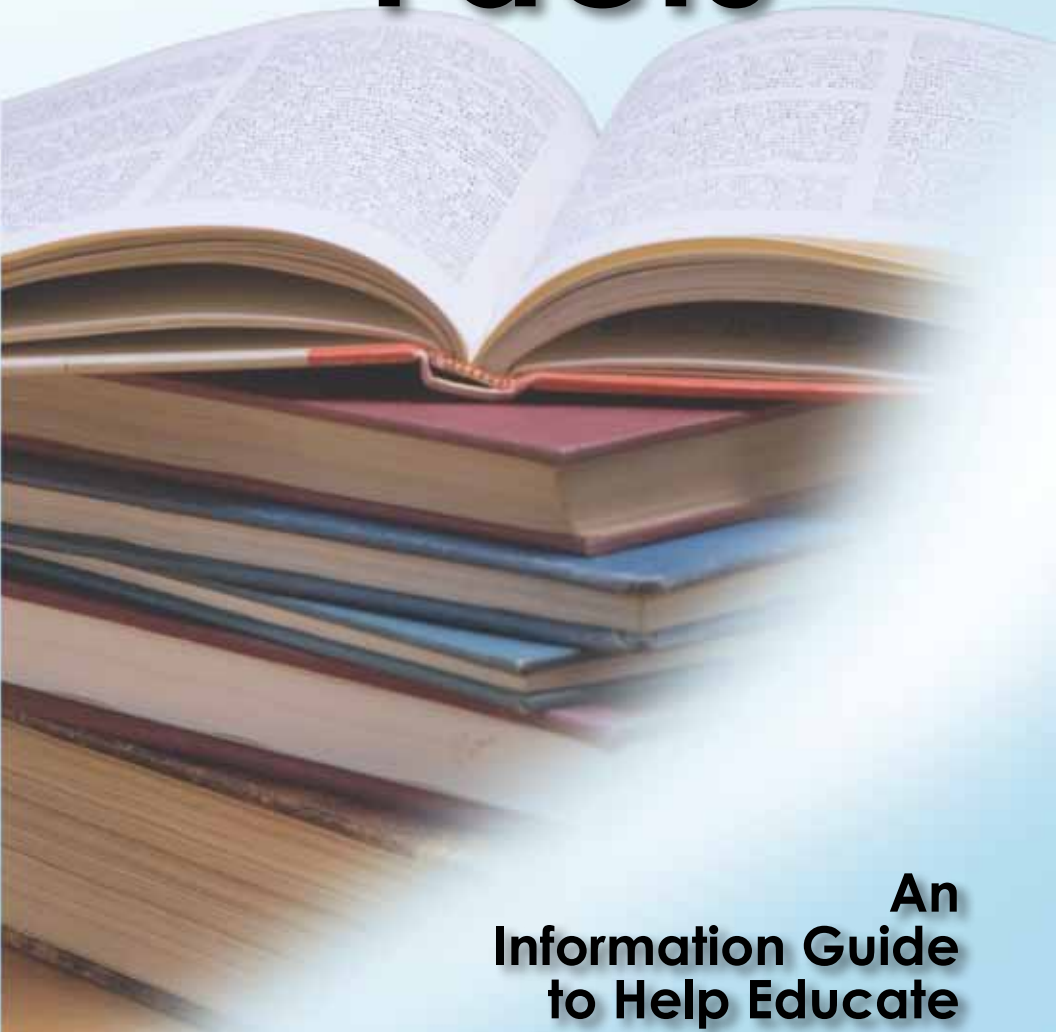


Know the Facts



An
Information Guide
to Help Educate
School Personnel
About Juveniles
Who Sexually Offend

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Introduction

In 2005, the state of Wisconsin enacted **ACT 5**, giving law enforcement the discretion to provide the general public information pertaining to juveniles on the sex offender registry. It is believed that holding sexual offenders accountable for their whereabouts and activities will help decrease acts of sexual violence in our communities.

Although this law is an important step toward ending sexual violence in our communities, it is equally important to raise public awareness in identifying and preventing sexual violence that has not been reported to the authorities. It is also crucial to be informed and educated about ways in which we, as individual citizens, can help protect ourselves and our loved ones from sexual assault.

This brochure was created to help educate school personnel on the facts about juveniles who have sexually offended, while offering strategies to promote ongoing safety within the school.



Who is sexually abusing our children?

Most often, they are likely to be people we know, and frequently people we care about. Many times it is a family member or someone the victim met while at work, on the internet, at school or through an acquaintance.

Were most juveniles who sexually offend **abused** as children?

Many juveniles who engaged in a sex offense were not sexually victimized as children (Hanson, 1988). The self-reported rates of sexual victimization for juveniles who have engaged in a sex offense range from 20% to 55%. Several studies have shown higher rates of self-reported physical abuse rather than sexual abuse.

The Facts:

A Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000) report on sexual assaults of young children revealed that:

- ▶ **93%** of child sexual abuse victims know their abuser
- ▶ **34%** were family members and
- ▶ **58%** were acquaintances

Can juveniles who have committed a sexual offense attend public or private school?

The majority of juveniles who have engaged in a sexual offense can attend public or private schools, and participate in normal academic and extra-curricular activities. The **supervising agency** (county or state) will develop rules of supervision for the youth based on their individualized case and risk factors. These restrictions can be incorporated into a safety plan by the schools.

How are schools notified about a juvenile who has been adjudicated for a sexual offense?

The court clerk will notify the school board of the school district, the governing body of the private school, or the designee of the school board or governing body in which the juvenile is enrolled **within 5 days** after the date on which the dispositional order is entered (§ 938.396 [2g] [m]).

What information can school personnel receive in regards to a sexual offense adjudication?

This greatly depends on the school district. In general, the nature of the court order determines what school personnel will be notified. In many school districts across the state, initial notification is sent to the districts' Security Director who then notifies the principal in the school the youth will be or currently is attending. Based on the nature of the offense, the principal will make a determination on a "**need to know basis**" as to which staff should be given the information based on their particular involvement with the youth. Public or private school personnel that obtain such information shall keep the information **confidential** as required under § 118.125 and § 938.78 (2) (b). Breaching confidentiality is a violation of state statute and could cause harm, hysteria, fear, embarrassment, re-victimization, and/or parental outrage.

What are **some effective strategies** for school personnel to be aware of when dealing with a juvenile who has sexually offended?

School administrators may want to establish a general safety plan to outline how they are going to effectively manage an adolescent sex offender within their school. Establishing a **collaborative approach** by working with designated school personnel, probation and parole agents or county delinquency staff, parents/guardians, and identified community supports is essential in addressing safety within the school.

During regularly scheduled activities, what **type of supervision** is needed for a juvenile who has sexually offended?

School administration should **avoid** applying a “one-size fits all” approach to juveniles within their schools who have been involved in a sexual offense. The school’s supervision plan **should be individualized** and based on the specific dynamics of the sexual offense that was committed.

Did you know?

Safety **problems may increase** when confidentiality is breached.

Are juveniles who commit sexual offenses likely to sexually re-offend?

No. Most studies find that juveniles sexually re-offend at a base rate of 7.5-14%. Nearly 90% of all previous juvenile offenders will not sexually re-offend. In addition, research has shown that recidivism rates drop significantly when juveniles are engaged in specialized treatment programs. (Caldwell, 2007; Worling, 2000)

Are all juveniles who sexually offend equally dangerous?

No, some juveniles who sexually offend are more dangerous than others. According to research, the top factors related to increased risk for adolescent sexual recidivism include:

- ▶ Number of past sexual abuse victims
- ▶ Length of sexual offending
- ▶ Number of prior charged sex offenses
- ▶ Non-sexual, antisocial behavior

Is sex offender treatment effective in lowering recidivism?

Yes. Appropriate sex offender treatment programs can help to identify and reduce an offender's risk profile. Research shows that sex offenders who successfully complete a treatment program re-offend (sexually and non-sexually) **less often** than those who do not complete a treatment program.



Most juveniles are **not** sexual predators, **nor** do they meet the criteria as a pedophile.

Did you know?

Do juveniles who have offended sexually have the same **characteristics** as adult sex offenders?

Juveniles who engage in sex offenses differ from adult sex offenders in several ways.

- ▶ Juveniles are more responsive to treatment than some adult sex offenders and do not appear to continue re-offending into adulthood
- ▶ Juveniles have lower sexual recidivism rates
- ▶ Juveniles engage in fewer abusive behaviors over shorter periods of time
- ▶ Juveniles typically engage in less aggressive sexual behavior
- ▶ Many juveniles do not have deviant sexual arousal and/or deviant sexual fantasies that some adult sex offenders have

How can we keep our children **safe** from sexual abuse?

The community should continue focusing on providing early interventions to children and families. Some of the comprehensive approaches to providing early intervention and prevention entail equipping people with the necessary tools to detect signs of abuse, and having them teach their children to use protective measures.

▶ **Physical Signs of Sexual Abuse to Be Aware of:**

- ▶ Unexplained injury, pain, or irritation in the genital area
- ▶ Stained or bloody underclothing
- ▶ Continually complaining of headache or stomach aches
- ▶ Pregnancy
- ▶ Sexually Transmitted Disease

▶ **Behavior Signs of Sexual Abuse to Be Aware of:**

- ▶ Significant change in normal personality
- ▶ Persistent defiance or disobedience
- ▶ Missing school
- ▶ Struggling with school work, and grades starting to slip
- ▶ Unexplained or sudden fear of a particular person
- ▶ Unexplained or sudden fear of certain places
- ▶ Return to immature habits, like thumb sucking, bed-wetting, etc
- ▶ Sudden knowledge and/or display of sexual words/behaviors that are not appropriate to their age group including acting out sexual behavior with toys, animals, or people
- ▶ Any other sudden or unexplained change in a child's behavior

Resources

Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc.

600 Williamson St, Ste. N-2
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

phone (608) 257-1516

TTY (608) 257-2537

fax (608) 257-2150

e-mail wcasa@wcasa.org

Office of Crime Victim Services, Wisconsin Department of Justice

P.O. Box 7951
Madison, WI 53707

phone (608) 264-9497

toll free (800) 446-6564

This office provides financial assistance to eligible crime victims, funding to support victim assistance programs, and assistance to individual victims of crime.

Valuable Web Sites

Division of Juvenile Corrections Public Web Site

The Wisconsin Division of Juvenile Corrections does have a state-wide treatment directory that lists treatment providers by individual counties that specialize in working with juveniles who sexually offend for the state of Wisconsin.

www.wi-doc.com/index_juvenile.htm

General Sex Offender Public Website

Toll Free Access Line (800)398-2403

Search by name or zip code at www.widocoffenders.org

Most Wanted Website

www.mostwantedsexoffenders.wi.gov

National Sex Offender Registry

www.nsopr.gov

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For additional copies of this booklet or
for more information contact:

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<http://www.wi-doc.com>

<http://WIDOCoffenders.org>