

Incidence of Child Sexual Abuse in Maryland

Introduction

- According to The Annie E. Casey Foundation and Maryland Center on Economic Policy, in 2024 there were **1,371,237** children under 18 years of age living in Maryland.¹ Of this total:
 - **329,245** children were between the ages of 14 and 17 years,
 - **692,461** children were between the ages of five and 13 years, and
 - **349,531** children were under five years old.²
- The Maryland Department of Human Resources, Child Protective Services (CPS), receives reports of “sexual abuse of minors” in Maryland.
- According to the Maryland Criminal Code, **Sexual abuse** means “an act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a minor, whether physical injuries are sustained or not.”³ Sexual abuse involves offenders who are household or family members or someone who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervising a minor.⁴
 - Examples of sexual abuse include incest, rape, a sexual offense in any degree, and any other sexual conduct that is a crime.⁵

Maryland Statistics

- In 2023, there were **1,614** reported cases of child sexual abuse in Maryland.⁶
 - This is lower than the number of reported cases in 2022 and 2021.⁷
 - In 2022, there were **1,974** cases of child sexual abuse in Maryland.⁸
 - In 2021, there were **2,066** cases of child sexual abuse in Maryland.⁹

U.S. Statistics

- According to a review of 27 quantitative studies on child sexual abuse disclosures between 2000 and 2022, it was found that:¹⁰
 - **35.9%** of child sexual abuse victims did not disclose the abuse when they were interviewed in a forensic setting.
 - Child sexual abuse survivors were **30 times** more likely to disclose the abuse in informal settings than in formal settings such as reports to child protective services or the police.
 - Male survivors of child sexual abuse were **less likely** to disclose the abuse due to societal fear and stereotypes.
 - Survivors with male perpetrators were **more likely** to disclose the abuse compared to survivors with female perpetrators.
 - Survivors who had a relationship with the perpetrator were **less likely** to disclose compared to survivors who did not have a relationship with the perpetrator.
- According to data collected by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)'s CyberTipline, between October 2013 and April 2016:¹¹

¹ The Annie E. Casey Foundation & Maryland Center on Economic Policy. (2025, July). “Child population by age group: Maryland.” KIDS COUNT Data Center. Retrieved December 12, 2025, from <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/8376-child-population-by-age-group#detailed/2/any/false/2545,1095,2048,574,1729,37,871,870,573/595,383,384,140/16972,16973>.

² Ibid.

³ MD Crim Law Code § 3-602 (2013). Retrieved December 12, 2025, from <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Laws/StatuteText?article=gcr§ion=3-602>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Children’s Bureau. (2025). “Child Maltreatment, 2023.” Retrieved December 10, 2025, from <https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/cm2023.pdf>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ HHS, ACF, Children’s Bureau. (2024, January 29). “Child maltreatment 2022.” Retrieved December 11, 2025, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/report/child-maltreatment-2022>

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Latiff, M. A., Fang, L., Goh, D. A., & Tan, L. J. (2024). “A Systematic Review of Factors Associated with Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse.” Journal of Child Abuse & Neglect. Retrieved December 15, 2025, from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0145213423005525>

¹¹ National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). (2016). “Trends Identified in CyberTipline Sextortion Reports.” Retrieved December 16, 2025, from <https://www.missingkids.org/content/dam/missingkids/pdfs/ncmec-analysis/sexortionfactsheet.pdf>

- **84%** of female children and **53%** of male children, in the United States, were blackmailed for sexually explicit content.
- **13%** of the NCMEC's CyberTipline sexual exploitation reports indicated that the child victim engaged in some type of negative outcome because of the victimization.
 - Of these reports, about **1 in 3** children reportedly engaged in self-harm, threatened suicide, or attempted suicide because of the victimization.
- According to data collected by the NCMEC's CyberTipline, between January 2015 and December 2015:¹²
 - **78%** of child victims were girls, **13%** of child victims were boys, and **9%** of child victims' gender identity was unknown.
 - Child victims' ages ranged from one to 17 years, with the average age being 15 years.
 - About **1 in 4** reports (**23%**) indicated that an offender had additional child victims.
 - Of the total reported offenders, **98%** of offenders were unknown to the child victim in real life, outside of the online platform, and 2% of offenders were known.
 - Of the known offenders, **53%** were family members.
 - Of the reported familial offenders, **57%** were parents, stepparents, and siblings, and **37%** were more distant family members such as aunts, uncles, and cousins.
 - The unknown offenders commonly included family friends, former intimate partners, and acquaintances in the community.

Reporting Suspected Child Sexual Abuse in Maryland

If you or someone you know suspects child abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency or [department of child protective services](#). The [Darkness to Light National Child Sexual Abuse Helpline](#) can provide local resources and information at 1-866-FORLIGHT or via a crisis textline (Text "LIGHT" to 741741). You can also contact the [ChildHelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline](#) at 1-800-422-4453 for 24/7 support via phone and text. For more information or additional resources, visit <https://mcasa.org/prevention/preventing-child-sexual-abuse>.

¹² NCMEC. (2017). "The Online Enticement of Children: An In-Depth Analysis of CyberTipline Reports." Retrieved December 16, 2025, from <https://www.missingkids.org/content/dam/missingkids/pdfs/ncmec-analysis/Online%20Enticement%20Pre-Travel1.pdf>