



**VIOLENCE PREVENTION COALITION OF GREATER LOS ANGELES**

*A Project of Community Partners®*

**FACT SHEET: CHILD ABUSE**

<b>Myths</b>	<b>Facts</b>
Child abuse is more common in cities and occurs rarely in rural areas where people know each other.	Child abuse takes place equally in rural and urban areas. <i>Abuse myths, Childline, 2006.</i>
Only adults commit child sexual abuse.	As much as half of all child sexual abuse is committed by children under the age of 18. <i>"Juvenile sex offenders; Towards the development of a typology," Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 2003.</i>
Children "ask" for these actions by being "seductive" or by "consenting" to the sexual acts.	Children are never responsible for being abused. A child or young person is never responsible for behavior displayed by an adult. <sup>1</sup> When an adult instigates sexual contact, informed consent is impossible for a child. Many offenders try to shift the blame for their actions by accusing the child of being seductive or promiscuous. <sup>2</sup> <i>Department of Communities, Queensland Government, 2004.</i> <sup>1</sup> ; <i>Project Horizon, 2003.</i> <sup>2</sup>
Child sexual abuse is rare and only involves girls.	Research suggests that 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 6 boys are subjected to some form of sexual abuse by the age of 18. <sup>1</sup> As child abuse is a secret crime, notification statistics profoundly under-estimate the size of the problem. <sup>2</sup> <i>Department of Communities, Queensland Government, 2004.</i> <sup>1</sup> ; <i>Project Horizon, 2003.</i> <sup>2</sup>
Child sexual abusers are all homosexuals.	Abusers can be homosexual or heterosexual. Sexual abuse of young boys is perpetrated more often by heterosexual males rather than homosexual males. <i>Abuse myths, Childline, 2006.</i>
Child abusers are mostly lower income.	Abusers come from all income, education, and intelligence levels. <i>Abuse myths, Childline, 2006.</i>
Child sexual abuse is often an isolated incident, it only happens once.	Abuse is seldom a one time incident. Once a child is abused, incidents often repeated over periods of months and years, especially if the offender is known to the child or other family members. The person being abusive may move on to abuse other children. <i>Stop Child Abuse, 2007.</i>
Child sexual abuse occurs through a violent attack.	In 90% of child sexual abuse cases, the child knows and trusts the person who commits the abuse. <i>"Children abducted by family members: National Estimated and Characteristics," Juvenile Justice Bulletin. Office of Juvenile Justice and delinquency Prevention, 2002.</i>
Children will fabricate stories about their sexual experience.	Children rarely fabricate stories of sexual abuse. Falsely reporting sexual abuse can be an indicator of another problem that a child is unable to express. Children do not have the explicit sexual knowledge to enable them to talk about sex unless they have experienced it. <sup>1</sup> Children's disclosures of abuse may vary in their content because of their reluctance and fear to tell what has happened. <sup>2</sup> <i>Abuse myths, Childline, 2006.</i> <sup>1</sup> <i>Stop Child Abuse, 2007.</i> <sup>2</sup>

## UNITED STATES

- ❖ In 2002, an estimated 1,500 children were confirmed to have died from maltreatment; 36% of these deaths were from neglect, 28% from physical abuse, and 29% from multiple maltreatment types. *Child Maltreatment Fact Sheet, CDC, 2005.*
- ❖ In 2002, 906,000 children in the United States were confirmed by child protective service agencies as being maltreated. *Child Maltreatment Fact Sheet, CDC, 2005.*
- ❖ 90% of state inmates (89.5% of males, 90.6% of females) reported past abuse by family members. *"Prior Abuse Reported by Inmates and Probationers," Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999.*
- ❖ Two-thirds or more of abduction victims were female, and the majority were adolescents, ages 12 through 17. *"Children abducted by family members: National Estimates and Characteristics," Office of Juvenile Justice and delinquency Prevention, 2002.*
- ❖ In police reports, juveniles are kidnapped as often by acquaintances as by strangers. *"Children abducted by family members: National Estimates and Characteristics," Office of Juvenile Justice and delinquency Prevention, 2002.*

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY

- ❖ The LA County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Child Abuse Hotline receives an average of 15,300 calls per month: 700 referrals each weekday, 200 on Saturday, and 125 on Sundays. Of these calls, 40% were reports on child neglect, 25% on physical abuse, 25% on sexual abuse, and 10% on emotional abuse. *Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) County of LA DCFS, 2006.*
- ❖ In 2005, there were on average 17 child abuse cases per day in Los Angeles County. *Child Abuse Statistics, Rand California, 2006.*
- ❖ Infant mortality rates for Los Angeles County have been stable around 5.4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births between 2001-2003. In the year 2004, the infant death rate dropped slightly to 5.0 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. *"The State of Child Abuse in Los Angeles," Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2006.*
- ❖ In Los Angeles County, between 2000-2004, child death rates among children ages 1-17 decreased from 23.3 per 100,000 to 20.6 per 100,000 deaths in 2004. *"The State of Child Abuse in Los Angeles," Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2006.*
- ❖ In 2005, Los Angeles County school districts showed decreases across all four abuse types; sexual assault, physical abuse, general neglect, and emotional abuse. *"The State of Child Abuse in Los Angeles," Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2006.*

***To report child abuse and to obtain referrals to local agencies in Los Angeles, CA, contact the Child Protection Hotline, 24 hours/day: 1-800-540-4000. Outside of Los Angeles, contact the ChildHelp® National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD.***

For a full citation list or more information, please contact:

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