



The Canadian Centre for Child Protection

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection is a charitable organization dedicated to the personal safety of all children. Our goal is to reduce child victimization by providing programs and services to the Canadian public. Our mission is to:

- Reduce the incidence of missing and sexually exploited children
- Educate the public on child personal safety and sexual exploitation
- Assist in the location of missing children
- Advocate for and increase awareness about issues relating to child sexual exploitation



THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR CHILD PROTECTION OPERATES NATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

cybertip.ca www.cybertip.ca

Cybertip.ca is Canada's tipline for reporting online child sexual exploitation, including child pornography (child abuse images), online luring, children exploited through prostitution, child trafficking, and child sex tourism.



kids in the know www.kidsintheknow.ca

Kids in the Know is a safety education program designed to empower children and reduce their risk of victimization. The program focuses on building self-esteem by teaching critical problem-solving skills, and uses a community-based approach to heighten awareness of child safety and protection strategies. Kids in the Know includes a curriculum for teachers, supplementary information on dealing with disclosures of abuse, training programs, books, puppets, games, and online activities for families.



www.commit2kids.ca

Commit to Kids is a program to help child-serving organizations create safe environments for children. Commit to Kids provides strategies, policies, and step-by-step tools to help organizations reduce the risk of sexual abuse and protect children in their care.

Research and advocacy:

This program gathers and compiles the latest trends and characteristics of child victimization in Canada. It provides the research basis for an advocacy role that supports programs, services, and legislation that promote child protection.

Public awareness and education are integrated into all of the work we do. Since 1985, we have also been providing missing children services in Manitoba as Child Find Manitoba.

Identifying Concerning Adult Behaviour

Research shows that individuals who sexually abuse children usually know their victims. Offenders come from all walks of life and cannot be picked out or identified by appearance. Pay attention to behaviours and situations that present risk rather than focus on an individual's character.

Concerning behaviour to pay attention to:

- Giving "special" attention to or displaying favouritism toward certain children
- Repeated use of poor judgment when interacting with children
- Normalizing or minimizing inappropriate interactions with children
- Distorting relationships with children (i.e. adults using children to meet their own emotional needs)
- Frequently initiating or creating opportunities to have exclusive time alone with a child (or certain children)
- Making others feel uncomfortable by ignoring social, emotional or physical boundaries or limits with adults and children
- Refusing to let a child set their own limits (i.e. may use teasing or belittling language to keep a child from setting limits)
- Excessive touching, hugging, kissing, tickling, wrestling with or holding children even when a child does not want this physical contact or attention
- Making sexual references or telling/sending sexual or suggestive jokes to children or in the presence of children
- Exposing children to adult sexual interactions
- Encouraging children to behave sexually towards each other
- Displaying preferences for children of a certain age or gender
- Communicating electronically with children outside of a work context

Responding to Concerning Behaviour

Focus on the behaviour, not person.

If you become aware of interactions between a child and an adult that seem concerning, remember to carefully identify the behaviours of concern as opposed to making assumptions about the adult's intentions. The focus should be on the behaviour, not on the person.

Consider the following:

i. **Use your instincts as a guide.**

Ask yourself whether a reasonable observer would feel comfortable witnessing the behaviour. Consider the context — is the behaviour an appropriate response to the child's needs, or does it fall outside those guidelines? Does the behaviour seem concerning for the situation and the age of the child?

Appropriate behaviour:

An educator who rubs a Grade 1 student's back to console him after falling and hurting himself on the playground.

Inappropriate behaviour:

A soccer coach who rubs a 16 year old's back while she is on the sidelines waiting to go into the game and persists even when the teen gestures for him to stop.

Consider the following:

- » Does the interaction between the child and the adult seem concerning?
- » Is the child singled out and favoured by the adult?
- » Does it make you or the child feel uncomfortable?
- » Have you or anyone else made a comment about or noticed the adult's concerning interaction with the child?

ii. **Control your reaction.**

Children look to an adult's response in these situations. It is important to act appropriately. Remain calm and focus on the child's needs.

iii. **Determine how the child feels about the behaviour.**

Find out whether the child feels uncomfortable, scared or confused. Keep in mind that the child may not reveal their true feelings for a variety of reasons, including: to avoid causing trouble, to protect the individual, out of embarrassment or shame, or they may enjoy the attention, etc.

iv. **Do not dismiss your concerns.**

A child may not see any issues or reasons for concern; that does not mean your concerns are misguided. Trust your instincts.

v. **Take action.**

Report the concerning behaviour to the organization (supervisor/superintendent) and, if warranted, to the appropriate authorities. You have the legal obligation to report any allegations or suspicions of child sexual abuse to the organization and to CAS.

If you observe or hear about concerning behaviour or a situation between an adult and a child that does not hit the threshold of sexual abuse, but is inappropriate and concerning, report your concerns to your supervisor/superintendent.



Tips for Handling Disclosures

LISTEN	CONTROL YOUR REACTION	DO NOT CORRECT LANGUAGE
<p>What a child needs when disclosing is for you to listen. A child fears an adult's reaction as well as not being believed. It takes incredible courage to share such an experience. Listen attentively.</p>	<p>Do not over – or underreact. Be aware of your facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice as the child will be sensitive to your reaction. A child can pick up on differences between what an adult is saying and how they are acting. If body language and verbal language do not match, the child will feel confused.</p>	<p>A child who has been sexually abused often uses slang or distasteful words for genitals and sexual acts. You should not try to educate a child about correct terms during a disclosure. Doing so could make the child feel bad, stupid or dirty, and might prevent the child from continuing to disclose.</p>
NEVER COMMUNICATE BLAME	PRAISE THE CHILD FOR TELLING	PROTECT THE CHILD AND OTHER CHILDREN FROM OVEREXPOSURE
<p>Never imply guilt such as "I told you so," or "This wouldn't have happened if you hadn't..." when the child discloses sexual abuse. Be non-judgmental, both verbally and non-verbally (gestures, facial expressions). A child who has been abused needs to understand that what happened was not their fault, and that they are not alone.</p>	<p>It takes tremendous courage to disclose sexual abuse and a child will often assume responsibility for the abuse. Assure the child that it is not the child's fault, and that they did the right thing by disclosing.</p>	<p>Respect the child's need for privacy and confidentiality, and make sure that no other children are around to hear the child's disclosure. Only adults who will be directly involved in taking action should be present.</p>
SHOW AFFECTION	AVOID MAKING PROMISES	REPORT TO A CHILD WELFARE AGENCY (CAS)
<p>Adults can be apprehensive to show affection to a child after hearing that they have been sexually abused. Research indicates that a child who discloses abuse needs appropriate affection, support, and understanding.</p>	<p>Promise the child that you will take quick steps to stop the abuse. Avoid making promises about matters over which you have no control (e.g. "I will make sure the offender goes to jail.").</p>	<p>In Canada, individuals who work with children are obligated to report suspicions of child abuse. Leave any "investigating" to law enforcement and child welfare agencies; information obtained that is thought to have been "coached" can jeopardize an investigation.</p>

