

## Act to Heal the Sexually Abused Child

Sexual abuse is happening to three million children in the U.S. - that means in an average eighth grade classroom of 30 children, six children are currently being sexually abused.

Act:

1. View child sexual abuse as a health problem.
2. Be the capable adult who will help a child with this problem.
3. Protect the child physically. Separate the child from his or her abuser.
4. Protect the child emotionally:
  - a. It is NEVER the child's fault, repeat this fact often to the child.
  - b. As a parent, say you will always love the child. Show the child that this is true with words and behavior.
  - c. Tell the child that very likely, other children in the classroom have this problem.
  - d. Tell the child that very likely the abuser has a health problem, and may need medicine and other treatments.
  - e. Let the child know that he or she never has to be in the same room with the abuser - even a father, brother, uncle - if the child doesn't wish it.
  - f. Take the child to a therapist who specializes in the treatment of sexually abused children.
  - g. Protect the child victim, especially boy victims, from developing a sexual interest in younger children with a second-step to good health. Be sure, with the help of a sex-specific therapist, that a boy victim (especially a boy who has been repeatedly sexually abused) does NOT develop a sexual interest in younger children. Be aware that this sexual interest in younger children might lie dormant until the onset of puberty and then become a health problem for the child

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