

Child Victims of Sexual Assault: Focus on Maryland



- According to the United States Census, there are 1,359,334 children in Maryland. *US Census, 2012*
- The Maryland Department of Human Resources, Child Protective Services (CPS), receives reports of “sexual abuse of minors.” “Sexual abuse” cases involve perpetrators who are family or household members, or someone with care, custody, or supervision of a minor child. *Criminal Law Art. 3-602*
- Other types of sex crimes against children are addressed only by law enforcement, without involving CPS. Cases where the perpetrator is not a family or household member, or someone with care, custody, or supervision of a minor child are categorized as general sex crimes such as rape or sexual offense.
- There were 3,819 cases of “sexual abuse of a minor” investigated by CPS in 2005, 3,596 in 2004, and 4,074 in 2003 (the last three years for which data are available). *Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR), Child Protective Services (CPS), 2006.*
- Only approximately twelve percent of child sexual assault cases (any relationship between perpetrator and child) are reported. *Hanson, R.F., Resnick, H.S., Saunders, B.E., Kilpatrick, D.G., and Best, C., 1999, Child Abuse and Neglect, “Factors Related to the Reporting of Childhood Sexual Assault.”*
- Using an estimate of 3,830 sexual abuse of a minor cases investigated per year in Maryland (the average of 2003-2005 CPS data) and the national estimate that only twelve percent of all child sexual assaults are reported, we can estimate that **there are at least 31,930 cases of child sexual assault annually in the state of Maryland, and the system fails to learn about approximately 28,100 of them.** These numbers may even be higher because the data on reported/investigated child sexual assault cases in Maryland only includes “sexual abuse of a minor” cases as defined above.

Nationally:

- Seventy-three percent of child survivors do not tell anyone about the abuse for at least a year, 45 percent of victims do not tell anyone for at least 5 years, and some never disclose. *Broman-Fulks, 2007, Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, “Sexual Assault Disclosure in Relation to Adolescent Mental Health: Results from the National Survey of Adolescents.”*
- Sixty-seven percent of all victims of sexual assault reported to law enforcement agencies were juveniles (under the age of 18); 34 percent of all victims were under age 12. One of every seven victims of sexual assault reported to law enforcement agencies were under 6. *Snyder, 2000, Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident, and Offender Characteristics, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice*
- More than 54 percent of adult female survivors and nearly 71 percent of adult male survivors were first raped before their 18th birthdays. *Tjaden and Thoennes, 2006, Extent, Nature, and Consequences of Rape Victimization: Findings From the National Violence Against Women Survey, National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice*
- Less than 3 percent of child sexual assault perpetrators serve jail time for their offense. *Darkness to Light, 2011, How Many Child Sexual Abuse Perpetrators Go to Jail?*
- Forty-five percent of pregnant teens report a history of child sexual abuse. *Noll et al., 2009, Journal of Pediatric Psychology, “Childhood Sexual Abuse and Adolescent Pregnancy: A Meta-Analytic Update.”*