

CHILD SEX OFFENDERS

Statistics

- Texas is home to 54,402 registered sex offenders, second only to California. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, July 2006.
- In 2006, 61.2% of child sex offenders were parents, partners of parent or relatives; 31.8% were other/unknown; 4.4% were friend or neighbors and 2.8% were caregivers or guardians. US Department of Health and Human Services, Child Maltreatment 2006. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/index.htm.
- Two-thirds of sex offenders in state prisons committed offenses against children. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2007 Annual Report.
- There are more than 620,000 registered sex offenders in the US, and at least 100,000 noncompliant and missing sex offenders. Ibid.
- 96% of all child sex offenders are male. For victims under six, 12% of offenders were female. Snyder, H. Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement, National Center for Juvenile Justice, BJS, 2000.
- A study reveals that 17.5% of sample sex offenders committed another sexual offense. Hanson, R.K. (2002). "Recidivism and Age: Follow up Data from 4,673 Sex Offenders." Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 17 (10): 1046-1062.
- 23% of offenders are under 18 and 77% are adults. 16% of juvenile offenders are under 12. 40% of offenders of victims under six and 39% of offenders of victims 6 -11 were themselves juvenile. Ibid.

Overview of the Issue

- There is no typical child molester, but common characteristics are men over 25 who are single, live alone, have much younger friends, relate to children or have childish hobbies. Child sex offenders are usually not strangers to their victims and tend to be involved in child-focused activities.
- There tend to be two types of child molesters. Situational molesters relate to children as peers, are immature and socially inept. They choose victims by accessibility and will use coercion, manipulation or force. Preferential molesters offend often, with multiple victims at once and participate in child sex rings. They groom victims by seeking out the most vulnerable, befriending them and giving them attention and affection to gain their trust.
- Common sex offender behaviors: secrecy, rationalization, selfishness, manipulation, friendliness, exploitation, testing boundaries and resistance to change. To manage their behavior and prevent re-offending, child molesters must have external controls like supervision, registration, child safety zones, electronic monitoring and community notification in addition to internal controls like identifying triggers and deviant thoughts.

What You Can Do

- Learn how to access your local registered sex offender database (<http://records.txdps.state.tx.us>).
- Teach your child safety measures and develop a family code for emergencies. Most victims know their offenders. Be active in your community and know your neighbors.
- If you suspect a child or youth has sexual behavior problems, find help. They will not get better without treatment and will escalate in violence and deviance. Alert the authorities or crisis intervention center.

Impact on Survivors

- Child sexual assault victims are robbed of a childhood and suffer lifelong effects from the trauma. They are often manipulated emotionally and psychologically; and have intense self blame, shame and guilt.
- Assaults against juveniles are more likely to result in arrest than those against adults, partially because child survivors lack the option of non-cooperation. Assaults against victims under six years old are the least likely to result in arrest, often due to the offender's young age, who is identified but not arrested.

Quotable

Child molesters are justifiably considered the most heinous of offenders. They seek out and exploit vulnerability and use calculating and cowardly methods. Protect children. Err on the side of caution and report any suspicious behavior.