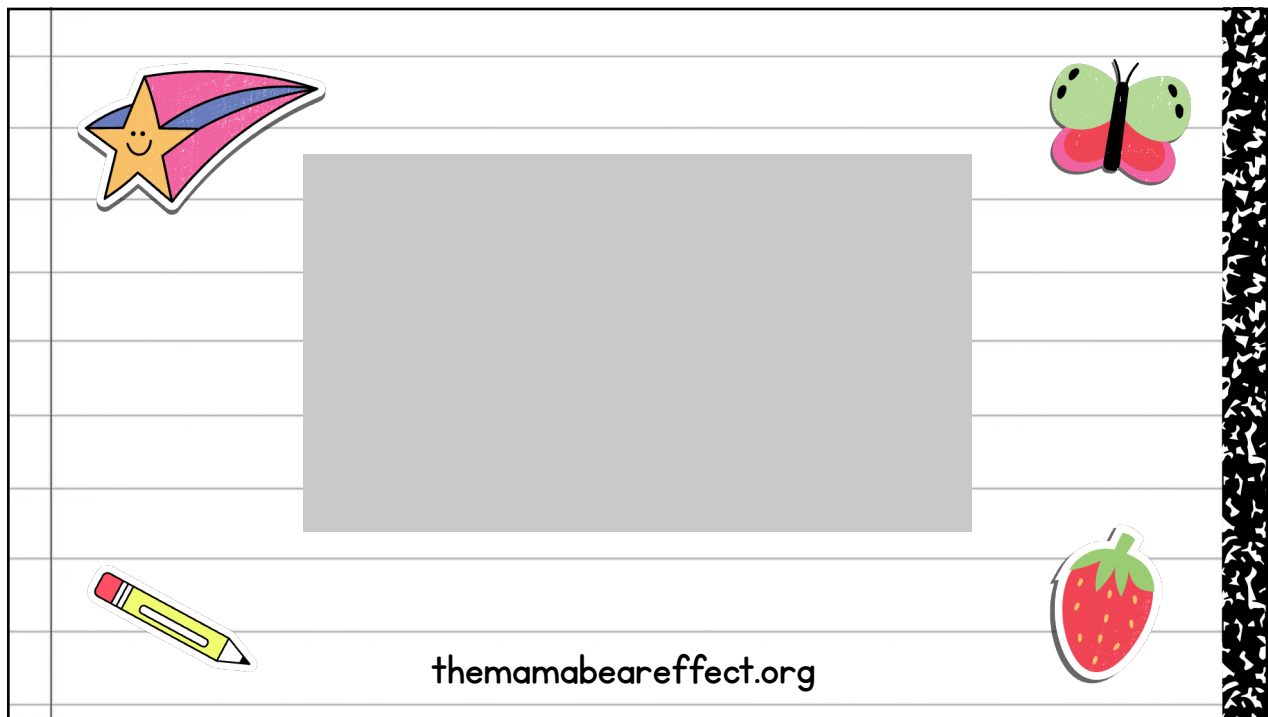
No Means No! by Jayneen Sanders



Do You Have a Secret? by Jennifer Moore-Malinos




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Resources



The Mama Bear Affect



Monique Burr Foundation



Fight Child Abuse

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