

# Child Sexual Abuse Prevention During the COVID-19 Pandemic

While early data shows that reports of abuse have dropped during the coronavirus pandemic, experts are concerned that abuse may actually be increasing.<sup>1</sup> A focus on prevention—equipping families with the skills to start safety conversations and create comfortable environments where kids can ask questions, and even disclose abuse—is more important than ever.



## What the Research Says

**1 in 4 girls & 1 in 20 boys**

report experiencing sexual abuse by age 18<sup>2</sup>

Children who are informed about their bodies and who feel comfortable talking openly with a caring adult are **less likely to be abused** and more likely to disclose abuse if it happens<sup>3</sup>

In **90%** of cases, sexually abused children know their abuser<sup>4</sup>

Many parents and caregivers are **reluctant to educate their children** about sexual abuse because they view it as an uncomfortable topic to discuss<sup>5</sup>

## The Impact of the Pandemic



In 2020, official reports of **child abuse fell by an average of 40 percent** compared to 2019<sup>6</sup>



Data from various abuse prevention hotlines shows a striking **increase in calls and record requests for services**<sup>7</sup>



Educators are among the **most frequent reporters** of suspected child abuse.<sup>8</sup> With many students still in remote settings, this adds urgency to prioritizing prevention.

## Starting the Conversation

The **Hot Chocolate Talk® How-to Guides** help parents and caregivers navigate and normalize these vital safety conversations.

Available to download at [HotChocolateTalk.org](https://HotChocolateTalk.org), our free research-based guides contain **practical advice and age-appropriate conversation starters** to help parents and caregivers talk with kids about personal safety.



## Connect with an Expert

Schedule an interview with child sexual abuse prevention expert **Dr. Tia Kim, PhD**. Dr. Kim is Committee for Children's vice president of education, research, and impact.



## Media Contact

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