

# 5 SIGNS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

About 1 in 4 girls  
& 1 in 13 boys  
experience  
childhood sexual  
abuse.\*

Many child survivors do not tell an adult what happened to them. That's why it's important for caring adults to recognize the signs of sexual abuse and protect children from harmful situations.

## 5 SIGNS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE:

### 1. A child doesn't want to spend time with someone close to them.

Many perpetrators are someone that the child knows and trusts.

### 2. Sudden changes in emotions and personality.

Most children have mood swings, but drastic personality changes indicate that something is wrong. Pay attention to any new aggression, shyness, or difficulty trusting others.

### 3. Physical signs of abuse.

Unexplained bruises, bumps and scratches, as well as complaints of pain in areas of their body or difficulty walking and sitting can indicate signs of abuse.

### 4. Showing inappropriate sexual behavior.

While many children will naturally show interest and curiosity about bodies and sex, children who have been abused may exhibit sexual behavior that is inappropriate for their age.

### 5. A child's own words.

A child may drop hints that point to abuse. Young children may also disclose abuse on accident, so it is important to pay attention to what a child says.

*Note: This is not an exhaustive list. Not every child survivor will demonstrate these behaviors.*

## WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.

If you suspect that a child in your life is being abused, be sure to listen to them and believe them. Cleveland Rape Crisis Center is here to support you and the child along your healing journeys.

To learn more about preventing and responding to child sexual abuse, request an education program by emailing [educationoutreach@clevelandrcc.org](mailto:educationoutreach@clevelandrcc.org) today.

\*Pereda, N., Guilera, G., Forns, M., & Gómez-Benito, J. (2009). The prevalence of child sexual abuse in community and student samples: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 29, 328–338. doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2009.02.007