

What can you do if it has already happened?

> Believe your child!

It takes a lot of courage for a child to talk about sexual abuse. Children do not usually make up sexual assaults, but tell the truth.

> Do not panic!

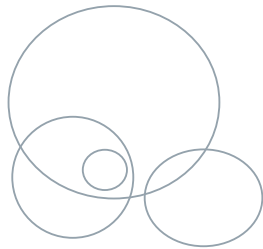
Panic and rash reactions may silence the child or warn the perpetrator. Take the time to consult a specialist on how you can best help the child.

> Side with the child!

The child is not to blame for what has happened. Do not accuse him or her, but praise them for having had the courage to tell you about it. Make it clear that you are siding with the child and give him or her all the support that is needed.

> Get help!

Not only the child, but you, too, need help. Should you discover that your child has been sexually abused, this is a shocking and painful experience for you. Do not keep it to yourself, but turn to an advice centre where you will be given the support that you need.



Advice centres

Turn to one of the following specialized advice centres or to a competent local victim aid centre or child protection organization.

Castagna, Beratungsstelle für sexuell ausgebeutete Kinder und weibliche Jugendliche (advice centre for sexually abused children and teenage girls), Zürich
044 360 90 40
mail@castagna-zh.ch

Opferberatungsstelle für gewaltbetroffene Jungen und Männer (advice centre for male victims of violence), Zürich
043 322 15 00
opferberatung@vzsp.org

Triangel, Beratungsstelle beider Basel für gewaltbetroffene Kinder und Jugendliche (advice centre for children and teenage victims of violence), Basel
061 683 31 45
info@triangel-basel.ch

Lantana, Fachstelle Opferhilfe bei sexueller Gewalt (victim aid centre for victims of sexual violence), Bern
031 313 14 00
beratung@lantana.ch

Limita Zürich

Fachstelle zur Prävention sexueller Ausbeutung von Mädchen und Jungen
Bertastrasse 35, 8003 Zürich, Fon: 044 450 85 20, Fax: 044 450 85 23
E-Mail: info@limita-zh.ch / Internet: www.limita-zh.ch
PC 80-30524-6

Opferberatungsstelle des Kantons Luzern (victim aid centre for the canton of Lucerne), Luzern
041 227 40 60
info@opferberatung-lu.ch

Anlauf- und Beratungsstelle Kinderschutzzentrum (contact point and advice centre, child protection centre), St. Gallen
071 243 78 02
info@gd-ksz3.sg.ch

Centre de consultation pour les victimes d'abus sexuels (advice centre for victims of sexual abuse), Genève
022 800 08 50 ctas@bluewin.ch

Centro Prisma, Lugano-Massagno
091 967 18 61
prisma@centroprisma.ch

This brochure is available in various languages and can be ordered from Limita. Further information and bibliographies (in German) are also available there.

Sexual violence against children

english/englisch

Information
for parents and
educators

Fear
paralyses –
awareness
protects

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Zürich

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What you should know about sexual exploitation

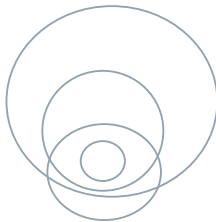
Children have the right to be protected from physical and mental violence, including sexual abuse. This right has been laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and applies to all children world-wide. Also in Switzerland, the law prohibits sexual activities between adults and children, in order to protect the children's development of their sexuality.

Most people think that sexual violence is not likely to occur among their own acquaintances, but only happens to others. However, it is a fact that sexual exploitation occurs in all cultures, religions and social classes. Children of any age can become victims of sexual exploitation. Approximately every fourth to fifth girl and every tenth to twelfth boy experience sexual assaults or sexual violence during their childhood.

Sexual violence against children takes on many forms. It includes coerced nakedness, watching child pornography, touching a child's genitals as well as rape.

The perpetrator is rarely the unknown villain who lures the child with a sweet. In about three quarters of the cases the children know their perpetrators. Children and adolescents are exploited by their coaches, teachers, priests or neighbours, or even by members of their own family, such as their father or stepfather, an uncle or a brother.

An adult who sexually abuses a child is taking advantage of his (or her) power over the child in order to satisfy his own needs. He takes advantage of the child's ignorance, as well as of the fact that the child trusts and depends on him. This is a severe violation of the child's physical and mental integrity and can have serious consequences.



Prevention is better than cure!

Warnings may scare a child. Information raises awareness. Informed and self-confident children are better protected from sexual violence than uninformed and insecure children. Only if the children's rights are respected and their worries taken seriously, can they be protected against sexual violence.

This is what boys and girls should learn from their parents and other adults they trust:

1. Your body belongs to you

You are somebody important, and you have a right to decide how, when, where and by whom you want to be touched.

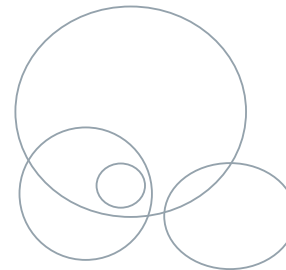
clothes or to touch your bottom, your vagina, your penis or your breast. There are adults who want you to touch their genitals. No one has the right to persuade or force you to do so, not even a person you know and love.

2. Your feelings count

You can trust your feelings. There are pleasant sensations that make you feel good. Unpleasant and strange sensations tell you that something is wrong. I am happy if you talk about your feelings, even if they are bothering.

3. There are pleasant and unpleasant ways of being touched.

There are ways of touching that feel good and make you happy. But there are also ways of touching that confuse or scare or even hurt you. Adults do not have the right to put their hands underneath your



4. You have a right to say no

If someone wants to touch you against your will, you have a right to say no and to defend yourself. Let us think about situations where it is OK to say no, and how you could best defend yourself.

5. There are good secrets and bad secrets

There are good secrets which are exciting and make you feel happy. Bad secrets seem dark and frightening. You should talk about those secrets that make you feel bad, even if you have promised not to do so. You can talk to me about anything that bothers you.

6. You have a right to get help

If a frightening secret or a problem bothers you, I would like you to talk about it, either to

me or to another person you trust. Do not stop talking about it before you have been helped. Let us think about who you could talk to about 'difficult things'.

7. It is not your fault

If you have been sexually abused, it was not your fault. No matter whether you tried to defend yourself or were too frightened to do so, and no matter what you have been told, it is always the perpetrator who is to blame for what happened to you.

Adults should not only teach these principles but also act accordingly in every-day life, so that their children will be better protected from sexual violence.

