

# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault: A Resource for Iowa's Families

**A guide for parents and companion document to**

*Preventing Bullying and Harassment:  
A Support Manual for Iowa's Sample  
District Policy on  
Bullying and Harassment*

**Iowa Department of Education  
in conjunction with the  
Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development**

**August 2006**





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## A Resource for Iowa's Families

## About the Document

### *Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Violence: A Resource for Iowa Families*

This document has been formatted so that families, community groups, and schools can use each section as a separate handout or use them all together as one complete document. Prevention tips and resources are provided to help children and youth of different ages or stages of development.

The term “sexual violence” is used to describe violence against someone that is sexual in nature. It may include behaviors that are physical, verbal, or visual. There are three different types of sexual violence described in this document — sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault. This document provides **general information** and **resources** to help parents and families understand, recognize, and respond to sexual violence of their child or youth. Resources are organized into groups to ensure age appropriateness.

The document is organized into four sections: Background Information; The “Basics” of Sexual Violence; Types of Sexual Violence; and Who Can Help: Websites and Resources for Families.

## About the Collaboration

The Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development is a dynamic, evolving partnership of state and local entities concerned about children and youth. This group strives to align state policies and programs and to encourage collaboration among multiple state and community agencies on youth-related issues. The goals of the collaborative are to promote the use of positive youth development principles in state policies and programs and to support the use of effective youth development practices throughout Iowa. For more information on the collaboration, their membership, and their work, go to: [www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)

State of Iowa  
**Department of Education**  
Grimes State Office Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

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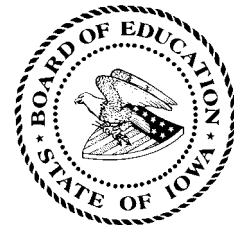
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**A Resource for  
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# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

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# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

### Table of Contents

Section I: Background Information	
About the Document .....	ii
About the Collaboration .....	ii
State Board Page .....	iii
Acknowledgments .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	vi
Letter from the Director of The Iowa Department of Education .....	vii
The Law (House File 816) .....	viii
Section II: The “Basics” of Sexual Violence .....	A1
Section III: Types of Sexual Violence .....	B1
1. Sexual Harassment .....	B1
2. Sexual Abuse .....	C1
3. Sexual Assault .....	D1
Section IV. Who Can Help .....	E1
1. Resources for Families with Elementary-Aged Children .....	F1
2. Resources for Families with Middle School-Aged Youth .....	G1
3. Resources for Families with High School-Aged Youth .....	H1
4. Resources for Families and Caretakers .....	I1
5. Resources for Educators, Youth Leaders, and Youth Development Professionals .....	J1
References .....	K1



# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault A Resource for Iowa's Families

## Director's Letter



STATE OF IOWA

THOMAS J. VILSACK, GOVERNOR  
SALLY J. PEDERSON, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
JUDY A. JEFFREY, DIRECTOR

August 2006

Dear School Administrator,

As you already know, in 2004, the Governor's Office directed the Department of Education to address the issue of bullying and harassment in Iowa schools. The Department responded by developing a model policy, creating bullying prevention and intervention materials, and providing awareness and training opportunities.

During the 2005 legislative session, the Iowa legislature continued this focused effort by directing the Department to address the specific issues of sexual harassment and assault. House File 816, Subsection 53 directs the Department of Education to provide schools with examples of age-appropriate materials and lists of resources that parents could use to teach their children to recognize and reject unwanted physical and verbal sexual advances.

The new requirement also states that:

- "School districts shall provide age-appropriate materials and a list of available community and web-based resources to parents at registration and shall also include the age-appropriate materials and resource list in the student handbook."
- "School districts shall incorporate the age-appropriate materials into relevant curricula and shall reinforce the importance of preventive measures when reasonable with parents and students."
- "School districts are encouraged to work with their communities to provide voluntary parent education sessions to provide parents with the skills and appropriate strategies to teach their children as described in this subsection."

In response to this directive, the Department worked with several organizations and the Iowa Collaboration for Youth Development to create this document. It is a companion to the Department's publication, *Preventing Bullying and Harassment: A Support Manual for Iowa's Sample District Harassment and Bullying Policy.*

We sincerely hope that this companion document will be helpful to you in your efforts to create supportive, nurturing learning environments for all our students. For additional information or questions, contact: Jane Todey, Consultant for Learning Supports at 515 / 281-8514 or [Jane.Todey@iowa.gov](mailto:Jane.Todey@iowa.gov)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy A. Jeffrey".

Judy A. Jeffrey, Director

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*Helping Communities Meet the Learning Needs of All Their Children and Adults*

# Preventing Bullying and Harassment

## A Support Manual

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### The Law (House File 816)

*The following is taken from HF 816 passed by the Iowa Legislature in 2005.*

#### **New Subsection. 53.**

Develop and make available to school districts, examples of age-appropriate materials and lists of resources which parents may use to teach their children to recognize unwanted physical and verbal sexual advances, to not make unwanted physical and verbal sexual advances, to effectively reject unwanted sexual advances, that it is wrong to take advantage of or exploit another person, and about counseling, medical, and legal resources available to survivors of sexual abuse and sexual assault, including resources for escaping violent relationships.

The materials and resources shall cover verbal, physical, and visual sexual harassment, including nonconsensual sexual advances, and nonconsensual physical sexual contact. In developing the materials and resource list, the director shall consult with entities that shall include, but not be limited to, the departments of human services, public health, and public safety, education stakeholders, and parent-teacher organizations.

School districts shall provide age-appropriate materials and a list of available community and web-based resources to parents at registration and shall also include the age-appropriate materials and resource list in the student handbook. School districts are encouraged to work with their communities to provide voluntary parent education sessions to provide parents with the skills and appropriate strategies to teach their children as described in this subsection. School districts shall incorporate the age-appropriate materials into relevant curricula and shall reinforce the importance of preventive measures when reasonable with parents and students.

# The “Basics” of Sexual Violence

*“The Basics of Sexual Violence” is part of a larger document that includes three types of sexual violence: Sexual harassment, Sexual abuse, and Sexual assault. Each type is briefly defined here. More detail, specific actions, and resources can be found in the complete document that is available on-line at:*

[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)

## Awareness

All families want their children to grow up to be safe, healthy, and successful. Preventing sexual violence is part of helping your child or youth grow up to be a confident and competent adult. This form of violence prevention can be addressed at an early age similar to the ways parents teach bicycle safety, protect children from poisoning, or prepare them to be good drivers. Here are some key points to keep in mind.

### **Sexual violence can happen to any child or youth and is much more common than we have believed.**

It is hard to imagine that someone you love as dearly as your child could be hurt in such an awful way. The reality is, however, that one in ten Iowans will have a forced sexual experience sometime in their lives. Two-thirds of all sexual abuse happens to children under the age of 18, and 90 percent of reported victims know and trust their abuser. Boys and girls of all ages, races, and income levels are at risk, and every family should be aware so they can be prepared to address this serious issue.

### **Sexual violence in any form is harmful to children and can have long-lasting health effects.**

When someone takes advantage of a child’s vulnerability and trust, that child is robbed of his/her innocence. People who were victims of sexual violence as children or teens may develop long-term physical and emotional problems. Some believe that a child can’t be hurt if s/he is too young to understand sexual activity. Others believe that children want this kind of

## Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

### A Resource for Iowa’s Families



# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

attention. Both of these beliefs are wrong and may be part of an abuser's way to trick others into accepting the sexual violence as normal.

### **Your attitude is important.**

Think about your own experiences, feelings, and beliefs about sexual violence. Your children's beliefs and behaviors will likely reflect the values and attitudes you have. If you believe that sexual violence can't happen to your child or don't know the signs of sexual violence, your child may not know what to do if someone approaches him/her inappropriately. If you are fearful about your child being a victim, your child may be too frightened to take any action. On the other hand, if you are willing to approach the subject in a matter-of-fact way with useful information, your child may feel much more prepared to deal with a situation if it arises.

Keep in mind that the values, beliefs, and traditions established by your family life will guide your children as they grow and begin to establish new relationships.

## **Prevention**

Just as we want to prevent accidents from happening to our loved ones, we want to prevent sexual violence from happening to someone we love. Here are some basic prevention tips to help minimize a child's risk of sexual violence.

### **Open communication is good prevention.**

Just as with other important topics such as alcohol use or smoking, *having a strong line of open communication with your children is critical.*

- **Let your children know you are interested and available to talk**, no matter what the topic. Discuss school life regularly with your child/youth including grades, sports, extracurricular activities, and friends.
- **Look for “teachable moments”** — daily opportunities that occur with your child/youth, such as when riding in the car, eating a meal together, etc. — to make it easy to share your messages and values.
- **Talk openly about body safety.** Teach your children, from an early age, to know that bad or secret touches to their private body parts should not happen. Teach them proper terms for private body parts and talk about appropriate boundaries in touching or being touched by others.

## Support your child in developing interpersonal skills.

- **Promote self-confidence** by encouraging your child to speak up for her/himself so s/he can learn to reject unwanted advances.
- **Suggest participation in leadership training opportunities** to help your child gain the confidence needed to ward off sexual abuse and harassment.
- **Raise awareness of other people's feelings** to help prevent your child from hurting others in this way. Foster a sense of respect, empathy, and compassion.

## Start talking *before* something happens.

It is important to introduce the idea of age-appropriate body safety early. Talk about touches that are good (such as hugs or petting a dog), touches that are hurtful (such as being hit, shoved, or pinched), and touches that may be confusing (being touched on your private parts, even if it feels good). Let them know when it is OK for private parts to be touched (such as changing a baby's diaper, during bath time, or at a doctor visit). Encourage your child to respect others' boundaries — and respect your child's boundaries. *Children of all ages need to know they have your permission to tell someone NO if they don't like the way they are being touched.*

## Realize that sexual abusers control children through secrecy.

Since the majority of sexual violence occurs between people who know each other, a sexual abuser will use the child's trust to take advantage of her/him. An abuser may start by asking the child to do things that are fun or rewarding. Over time, they will test the child's boundaries by asking her/him to do more and more things. At some point, the child may realize that what the abuser is doing is wrong but may not believe they can stop it, or may think it is their fault. One of the best ways to confront the secrecy of abuse is to let your children know it is *always okay to tell* when they are confused or frightened about secret or sexual touching, and *that adults should never trick a child into touching their private parts.*

## Intervention

As careful as we might be in our efforts to protect our children, we must realize that sexual abusers take advantage of a child or young adult's vulnerability. In spite of everything a person does right, accidents, injuries, or sexual violence can still happen. It's important to know that sexual violence is against the law and that each type of sexual violence requires a different approach to help the victim as well as the abuser.

# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

### Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. It can also occur when a person in authority demands sexual favors or subjects a child/youth to sexual conduct that creates an offensive, hostile, or intimidating environment. Sexual harassment is illegal — Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination in schools, including sexual harassment.

### Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse refers to coerced or forced sexual contact or activity that may be ongoing or occurs over time, often within a trusting relationship. Perpetrators are usually older than their victims and may trick or force them into gradually doing the sexual behavior. These behaviors may involve:

- Watching sexually explicit videos or acts;
- Being made to touch another's private parts;
- Being touched on the person's own private parts;
- Engaging or attempting to engage in sexual intercourse, or other sexual behavior.

The sexual behavior may not be violent and may even be pleasurable to the child (who doesn't necessarily know it is wrong). Perpetrators of ongoing sexual abuse control the child/youth through secrecy, shame, or threats.

### Sexual Assault

Sexual assault usually refers to forced or unwanted sexual activity that occurs as a single incident — as opposed to ongoing sexual abuse that may continue over time. The assault may involve a similar range of behaviors, and the offender usually takes advantage of the victim's vulnerability. Anyone can perpetrate this type of abuse — a trusted friend or family member, a stranger, a casual acquaintance, or an intimate partner. Similar to other forms of sexual violence, sexual assault is not always reported to authorities. However, when cases are extreme or sensational, this form of violence tends to receive more public attention than other forms of sexual violence.

**Regardless of age or circumstances, it is important for parents to talk with their children *before* they become victims or witnesses to any form of sexual abuse.**

For more information on sexual violence go to:

[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)

# Types of Sexual Violence: Sexual Harassment

## What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome visual, verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with a person's education. **Sexual harassment is illegal** — Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual harassment. (As defined by the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.)

Sexual harassment is a real and serious problem that can affect any child or youth regardless of gender, race, or age. It can threaten physical or emotional well-being, influence school performance, and make it difficult to achieve career goals.

## There are two types of harassment:

- 1) When a person in authority demands sexual favors in return for a benefit for the child or youth, *or*
- 2) When a child or youth is subjected to sexual conduct that creates an offensive, hostile or intimidating atmosphere.

## Sexual harassment can include behaviors such as:

- Making sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or commenting about a person's body or sex life;
- Looking or staring at a person in a sexual manner;
- Touching, grabbing, pinching, or brushing up against someone in a sexual way;
- Flashing or mooning;
- Spreading rumors about a person's activities or relationships;
- Blocking passage in a sexually suggestive or offensive way;
- Writing sexual messages, love notes, or sexual graffiti;
- Pulling clothing down or off;

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## A Resource for Iowa's Families



## Facts:

*Nationally, 81 percent of students in grades eight to 11 experienced some form of sexual harassment.*

*Every school in Iowa is required to have a Title IX (or Equity) Coordinator that will listen to your complaint and follow the school's procedure to resolve the problem appropriately.*



# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

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### Fact:

*Hallways and classrooms were the places where harassment most frequently took place. Other places included school grounds, gymnasium, pool, locker rooms, restrooms, parking lot, school busses, and on field trips.*

- Calling a person a sexual name;
- Spying on someone or using camera phones to take pictures of someone while showering or dressing;
- Forcing kisses or other sexual advances;
- Forcing someone to look at sexual pictures or materials;
- Using computers, text messaging, or other technologies to circulate demeaning information or pictures.

## Prevention Tips for Families

- **Model appropriate behavior.** For example, don't tell or laugh at jokes that are sexually demeaning. Use language that avoids stereotyping individuals by gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics.
- **Set clear expectations for your child's behavior toward others** and talk about what to do when others are harassing or being harassed.
- **Talk about healthy dating relationships** and the fact that a great deal of sexual harassment occurs within current, past, or perceived dating relationships.
- **Request a copy of your school's harassment policy.** Read it, discuss it with your child/youth, and keep it on hand as a reference. If any part is unclear to you, make an appointment with an administrator and ask questions.
- **Ask your school to put sexual harassment on the agenda** for parent-teacher organization meetings or parent discussion topic lists. If you are qualified, offer to lead a discussion group or series of talks for the parent community.

## Red Flags: What to look for as a family member if your child or youth is being sexually harassed.

Does your child/youth:

- Avoid school, want to stay home, or cut class;
- Avoid talking about their activities or school;



- Find it hard to pay attention, show signs of being socially withdrawn or depressed;
- Suddenly have consistently lower grades on a test or in a class;
- Want to change schools or even drop out;
- Drop out of chosen classes or field of study;
- No longer show interest in an activity, club, or events that were previously important;
- Find it hard to get letters of reference from a teacher;
- Engage in abusive behavior towards other children, siblings, or a family pet;
- Use inappropriate sexual comments, jokes, and/or gestures in their social interactions.

### **What to Do: If harassment happens to your child or youth.**

- Listen to what your child or youth tells you with an open mind — don't be too quick to judge them.
- Don't ignore the harassment; it usually doesn't go away by itself, and may get worse if no action is taken.
- Report it to school administration or someone in charge of the child's/youth's activity. Ask that the school/organization keep you informed of the actions taken, as well as future plans, to ensure that this type of harassment doesn't occur again.
- Encourage your child or youth to tell the harasser in person or in writing: 1) the specific actions or words that make them uncomfortable; 2) that the behavior is not welcome; and 3) that the behavior must stop.
- Keep a written record of the incidents of harassment. This will be important if an investigation becomes necessary. Make notes of any witnesses who might have observed the incident(s).
- Support your child or youth while at school, or other activities, by making sure that another adult knows about the harassment such as a teacher, counselor, or other staff person.

## **Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault**

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#### **Fact:**

*Nearly nine in 10 students (85 percent nationally) reported that students harass other students at their schools.*

# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

### **Fact:**

*Four out of five students who are harassed are targeted by a current or former student of their schools, with the remainder of the harassment coming from adults or school staff.*

- If the institution does not take prompt action to stop and resolve the harassment after you have reported it to them, file a complaint with an outside agency such as the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.
- If your child or youth reports harassment of a friend, direct and support their efforts to get help for this friend.
- If your child or youth has been found to be a perpetrator of sexual harassment, talk with him/her about your expectations for his/her behavior in clear and certain terms. Reinforce your expectations with clear consequences for his/her actions and follow-up to ensure that the behavior has stopped.

For more information on sexual violence go to:

**[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)**

# Types of Sexual Violence: Sexual Abuse

## What is Sexual Abuse?

Sexual abuse refers to forced or coerced sexual behavior that may occur more than once, often within a trusting relationship. **Most victims know their perpetrators.** Children cannot consent to sexual contact with adults or older youth, and sexual contact is considered abuse, regardless of whether it includes touching or not. Child sexual abuse is a persistent and hidden problem in our society that produces long-term and devastating effects on its victims and their families. **Sexual abuse of children is against the law and should be reported to law enforcement or to child protection authorities.**

## Sexual abuse can involve a series of behaviors such as:

- A trusted adult or older family member spends time regularly with a child. The adult appears to be very caring and generous with his/her time and possibly gives the child extra attention or gifts.
- The adult may begin to test the child's boundaries by sexually touching him/her in ways that are non-threatening or may happen as part of a game.
- Over time, the touching becomes more involved and may result in masturbation or intercourse.
- The abuse may continue as long as the child likes the attention, believes the behavior is normal, does not feel hurt or threatened, or does not believe he/she will be believed if they tell. The child may, in some circumstances, even defend the perpetrator when asked if anything is "going on."

A child or youth may only become distressed about the sexual touching when they discover the behavior is wrong, they want to stop spending time with the adult, or the adult makes threats and increases demands for more sexual activity.

## Sexual abusers may:

- Not let a child set his or her own limits regarding their own bodies;
- Offer hugs, kisses, tickles, wrestling, or touches to a child even when the child doesn't want the attention;

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### Fact:

*The most common and upsetting examples of sexual abuse reported by children and youth at school:*

- *Pulled off or down their clothing (74 percent).*
- *Forced them to do something sexual other than kissing (72 percent).*

# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

### Facts:

*An estimated 1 in 4 girls, and 1 in 6 boys will be the victims of sexual abuse before the age of 18.*

*The median age of these sexual abuse victims is nine years old.*

- Be overly interested in the sexuality of the child/youth;
- Insist on having alone time with the child/youth;
- Prefer the company of children to their same-age peers;
- Buy expensive gifts or give money to children/youth for no apparent reason;
- Frequently walk in on a child or teen in the bathroom;
- Allow children to get away with inappropriate behaviors.

Most children or youth do not want to talk about the abuse directly. They may have been told that no one will believe them or that they will get into trouble. A child is more likely to say something like, “Janey’s brother is weird sometimes. I don’t like going over to their house.” They may not acknowledge the sexual abuse unless they are specifically asked or know that they will be believed.

## Prevention Tips for Families

- Know with whom your child or youth spends time;
- Understand that an abuser could be someone you know and trust;
- Carefully screen babysitters and caregivers;
- Teach your children proper names for their private body parts;
- Allow children and youth to set their own boundaries and say “no” to touches they do not want;
- Sexual activity is something special that adults do when they are in a committed relationship. Reinforce with your children that no one should ever trick them into being touched;
- Encourage your child/youth to speak up and tell you or another trusted adult if it would ever happen to him or her.

## Red Flags: What to look for as a family member if you suspect your child or youth is being sexually abused.

Does your child or youth:

- Have a loss of appetite or stomach ache with no discernible reason;
- Act more clingy or insecure;

- Appear withdrawn;
- Have difficulty sleeping, seem afraid of the dark, or have recurring nightmares;
- Show fear of certain people or places;
- Seem to act more “babyish” or behave in childish ways that are not typical;
- Lie more often about what they are doing or who they are with;
- Seem to have an unusual knowledge or interest in sexual matters for his/her age;
- Appear to express affection in inappropriate ways for his/her age;
- Have new words for body parts;
- Act more aggressive;
- Seem to act out sexuality with others or with their toys.

### **What to Do: If you suspect your child/youth is a victim of sexual abuse.**

- Ask open-ended questions that provide you with more information than yes or no questions. Example: What happened next? Tell me about it.
- Listen and allow your child/youth to talk.
- Remain calm. If you become visibly upset, your child may think you are mad at him/her and may try to change his/her story to please you.
- Praise or support your child/youth for telling you about the abuse.
- Reassure your child/youth that the abuse was not his/her fault.
- Avoid placing blame on your child/youth for something the abuser is responsible for.
- Avoid questions/words that might influence the child’s story, such as “He made you touch him, didn’t he?”
- Take steps to prevent your child/youth from being alone with the suspected abuser.
- Seek help or counseling for your child/youth and others as needed.

## **Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault**

### **A Resource for Iowa’s Families**

#### **Fact:**

*In approximately 90 percent of child sexual abuse cases the child knows the abuser.*

# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

- Contact the child abuse reporting hotline or the sexual abuse hotline to discuss what steps you may need to take to report the abuse.

### **What to Do: If you suspect your child/youth is abusing another child.**

- Be informed about normal sexual development so you can tell the difference between “curiosity” and behaviors that may indicate sexual abuse.
- Approach your child in a calm, nonjudgmental manner to ask him/her about your suspicions — try to get a clear picture of the situation.
- Explain that it is wrong for them to make someone else touch them or to touch others in their private places until they are older — even if it may seem like a game.
- Don't let your child/youth be with other children unsupervised until you can be sure other children will not be touched inappropriately.
- Talk with your child's health care practitioner or to a counselor who may be familiar with these behaviors in children, so you can find out if more help is needed.

**Don't leave a child/youth alone with someone you suspect is abusing them.** Even if the suspected abuser is someone you know and you don't want to accuse them of something you aren't sure about — it is critical that your child or youth be safe from any further abuse. Don't just listen to the abuser's side of the story. Try to remain objective and talk with someone who can help you make the best decision for your child's safety. **Remember, sexual abuse of children is against the law and should be reported to law enforcement or to child protection authorities.**

For more information on sexual violence go to:

**[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)**

# Types of Sexual Violence: Sexual Assault

## What is Sexual Assault?

Sexual assault is any forced or unwanted sexual contact or activity. It may also involve verbal or visual behaviors, or any type of pressure designed to coerce or force someone to join in the unwanted sexual contact or activity. Typically, this type of abuse occurs one time rather than being repeated over time as with sexual abuse. It can be perpetrated by:

- An acquaintance, friend, or dating partner;
- A stranger;
- A family member;
- Counselors, therapists, teachers, clergy or other persons in a position of authority over the child or youth.

## Sexual assault can occur in the form of touching, such as:

- Being asked or forced to touch “private parts” or having their “private parts” touched;
- Playing sexual games;
- Having oral, genital, or anal intercourse or penetration with objects or body parts;
- Forcing a child/youth into prostitution.

## Sexual assault can also occur as non-touching sexual activity, such as:

- Sharing pornographic material;
- Exposing oneself to a child/youth;
- Inappropriately photographing a child/youth in sexual poses;
- Forcing or encouraging a child/youth to watch or hear sexual acts;

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#### Facts:

*Sexual assault must  
be reported to law  
enforcement!*

*30-50 percent of  
offenders are  
under age 18.*

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## A Resource for Iowa's Families

### Fact:

*Among women in Iowa who experienced sexual violence before age 18, the perpetrator was most commonly a family member or friend, acquaintance, or a date.*

- Verbally or emotionally assaulting a child/youth in a sexual nature (e.g., making fun of a child's body parts, calling a child "slut" or "stud");
- Placing/sending obscene telephone calls or e-mails;
- Asking a child/youth for a sexual act.

### Sexual offenders may:

- Use force or trickery to get the child or youth to submit to the assault;
- Take advantage of a child or youth's weaknesses to accomplish the assault;
- First test a child or youth to see if s/he will allow the offender to exploit them;
- Use alcohol or drugs to get the child or youth to comply.

### Prevention Tips for Families

- Help your children develop skills in assertiveness and self-protection—so they can feel more prepared if they are in a situation where they need to resist someone's advances.
- Know with whom your child or youth spends time, and what they are doing.
- Caution your child/youth about anyone who tries to trick him/her into getting into a car or doing something sexual for favors.
- Develop a "safety plan" so your children know what to do if they are ever in a frightening or dangerous situation.
- Do not allow your child or youth to use the Internet without appropriate supervision and clearly established guidelines.
- Carefully screen babysitters and caregivers.
- Be alert to your teenager's dating partner(s) if s/he tries to control or isolate your youth.
- Confirm that there is always adult supervision at teenage parties.
- Talk with teenagers about the increased risk of assault if they are at parties where there is drinking.



## **Red Flags: What to look for as a family member if your child or youth has been sexually assaulted.**

Does your child or youth have:

- Trouble sleeping or nightmares;
- Anxiety or worry about certain people or situations;
- Frequent crying spells or sadness;
- Sudden mood swings;
- Increased fear of certain people or situations, being alone;
- A change in eating habits — eating more than usual, or less than they should;
- Mental confusion or a lack of concentration;
- Increased behavior problems (“acting out”) at school;
- Increased anger;
- Increase in sexual behaviors (“acting out” sexually);
- Decreased trust in you or others;
- A greater sense of secretiveness.

## **What to Do: If your child or youth has been the victim of sexual assault.**

- Support and comfort your child/youth and help him/her feel safe.
- Listen calmly and ask questions without judgment until you have all the facts.
- Tell your child/youth that you believe him/her, even if the story is not entirely consistent — children/youth rarely make up stories of assault.
- Seek medical assistance *as soon as possible* to assure your child/youth is okay and to collect evidence (you can go to a local emergency room or call 911 for information).
- Seek crisis services or counseling for your child/youth and other family members (may also be available at the hospital).

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## **A Resource for Iowa's Families**

### **Fact:**

*For each year since 1997, the largest number of sexual assault victims in Iowa was females age 13-17.*

# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

### **Fact:**

*Nationally, sexual assault is the most under-reported crime, with only 1/3 being reported to law enforcement.*

- Report the sexual assault (and the name of the offender, if known) to law enforcement authorities.

For more information on sexual violence go to:

**[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)**

# Who Can Help?

## Resources and Guidance for Victims of Sexual violence

**Medical** — If your child has been abused or assaulted, s/he needs to be seen by a medical professional. Many Iowa communities have specially trained nurses, called Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners, who can examine someone after an assault and know how to properly collect evidence required for the legal system. You can also seek care at your local emergency room or family doctor. The cost of a sexual assault examination is not charged to the victim — it is paid for by the State of Iowa. All health care providers are required by law to report child sexual abuse and they know how to support your family in getting help for a victim.

**Legal** — Local law enforcement will assist by filing a police report, investigating the crime, and apprehending a suspect. To notify law enforcement, *dial 911*. Other professionals can help you to report sexual violence to the authorities. Teachers, nurses, counselors, social workers and other helping professionals are trained “mandatory reporters” of child abuse and assault and can offer support.

**Crisis Counseling and Advocacy** — Free crisis services and medical/legal advocacy are available to victims of crime in Iowa. Trained victim advocates can also help you receive compensation for some crime-related expenses, and can refer you to other community resources. To find a program near you, call the Iowa Sexual Abuse Hotline (listed below).

- **For survivors** of sexual abuse and sexual assault, the Iowa Sexual Abuse Hotline is a free 24-hour crisis line that provides information, support, and referral to appropriate agencies and programs across the state.
- **For youth who may be experiencing dating violence or need help escaping violent relationships**, contact the Iowa Sexual Abuse Hotline for confidential support and information.

<b>Iowa Sexual Abuse Hotline</b>	<b>1-800-284-7821</b>	<b>24-hour support, information and referral</b> — Trained advocates provide supportive listening and information about services for sexual abuse survivors and their significant others.
<b>Child Abuse Reporting Hotline</b>	<b>1-800-362-2178</b>	<b>Iowa Department of Human Services</b> — Trained staff accept mandatory and voluntary reports of suspected child abuse and refer them for investigation.

For more information on sexual violence go to:

[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)

## Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

### A Resource for Iowa's Families



**Preventing  
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Youth  
Sexual  
Harassment,  
Abuse, and  
Assault**

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# Resources for Families with Elementary-Aged Children

(Ages 5-10)

Resource	Contact Information
<i>How to Protect Your Child from Child Abuse:</i> An insert in each Cub and Boy Scouts of America Handbook and <i>It Happened to Me</i> (DVD) and the Adult Leader Youth Protection Training available online.	<a href="http://www.BSA-IA.org">www.BSA-IA.org</a> 515-266-2135 800-999-SCOUT
<i>No Way, Don't Go There, &amp; I Don't Think So:</i> Books about staying safe from Girl Scouts of America.	<a href="http://www.GirlScouts.org">www.GirlScouts.org</a> or contact your local council
<i>Safe Schools and Healthy Students Initiative:</i> This government site provides various youth and school violence prevention resources.	<a href="http://www.sshs.samhsa.gov/initiative/resources.aspx">www.sshs.samhsa.gov/initiative/resources.aspx</a>
<i>Pacer Center's Kids Against Bullying:</i> This website provides children in 2nd through 6th grades a safe, entertaining way to learn how to respond to bullying. The site includes a cast of animated characters, celebrity videos, kid videos, Webisodes, games, contests, stories, etc.	<a href="http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org">www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org</a>
<i>Families are Talking:</i> A newsletter that provides tips to help parents and caregivers talk with their children about sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.	<a href="http://www.siecus.org/pubs/families/FAT_Newsletter_V3N3.pdf">www.siecus.org/pubs/families/FAT Newsletter V3N3.pdf</a> Additional newsletters and resources: <a href="http://www.siecus.org/pubs/pubs0004.html">http://www.siecus.org/pubs/pubs0004.html</a>
<i>7 Steps to Protecting Our Children:</i> A guide for parents and caregivers to use to protect their children as well as prepare their children to protect themselves from child sexual abuse.	<a href="http://www.d21.org">http://www.d21.org</a> (use a small "L," not a "one" in the web address).

## Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

A Resource for Iowa's Families



# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

Resource	Contact Information
<p><i>Stop It Now!</i> has a six-step “Family Safety Plan” to help families identify their support network and create an environment to keep children safe from sexual abuse. Developmentally appropriate sexual behavior in children is described. The website describes warning signs for adults who may suspect a child has been sexually abused, and also lists signs to watch for in other adults who may be abusing children.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.stopitnow.org">http://www.stopitnow.org</a></p> <p>Stop It Now! has a help-line available (1-888-PREVENT) for individuals and families to call for support and access to resources in a confidential setting.</p>
<p><i>Keeping Children Safe from Abuse: Tips for Parents and Caregivers</i>, provides guidelines for opening discussions with children on topics from personal/body safety, to sexual abuse, to date rape. It also includes several school-based curricula options for preventing bullying and sexual violence.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.cfchildren.org/parents/parentindex/">http://www.cfchildren.org/parents/parentindex/</a></p> <p>The website provides several parent resources, including a series of articles.</p>

For more information on sexual violence go to:

**[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)**

# Resources for Families with Middle School-Aged Youth

(Ages 11-13)

Resource	Contact Information
<b><i>How to Protect Your Child from Child Abuse:</i></b> An insert in each Cub and Boy Scouts of America Handbook and <i>Time to Tell</i> (video) For Boys with Adult Leader Youth Protection Training available online.	<a href="http://www.BSA-IA.org">www.BSA-IA.org</a> 515-266-2135 800-999-SCOUT
<b><i>Cadette Girl Scout Handbook</i></b> from Girl Scouts of America: Also, <i>Staying Safe for girls</i> (on line) and <i>Studio 2B: Taking Charge</i>	<a href="http://www.GirlScouts.org">www.GirlScouts.org</a> or contact your local council
<b><i>Harassment Free Hallways: How to Stop Sexual Harassment in Schools:</i></b> A Guide for Students, Parents, and Schools from the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation.	<a href="http://www.aauw.org/ef/harass/index.cfm">http://www.aauw.org/ef/harass/index.cfm</a>
<b><i>American School Counselor Association:</i></b> (ASCA) is a worldwide nonprofit organization that supports school counselors' efforts to help students focus on academic, personal /social and career development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible member of society. This site contains information specifically directed towards parents and the general public.	<a href="http://www.schoolcounselor.org">www.schoolcounselor.org</a> and click on Public and Parents and then on "Articles for Parents" to reach the following site: <a href="http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?pl=327&amp;sl=130&amp;contentid=130">http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?pl=327&amp;sl=130&amp;contentid=130</a>
<b><i>Stay Safe Online:</i></b> Offers information for kids, teens, parents, and teachers on cyber bullying and other safety issues.	<a href="http://www.siecus.org/pubs/families/FAT_newsletter_V3N3.pdf">www.siecus.org/pubs/families/FAT_newsletter_V3N3.pdf</a>
<b><i>Safe Schools and Healthy Students Initiative:</i></b> This government site provides various youth and school violence prevention resources.	<a href="http://www.sshs.samhsa.gov/initiative/resources.aspx">www.sshs.samhsa.gov/initiative/resources.aspx</a>

## Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

A Resource for Iowa's Families



# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

Resource	Contact Information
<p><i>Families are Talking:</i> A newsletter that provides tips to help parents and caregivers talk with their children about sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.siecus.org/pubs/families/FAT_Newsletter_V3N3.pdf">www.siecus.org/pubs/families/FAT_Newsletter_V3N3.pdf</a> For additional newsletters and resources: <a href="http://www.siecus.org/pubs/pubs0004.html">http://www.siecus.org/pubs/pubs0004.html</a></p>
<p><i>Stop It Now!</i> has a six-step “Family Safety Plan” to help families identify their support network and create an environment to keep children safe from sexual abuse. Developmentally appropriate sexual behavior in children is described. The website describes warning signs for adults who may suspect a child has been sexually abused, and also lists signs to watch for in other adults who may be abusing children.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.stopitnow.org">http://www.stopitnow.org</a> Stop It Now! has a help-line available (1-888-PREVENT) for individuals and families to call for support and access to resources in a confidential setting.</p>
<p><i>Keeping Children Safe from Abuse: Tips for Parents and Caregivers,</i> provides guidelines for opening discussions with children on topics from personal/body safety, to sexual abuse, to date rape. It also includes several school-based curricula options for preventing bullying and sexual violence.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.cfchildren.org/parents/parentindex/">http://www.cfchildren.org/parents/parentindex/</a> The website provides several parent resources, including a series of articles.</p>

For more information on sexual violence go to:

**[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)**



# Resources for Families with High School-Aged Youth

(Ages 14-18)

Resource	Contact Information
<i>Senior Girl Scouts of America Handbook, Staying Safe for Girls</i> (on-line) and <i>Studio 2B: Taking Charge</i> .	<a href="http://www.GirlScouts.org">www.GirlScouts.org</a> or contact your local council
<i>Personal Safety Awareness</i> is a video for Youth 14-21 from Boy Scouts of America. Adult Leader Youth Protection Training available online.	<a href="http://www.BSA-IA.org">www.BSA-IA.org</a> 515-266-2135 800-999-SCOUT
<i>See It, Stop It, and Get Organized:</i> A web-site to help abusers, victims, and witnesses to help prevent relationship violence. Includes “Do’s & Don’ts,” risks and resources.	<a href="http://seeitandstopit.org">http://seeitandstopit.org</a>
<i>Harassment Free Hallways: How to Stop Sexual Harassment in Schools:</i> A Guide for Students, Parents, and Schools from the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation.	<a href="http://www.aauw.org/ef/harass/index.cfm">http://www.aauw.org/ef/harass/index.cfm</a>
<i>American School Counselor Association:</i> (ASCA) is a worldwide nonprofit organization that supports school counselors’ efforts to help students focus on academic, personal /social and career development so they achieve success in school and are prepared to lead fulfilling lives as responsible member of society. This site contains information specifically directed towards parents and the general public.	<a href="http://www.schoolcounselor.org">www.schoolcounselor.org</a> and click on Public and Parents and then on “Articles for Parents” to reach the following site: <a href="http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?pl=327&amp;sl=130&amp;contentid=130">http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?pl=327&amp;sl=130&amp;contentid=130</a>
<i>Safe Schools and Healthy Students Initiative:</i> This government site provides various youth and school violence prevention resources.	<a href="http://www.sshs.samhsa.gov/initiative/resources.asp">www.sshs.samhsa.gov/initiative/resources.asp</a>

## Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

A Resource for Iowa's Families



# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

Resource	Contact Information
<b><i>National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center</i></b> (NYPRC) serves as a central source for information and materials to prevent violence and suicide. The site links parents, teachers, researchers, and teens to materials designed specifically for those audiences.	<a href="http://www.safeyouth.org">www.safeyouth.org</a>
<b><i>What Is Abuse In Relationships?</i></b> Describes emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and is sponsored by the Domestic Violence & Incest Resource Centre (DVIRC).	<a href="http://dvirc.org.au/whenlove/infospace.htm">http://dvirc.org.au/whenlove/infospace.htm</a>
<b><i>Families are Talking:</i></b> A newsletter that provides tips to help parents and caregivers talk with their children about sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.	<a href="http://www.siecus.org/pubs/families/FAT_Newsletter_V3N3.pdf">www.siecus.org/pubs/families/FAT Newsletter V3N3.pdf</a> Additional newsletters and resources: <a href="http://www.siecus.org/pubs/pubs0004.html">http://www.siecus.org/pubs/pubs0004.html</a>
<b><i>Keeping Children Safe from Abuse: Tips for Parents and Caregivers,</i></b> provides guidelines for opening discussions with children on topics from personal/body safety, to sexual abuse, to date rape.	<a href="http://www.cfchildren.org/parentsf/parentindex/">http://www.cfchildren.org/parentsf/parentindex/</a>  The website provides several parent resources, including a series of articles.
<b><i>Teen Dating Violence:</i></b> Website and Brochure from the Washington State Attorney General	<a href="http://www.atg.wa.gov/violence/points.shtml">http://www.atg.wa.gov/violence/points.shtml</a>
<b><i>Teen CASA (Coalition Against Sexual Assault):</i></b> Provides helpful information on healthy relationships, actions to take, and advocacy for victims and their families.	<a href="http://www.nccasa.org/teen/index.htm">http://www.nccasa.org/teen/index.htm</a>

For more information on sexual violence go to:

**[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)**

# Resources for Families and Caretakers

Resource	Contact Information
<i>National Center for Missing and Exploited Children</i> offers information about recognizing signs in children who have been sexually exploited, and advice for parents on keeping their children safe from sexual abuse.	<a href="http://www.missingkids.com">www.missingkids.com</a>
<i>Childhelp USA</i> provides crisis counseling to adult survivors and child victims of abuse, offenders, and parents.	<a href="http://www.childhelpusa.org">www.childhelpusa.org</a> or e-mail: <a href="mailto:help@childhelpusa.org">help@childhelpusa.org</a>
<i>The National AD Council</i> provides a directory to common online phrases.	<a href="http://www.missingkids.com/adccouncil/lingo.html">www.missingkids.com/adccouncil/lingo.html</a>
<i>Stop It Now!</i> has a six-step “Family Safety Plan” to help families identify their support network and create an environment to keep children safe from sexual abuse. Developmentally appropriate sexual behavior in children is described. The website describes warning signs for adults who may suspect a child has been sexually abused, and also lists signs to watch for in other adults who may be abusing children.	<a href="http://www.stopitnow.org">http://www.stopitnow.org</a>  Stop It Now! has a help-line available (1-888-PREVENT) for individuals and families to call for support and access to resources in a confidential setting.
<i>Iowa Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce</i> offers several valuable links for parents on internet and cyber safety.	<a href="http://www.iowaicac.org">www.iowaicac.org</a>

For more information on sexual violence go to:

**[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)**

## Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

### A Resource for Iowa's Families



**Preventing  
Child and  
Youth  
Sexual  
Harassment,  
Abuse, and  
Assault**

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# Resources for Educators, Youth Leaders, and Youth Development Professionals

Publications Recognized and Used by the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Abuse	Website
<i>Bully Proof</i> — approved, 4th and 5th grades.	<a href="http://www.wcwonline.org/title42.html">http://www.wcwonline.org/title42.html</a>
<i>Quit it</i> — approved, K through 3rd grades.	<a href="http://www.efastcom.com/NEABookstore/control/productdetails?&amp;item_id=1881800">http://www.efastcom.com/NEABookstore/control/productdetails?&amp;item_id=1881800</a>
<i>Flirting or Hurting</i> — approved, 6th through 12th grades.	<a href="http://www.wgby.org/edu/flirt/fhmain.html">http://www.wgby.org/edu/flirt/fhmain.html</a>
<i>Gender Violence Gender Justice</i> — approved, 7th through 12th grades.	<a href="http://www.wcwonline.org/title_282.html">http://www.wcwonline.org/title_282.html</a>
<i>Expect Respect</i> — approved, 7th through 12th grades.	<a href="http://www.expect-respect.org.nz">http://www.expect-respect.org.nz</a>

The following information was taken from *Bully Free Schools Manual: Preventing Bullying and Harassment — A Support Manual for Iowa’s Sample District Harassment and Bullying Policy*. Contact the Iowa Department of Education to receive a copy of this manual.

BULLYING PREVENTION	Websites
The Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) sponsors a national campaign providing evidence-based information to students, parents, and school staff called <i>Take a Stand, Lend a Hand, Stop Bullying Now!</i>	<a href="http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov">http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov</a>
The Committee for Children provides a wealth of information on bullying and bullying prevention on their website, including programs, research, training opportunities, and helpful links.	<a href="http://www.cfchildren.org/bully.html">http://www.cfchildren.org/bully.html</a>

## Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

A Resource for  
Iowa’s Families



# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

BULLYING PREVENTION cont.	Websites
Bullying Online is a UK website with especially useful information on what parents can do. Although some of the information is geared towards British schools, the general approach recommended is equally useful for American users.	<a href="http://www.bullying.co.uk">http://www.bullying.co.uk</a>
The Safe and Responsive Schools websites provide listings of resources and web links on bullying prevention and other topics related to school violence prevention.	<a href="http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl/resources_bullying.html">http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl/resources_bullying.html</a> <a href="http://www.unl.edu/srs/links.html">http://www.unl.edu/srs/links.html</a>

BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS	Websites
<b>Blueprint for Violence Prevention: Book Nine. Bullying Prevention Program</b> describes a comprehensive bullying prevention program, gives empirical evidence on its effectiveness, provides timelines for implementation and includes program evaluation procedures. <b>Author(s):</b> Olweus, D. & Limber, S.	Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence University of Colorado at Boulder IBS #10 Campus Box 439 Boulder, CO 80309-0439 Fax: (303) 443-3297 <a href="http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/model/programs/BPP.html">http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/model/programs/BPP.html</a>
<b>Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program</b> is a school-wide approach to create a safe and respectful school climate that addresses bullying, providing step-by-guidance, implementation, and assessment tools, adult trainings, and student lessons. <b>Author(s):</b> Committee for Children	Committee for Children website: <a href="http://www.cfchildren.org/strf/strf/strindex/">http://www.cfchildren.org/strf/strf/strindex/</a>  Phone: 800-634-4449 Ext. 6223
<b>Bullyproof: A Teachers Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Fourth and Fifth Grade Students</b> contains eleven sequential lessons. Class discussions; role plays, case studies, writing exercise, reading assignments, art activities, and nightly homework, combine to give students the opportunity to explore and determine the fine distinctions between “teasing” and “bullying.” <b>Author(s):</b> Sjostrom, L. & Stein, N.D.	Wellesley Centers for Women Wellesley College 106 Central Street Wellesley, MA 02481 (781) 283-2500 Fax: (781) 283-2504 <a href="http://www.wcwonline.org/title42.html">http://www.wcwonline.org/title42.html</a>

BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS	Websites
<p><b>The Bully Prevention Handbook: A Guide for Principals, Teachers, and Counselors</b> describes a specific bullying prevention program in detail, as well as provides instructions, materials, evaluation tools, and checklists.  <b>Author(s):</b> Hoover, J.H. &amp; Oliver, R.</p>	<p>National Educational Service  Bloomington, IN 47404  (888) 763-9045 <i>or</i>  (812) 336-7700  Fax: (812) 336-7790</p>
<p><b>Bully Proofing Your School: A Comprehensive Approach for Elementary Schools</b> describes a comprehensive prevention program designed to stop bullying among elementary school students. It outlines staff training and classroom interventions.  <b>Author(s):</b> Garrity, C., Jens, K., Porter, W. Sager, N., Short-Camilli, C.</p>	<p>Sopris West  4093 Specialty Place  Longmont, CO 80504  Phone: (303) 651-2829  Fax: (303) 776-5934</p>
<p><b>No Bullying</b> is a program geared at teaching elementary and middle school students and staff how to appropriately deal with aggressive students who do not play fair.  <b>Author(s):</b> Beverly Title &amp; Lana S. Leonard</p>	<p>Teaching Peace  P.O. Box 412  Hygiene, CO 80533  <a href="mailto:info@teachingpeace.org">info@teachingpeace.org</a></p>

## Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

**A Resource for Iowa's Families**

# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

RESOURCES ON HARASSMENT	Websites
U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. The Office for Civil Rights enforces several federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance from the Department of Education.	<i>Sexual Harassment Resources:</i> <a href="http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/sexharassresources.html">http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/sexharassresources.html</a>
Iowa Civil Rights Commission. The Iowa Civil Rights Commission enforces civil rights compliance in the State of Iowa through compliance, mediation, advocacy, and education.	<a href="http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc">http://www.state.ia.us/government/crc</a>

*For additional support and/or information, contact your local Area Education Agency. Each agency has personnel trained in effective bullying-prevention programs and can provide guidance on the use of the anti-bullying manual mentioned above.*

For more information on sexual violence go to:

**[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)**



# References

*Information contained in this document has been drawn from a variety of sources including:*

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Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault Resources:

*Keep Children Safe: Raising Awareness of the Trauma of Child Sexual Abuse*

*Break the Silence About Sexual Violence* (Available in English and in Spanish)

*It's Not Your Fault: What you need to know about Sexual Assault*

*Preventing Bullying and Harassment: A Support Manual for Iowa's Sample District Policy on Bullying and Harassment*, Iowa Department of Education, 2005.

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**A Resource for  
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# Preventing Child and Youth Sexual Harassment, Abuse, and Assault

## A Resource for Iowa's Families

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*7 Steps to Protecting our Children, Darkness to Light*, [www.d2l.org](http://www.d2l.org)

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*Stop It*, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, [www.ncmec.org](http://www.ncmec.org)

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*Unmasking Sexual Con Games: Helping Kids Recognize and Protect Themselves from Sexual Harassment and Abuse, Set Healthy Personal Boundaries, and Develop Good Relationships* by Kathleen M. Sorensen and Ron Herron, 1998.

For more information on sexual violence go to:

**[www.icyd.org](http://www.icyd.org)**