Child sexual abuse is:

- Fondling or rubbing against a child’s private parts, butt or breasts
- Asking or coercing a child to touch someone’s private parts
- Exposing private parts to a child
- Showing or making pornographic movies or images of/to a child
- Having inappropriate sexual conversations with children in person, on the phone, or on the internet

ACTIONS TO TAKE

Call the Illinois child abuse hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE.
If there are immediate safety concerns, also call 911.

For more information, visit www.ChicagoCAC.org or contact Info@ChicagoCAC.org
Children often indicate something is wrong through behaviors, not words.

There are many reasons why children may not disclose abuse. They may be ashamed or fear that no one will believe them. Many abusers make threats to ensure that victims do not tell. Because most abusers have a close relationship with the child and their family, the child may worry about getting their abuser or themselves in trouble.

Recognize the signs.
Children often disclose abuse through unusual behaviors and changes in behaviors. Because many forms of abuse are not physically evident, adults should recognize certain behavioral cues and provide support. Adults who suspect abuse should call the child abuse hotline or their local police department. Consider the possibility of abuse when a child:

- is hesitant about being alone with a specific adult or child
- has sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- suddenly refuses to change for or participate in physical activities
- experiences nightmares, trouble sleeping or bed-wetting
- shows signs of depression, anxiety, aggression or suicidal ideation, including cutting and other forms of self-harm
- becomes pregnant or contracts a sexually transmitted infection, particularly if under 14
- experiences pain when sitting, walking or using the bathroom

Respond with compassion.
Remember that an abuser can be a woman, a man, an adolescent, or someone who the child knows. Coming forward takes courage. If a child discloses abuse to you:

- Stay calm and listen carefully. Encourage the child to speak freely, but do not ask detailed questions about the abuse.
- Reassure the child. Tell the child that you believe him or her, that telling you was the right thing to do, and that he or she has not done anything wrong.

Report suspected abuse.
If you suspect or know that a child is being abused, call the Illinois child abuse hotline: 1-800-25-ABUSE. If there are immediate safety concerns, also call 911. Anyone can call to make a report, and reports can be made anonymously.

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