



**A better
understanding,
A better
community**

**An
Information Guide
About Juveniles
Who Sexually Offend**

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Introduction

In 2005, the state of Wisconsin enacted **ACT 5**, giving law enforcement the discretion to provide the general public information pertaining to juveniles on the sex offender registry. It is believed that holding sexual offenders accountable for their whereabouts and activities will help decrease acts of sexual violence in our communities.

Although this law is an important step toward ending sexual violence in our communities, it is equally important to raise public awareness in identifying and preventing sexual violence that has not been reported to the authorities. It is also crucial to be informed and educated about ways in which we, as individual citizens, can help protect ourselves and our loved ones from sexual assault.

This brochure was created to provide basic information and clear up misconceptions on juveniles who sexually offend. Specifically, this pamphlet provides facts about juveniles who sexually re-offend and identifies risk factors in order to prevent sexual assault.

What You Need To Know

Is child sexual abuse really a **big** problem?

Statistics show that child sexual abuse occurs at an alarming rate. As many as one in three girls, and one in seven boys, will be sexually abused at some point in their childhood. About 40% of sexual assaults take place in the victim's own home, and 20% take place in the home of a friend, neighbor or relative.

Who is sexually abusing our children?

Most often, they are likely to be people we know, and frequently people we care about. Many times it is a family member or someone the victim met while at work, on the internet, at school or through an acquaintance.

Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000) revealed that:

- 93% of child sexual abuse victims know their abuser.
- 34% were family members and
- 58% were acquaintances

Were most juveniles who sexually offend, sexually abused as children?

Many juveniles who engaged in a sex offense were not sexually victimized as children. The self-reported rates of sexual victimization for juveniles who have engaged in a sex offense range from 20% to 55%. Several studies have shown higher rates of self-reported physical abuse rather than sexual abuse.

Are all juveniles who sexually offend equally dangerous?

No, some juveniles who sexually offend are more dangerous than others. According to research, the top factors related to increased risk for adolescent sexual recidivism include:

- Number of past sexual abuse victims
- Length of sexual offending
- Number of prior charged sex offenses
- Non-sexual, antisocial behavior

Do juveniles who sexually offend have the **same characteristics** as adult sex offenders?

No. Juveniles who engage in sex offenses differ from adult sex offenders in several ways.

They differ!

- Juveniles are less likely to re-offend sexually

- Juveniles engage in fewer abusive behaviors over shorter periods of time

- Juveniles typically engage in less aggressive sexual behavior

- Juveniles are more responsive to treatment than adult sex offenders, and do not appear to continue re-offending into adulthood

- Many juveniles do not have deviant sexual arousal and/or deviant sexual fantasies seen among some adult sex offenders

- Most juveniles do not meet the criteria to be diagnosed as a pedophile

- Most juveniles are not sexual predators



Are juveniles who commit sexual offenses more likely to sexually re-offend?

No. Most studies find that juveniles sexually re-offend at a base rate of **7.5–14%**. In addition, research has shown that recidivism rates drop significantly when juveniles are engaged in specialized treatment programs. (Caldwell, 2007; Worling, 2000)

Do all juveniles who commit a sexual offense have to be placed in a secure setting?

No, most juveniles who have sexually offended can be managed safely while in the community. However, juveniles that pose a greater risk to community safety are generally placed by the courts in a secure placement until they have shown that they have lowered their risk to sexually offend, and can be safely managed back in the community.



Is sex offender treatment effective in lowering recidivism?

Yes. Appropriate sex offender treatment programs can help identify and reduce an offender's risk profile. Research shows that sex offenders who successfully complete a treatment program re-offend (sexually and non-sexually) **less often** than those who do not complete a treatment program.

How does the Division of Juvenile Corrections assess risk level?

The Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) performs a comprehensive assessment on all youth who have been adjudicated for a sexual offense, and are court ordered into our care. The comprehensive assessment includes a review of information gathered from the committing county, including prior psychological, psychosexual and mental health evaluations, police reports and victim statements. Clinical evaluations are also conducted. Standardized assessments are used as a guide to identify an individual's risks and needs, develop treatment plans, establish levels of community supervision, and monitor individualized case management plans.

How can we keep our children safe from sexual abuse?

The community should continue focusing on providing early interventions to children and families. Some of the comprehensive approaches to providing early intervention and prevention entail equipping people with the necessary tools to detect signs of abuse, and having them teach their children to use protective measures.

► **Physical Signs of Sexual Abuse to Be Aware of:**

- Unexplained injury, pain, or irritation in the genital area
- Stained or bloody underclothing
- Continually complaining of headache or stomach aches
- Pregnancy
- Sexually Transmitted Disease

► **Behavior Signs of Sexual Abuse to Be Aware of:**

- Significant change in normal personality
- Persistent defiance or disobedience
- Missing school
- Struggling with school work, and grades starting to slip
- Unexplained or sudden fear of a particular person
- Unexplained or sudden fear of certain places
- Return to immature habits, like thumb sucking, bed-wetting, etc
- Sudden knowledge and/or display of sexual words/behaviors that are not appropriate to their age group including acting out sexual behavior with toys, animals, or people
- Any other sudden or unexplained change in a child's behavior

Resources

Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc.

600 Williamson St, Ste. N-2
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

phone (608) 257-1516

TTY (608) 257-2537

fax (608) 257-2150

e-mail wcasa@wcasa.org

Office of Crime Victim Services, Wisconsin Department of Justice

P.O. Box 7951
Madison, WI 53707

phone (608) 264-9497

toll free (800) 446-6564

This office provides financial assistance to eligible crime victims, funding to support victim assistance programs, and assistance to individual victims of crime.

Valuable Web Sites

Division of Juvenile Corrections Public Web Site

The Wisconsin Division of Juvenile Corrections does have a state-wide treatment directory that lists treatment providers by individual counties that specialize in working with juveniles who sexually offend for the state of Wisconsin.

www.wi-doc.com/index_juvenile.htm

General Sex Offender Public Website

Toll Free Access Line (800)398-2403

Search by name or zip code at www.widocoffenders.org

Most Wanted Website

www.mostwantedsexoffenders.wi.gov

National Sex Offender Registry

www.nsopr.gov

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<http://www.wi-doc.com>

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