

# WHY KIDS DON'T TELL

## SOME COMMON REASONS

**There are many reasons why children don't tell anyone about sexual abuse. Some common reasons are:**

- They've been taught to obey adults.
- They've promised to keep the abuse secret.
- They've been bribed to keep it a secret.
- They've been threatened by the offender to keep it a secret and are scared to tell.
- They feel guilty because they believe the abuse is their fault.
- They're ashamed to tell.
- They're confused because the offender is someone they know and trust.
- They've been convinced that the abuse is normal or okay.
- They're too young to know the abuse isn't appropriate—especially if it's done by someone they know and trust.
- They haven't been taught that the abuse isn't okay.
- They don't know the words to use to tell.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP CHILDREN TELL

If you want your children to feel comfortable enough to tell you about sexual abuse, the most important thing to do is to [talk to them about it](#). Many of the reasons children don't tell can be avoided by talking to your child—about everything from the [correct names for private body parts](#) to what a secret is and [why it shouldn't be kept](#).

And adults need education, too. You can help protect your child by learning as much as you can about [child sexual abuse](#), [who the offenders are](#), and [how to respond](#) if your child tells you about abuse.

It also helps if children learn about private body parts safety in school. [You can encourage your child's school to teach a personal safety curriculum](#). This also helps children understand that they can tell teachers or other adults at school. This is sometimes easier than telling an adult at home, especially if the abuser is a member of the family. Studies show that learning about sexual abuse at school doesn't result in children making false reports.

And last but not least, make sure your children know that if they do tell, you'll believe them.



**HOT CHOCOLATE TALK**  
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION

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