

# DEFINING & UNDERSTANDING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

## Tip Sheet

### What Is Considered Child Sexual Abuse?

If you are not exactly sure what sexual abuse is, you're not alone. All sexual touching between an adult and a child is sexual abuse. Sexual touching between children can also be sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse between children is often defined as when there is a significant age difference (usually 3 or more years) between the children, or if the children are very different developmentally or size-wise. Sexual abuse does not have to involve penetration, force, pain, or even touching. If an adult engages in any sexual behavior (looking, showing, or touching) with a child to meet the adult's interest or sexual needs, it is sexual abuse.

### Child Sexual Abuse includes harmful contact and non-contact behaviors.

#### Abusive physical contact or touching includes:

- Touching a child's genitals or private parts for sexual purposes
- Making a child touch someone else's genitals or play sexual games
- Putting objects or body parts (like fingers, tongue or penis) inside the vagina, in the mouth or in the anus of a child for sexual purposes



### Non-contact sexual abuse includes:

- Showing pornography to a child
- Deliberately exposing an adult's genitals to a child
- Photographing a child in sexual poses
- Encouraging a child to watch or hear sexual acts
- Inappropriately watching a child undress or use the bathroom

## Sexually Abusive Images Of Children And The Internet

As well as the activities described above, there is also the serious and growing problem of people making and downloading sexual images of children on the Internet. To view sexually abusive images of children is to participate in the abuse of a child, and may cause someone to consider sexual interactions with children as acceptable. People who look at this material need help to prevent their behavior from becoming even more serious.

## Share Prevention Tip Sheets in Your Community

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