

Recognizing and Preventing Child Molestation

Every time we read an article about child molestation, it is often a news article. That's because anything dealing with a man's sexual side is often viewed as taboo, and most people don't like to talk about it. Nevertheless, one out of every four girls will be molested by the time they are eighteen years old, and most of them by family members or family friends. Non-stranger molestations do happen, but they are few and far between. Now, as far as the findings go, one out of four girls have been molested. That's the system's findings, but I'll venture out to say that one out of every three girls (or more) over the age of eighteen have been molested, but only one out of four admit to it. That's because when a child is molested, fondled or raped by a family member, they are often too ashamed or too afraid to admit it. Many young girls and boys who do open their mouths are often quieted by a humiliated family who decides to deal with the issue themselves by confronting the predator as if that would cure the issue. Instead, the victim ends up feeling exposed and unprotected, and this often causes the victim to become more and more violent in an attempt to further protect themselves from the person who victimized them and from anyone that may consider victimizing them.

11 Signs That Your Child Has Been Molested

Any parent who has a girl should be extremely cautious and protective of that girl. All the same, nowadays, the boys have been extremely protected as well. Most parents don't know when their children have been prematurely exposed to sex, while others tend to ignore the signs and hope they'll go away. As a parent, you need to always be aware of who your child is around, and what is going on in your child's life. Even when children rebel, they want their parents to take control of the situation and help them to feel safe. Here are a few signs that your child may have been improperly handled.

1. Child retreats or refuses to be in the room with certain individuals. When a child has been mishandled, they will often feel uncomfortable around the people who mishandled them. This is because a child will experience fear and humiliation in the presence of that person, and will often fear giving off any wrong signals. If your child suddenly changes towards a person in your family or in your circle, start paying more attention to what's going on.
2. Child suddenly becomes disrespectful towards certain individuals. With children, you are either an adult or a child; there is no in between. When someone mishandles a child, the child will lose respect for them because a molester will often speak on a child's level in an attempt to relax the child. Additionally, some children do this to intentionally give off signals to you, the parent, that something is wrong. Sometimes, children fear approaching their parents, and they hope their parents will approach them to ensure them that they are loved and the issue will be handled appropriately.
3. Child suddenly becomes disrespectful towards their parents. Sometimes, children become angry at their parents when they've been molested because they are upset that the parent did not protect them. All the same, when the parent is unaware that their child is being molested, they

often behave in a friendly manner towards the predator. This causes the child to feel betrayed, unprotected and in danger. Of course, this brings about anger in the child towards their parents; especially if the predator is a boyfriend or girlfriend of one of the parents.

4. Child suddenly begins to show jealousy towards anyone who is with a certain person. When I was eight years old, one of my neighbors (who was 24) would jokingly refer to me as his girlfriend. After a while, he began to sit closer to me, hold my hand and even went so far as to kiss me. When he did finally get a girlfriend, I became jealous and wouldn't greet her. Please know that molesters are crafty and can manipulate children into believing that what they are doing is not wrong.
5. Child suddenly starts mating Ken and Barbie, or any of their toys. Children tend to act out with their toys what has been happening to them. This is a way of coping, and a way for the child to see outside of their body, what is going on when a person mishandles them.
6. Children suddenly want to visit a certain family member often, but appears changed every time they return. This is one thing most people don't know about molestation. When a child has been convinced that the act isn't a bad act, they will often ask to return to the predator's house. Most parents misjudge this behavior and don't look further into it.
7. Child starts fondling other children. When children have been fondled or mishandled, they will often do to other kids what has been done to them because they are being taught by the predator that the act is just a game.
8. Child's grades begin to decline. Sex and everything sexual is too overwhelming for a child to handle; therefore, many children withdraw into depression. Sex is a mature act, and when it is done to a child, it can confuse the child and the child will spend his/her days and nights trying to find ways to cope.
9. Child begins hanging with the wrong crowd. Now, some children do this out of rebellion, so don't just assume that your child has been molested just because they start becoming rebellious. Nevertheless, many children who have been preyed on tend to look for protection outside of their homes because they don't feel protected at home. After all, the predator is allowed in their homes in most cases; therefore, broken children look to other broken children and adults for protection.
10. Child suddenly begins to dress more masculine (for girls) or act more feminine (for boys). Girls tend to dress more masculine in an attempt to "turn off" their predators. Boys tend to act more feminine because they are being groomed and treated like a female by their predators. When a man molests a boy, he often takes the domineering male-like role, and assigns the submissive role to the prey. This can be confusing to a young man who is still trying to find his identity.
11. Child starts acting out sexually at a young age. Promiscuity is often a child trying to wash away the person who they didn't want with a person that they do want.

There are a lot more signs that a child is being molested or has been molested. But now, let's talk about prevention.

How can you prevent your child from being molested?

1. Talk to your child at minimum once a week in a one-on-one session. Parents tend to talk to their children in groups, and this lessens the chance that the child being preyed on will speak out against what is happening to them. This is because they are humiliated by the act, and may fear being teased by their siblings. Family meetings are good to discuss family events and problems, but every parent should talk to their children one-on-one for at least thirty minutes a week to ensure that all is well.
2. Make your child feel comfortable with you. All too often, a parent takes on the dominant role of being a parent, but will not take on the role of being a friend. Parents often feel that their children will lose respect for them if they befriend their children; therefore, many parents lose out on the opportunity to know their kids outside of dominating them. When your child feels comfortable talking to you, he or she will be more likely to tell you what's going on in their lives. When they are afraid to approach you, they will simply withdraw themselves. Ask your kids about their lives, favorite colors, favorite things to do and their plans for life. Talk to them about your life so they'll feel comfortable sharing their life with you. Let them know that you are there for them and will protect them from any predator; even if it's your spouse or romantic interest.
3. Let your children know that by telling you of someone molesting them or mishandling them, that the person will never have access to them again. A child needs to know that the "monster" will go away, and will not be a friend of the family anymore; even if that person is in the family. If a child fears that the person will be allowed back into your home or even allowed to call you, they will keep quiet because the "monster" still has access to them.
4. Teach your children at a young age where the "no-touch" zones are. I was really impressed by a friend of mine who had her daughter to quote the "no-touch" areas everyday before she sent her off to school. Her daughter would proudly quote, "Nobody is supposed to touch me here, here or there!" All the same, I could see how happy her daughter was to know that Momma cared enough to protect her.
5. Don't let your children sit on people and create space limits. This was something that a lot of fathers would come against, but since a lot of children are coming up in single-parent households, they aren't being taught not to sit on a man or woman's lap. This has to be taught to children, because girls especially tend to sit on the laps of men in an attempt to get money. We were simply taught to be cute, but of course, the child isn't thinking anything about sex. A predator, on the other hand, may misinterpret this behavior. All the same, teach your children that if, for example, a person is visiting, that they have to sit on a different couch or chair than that person.
6. Don't send your kids to sleep overs unless you know that you know that you know the household is safe. Be sure to pray on it! Always remember that molested kids tend to act out on other kids, what's been acted out on them. So, your child can go somewhere and not be molested by an adult, but be mishandled by another child who thinks the behavior is okay. This

is common with children, believe it or not.

7. Change the channel! Stop letting your kids listen to hip hop and any music that exploits sex! A lot of parents who listen to music that exploits sexuality, let their children listen to this music. This music ALONE relaxes a child's guards, and does the work of the molester. The molester doesn't have to do much work or much convincing these days because the music has done the work for him or her. When I was fifteen, and being molested by a family friend, he used R. Kelly to "set the mood."
8. Children dancing like strippers is NOT okay! Children should behave like children. If they aren't dancing for the Lord, they need to sit down and read a book. Some parents think it's cute to watch their children dance exotically. These same parents will invite their friends to come over and watch their children pop, dip and twerk all over the place. What they don't realize is that they themselves are grooming their children for sex.
9. Don't let any and everybody in your home; family or no family! All too often, parents welcome the predators into their homes. Because of this, the children trust the predators. After all, if he or she was so bad, why does Daddy and Mommy let them in the house? This is the reasoning of a child. When you have children, you need to cut down who comes to your home by more than 50%. Remember, the Word tells us to try the spirits to see if they are of God.
10. Let everyone know that you mean business! Your friends and family should know that you would never tolerate any mishandling of your children. All the same, your child should know that they are protected. When you let others know that you aren't a lazy parent, and that you have a relationship with your child where you ask questions, a child molester will often not take the risk to touch your child. Molesters tend to look for children who are being dominated or ignored at home, but are not being listened to.

What should you do if your child has been molested or mishandled?

1. Show regret. Children need to know that you are hurt by what has happened to them, and that you are sorry it happened.
2. Let them know the molester will be punished, and they will be protected from this day on out. If a child still feels threatened or that the molester will still have access to them, they will oftentimes become fearful. This fear has caused many children to commit suicide or become dangerous to themselves and others.
3. Never ever let the predator return to your home or call you. Sure, you have to forgive them, but your child has to know they are safe. If you shake hands with the enemy, the child will recognize you as their enemy.
4. Be attentive, and let your child know that you will be there, patient and loving throughout the healing process. Let them know that you will help them no matter how long their healing takes.
5. Don't rush the healing process, and never assume that your child is using their pain as a crutch. The process is no easy one, and children who feel rushed to heal often do not heal. Instead, they learn to put on an act just to pacify their parents. Remember, any open wounds can set up an

infection. You need to cover any wound that exposes itself, and locate any hidden wounds that may be hiding behind pride, anger and humiliation.

6. Restore the child's value to them. Children who are molested often feel devalued, and lose respect for themselves and their bodies. Pray the soul tie off of them, and continue to let them know that they are new again. Teach them to respect their bodies, and never treat them like damaged goods.
7. Don't overdo it. Children who have been molested are oftentimes humiliated about what happened. If you keep coming at them about the incident, they'll often clam up and regret telling you. Always remember that your child wants to return to normal, or find a new normal. They don't want an overly emotional parent who keeps reminding them of what happened or treating them like a victim. Even though they were victims of abuse, most children want to feel like overcomers...not victims. It is always good to remind them of their strength and tell them how proud you are of them that they took whatever steps they did to stop or prevent the abuse. Also let them know that they will be able to help other children who have been victimized. This helps them to find their strength in their hour of weakness.
8. Don't go on a guilt trip. Children will often see your pain as a result of their actions; not the molesters. They need to see that you feel bad, but they don't need to see you as weak. In this hour, they need to see your strength. This also means that you shouldn't go out and do things out of guilt. Some parents, for example, go out and buy their children everything they want to compensate for what happened to them. Instead of helping them, the parent ends up giving them "reminders" of what happened because the child will recognize each gift as something given to them because of what happened to them. Therefore, those tennis shoes may remind your son of what happened, or that purse may serve as a constant reminder to your daughter of what happened.
9. Close the door of your home from here on out. What's amazing is the parents of victimized children often close their doors to the molesters, but open their doors to new people. This creates an unsafe environment for the child, and reassures those insecurities that rise up in a child. Learn to be alone and stop feeling that you need people around you to function. Your child's safety should come before your feelings of loneliness.
10. If you host a sleep over, do not allow your child to sleep in the bed (or in the same room if you can help it) with other children. Believe it or not, girls do molest girls and boys do molest boys; especially when they themselves have been molested.
11. Be a better parent. Let's face it. When a child is molested, it's often because there was an open door that created an environment or an opportunity for the act to happen. Don't live in the guilt, but learn from the experience.
12. Finally, be proactive in protecting your children. Most parents are active, instead of proactive. They will "act" when their child has been mishandled, but they aren't proactive in ensuring that their child will never be molested or mishandled. A child needs a proactive parent, because once the child's innocence has been taken away, there are no prison sentences, fist blows, bullet

wounds or tears that can recover their innocence. Stop waiting to defend the children when they really need protection.