



# Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation

The Institute for Family Violence Studies

Florida State University

## OCTOBER EPRESS

### QUESTIONS FROM DIRECTORS

***I saw that you are updating the list of additional services offered at programs. My program just started offering a new parenting class. Can you tell me how other programs are funding their parenting classes?***

Funding is an age-old problem, for any type of service. I have promised you that I will open up the phone lines in the next phone conference and ask that particular question for you, because we haven't asked it in a while. In the past, programs have applied for grants to offer parenting classes, have received money from the city or the county to offer such programs, and have creatively applied to local sports teams and philanthropic groups to fund them. Additionally, programs have had large fund raising events –like gold tournaments or chocolate parties -- to raise money. A great example is the Diamond Drop that the Family Nurturing Program has held

<https://www.jaxdailyrecord.com/article/young-lawyers-support-family-nurturing-center-inc>

Many non-profits are turning to crowd funding online, but you must have an extensive stakeholder and interested community member list to make that work.

<http://giving.childrenshospital.org/assets/pdfs/cmnh-99-fundraising-ideas.pdf>

I am not an expert at fundraising, so I suggest you find someone who is: be sure that your community advisory board has a fundraiser on it! This is rarely something that just one person can do. But you need someone who can develop the team to plan and conduct the events that raise money. I also suggest that you go online and seek out foundations that fund programs locally in your area. I know of a few supervised visitation programs who have done that and have been successful.

***In the last phone call, you asked us to write Program Narratives. What should be in mine?***

These are very brief (one or two paragraphs) descriptions of your program. Highlight what you do, or something that you have done in a unique way. We compile these for DCF so that the statewide report is more than just a collection of numbers. When combined, these narratives provide rich details. Your programs offer parenting classes to improve the skills of parents and break the cycle of abuse. You have holiday parties in which the local law enforcement agency donates hundreds of toys for every single one of your clients. You find new and exciting ways to strengthen families: by connecting them to local services, by linking them to educational, employment, or housing opportunities, and by helping them learn how to care for their children. There is something special or compelling about every single supervised visitation program in the state. You must learn to tell the story of your program. Begin by creating a simple narrative for us. Send it to us ([koehme@fsu.edu](mailto:koehme@fsu.edu)) or to Kelly O'Rourke this month!

The Clearinghouse is working on the Statewide Reports.

This includes both the Access and Visitation Report and the Florida Case and Client Report.

If you have any data that is NOT in the data base yet, please enter it ASAP so that it is included in our reports.

If you are not yet participating in the Florida Database and would like to start, please call us and we will get you started for 2017-2018. (850-644-6303)

# Encouraging Children to Express Emotions in Productive Ways

By Brittney Clemons

## Introduction

Young children deal with many of the same emotions adults do. Children get angry, sad, frustrated, nervous, happy, or embarrassed, just like adults. However, young children find it challenging to identify how they are feeling and the best way to express those emotions. Sometimes they may act out these emotions in physical and inappropriate ways. This can be frustrating for parents and caregivers, but these situations provide opportunities to teach young children how to understand their emotions and express them in constructive ways. Helping children develop emotional intelligence and learn healthy ways to respond to frustration will allow them to develop strong, connected relationships now and later in life.

## Objectives

This e-press provides information to help parents with the following:

- Cultivate emotional Intelligence in their child
- Provide guidance on how to teach their children how to respond to frustration

## Teach Children Emotional Intelligence

Part of helping children express themselves in productive ways involves teaching them emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, understand and manage one's own emotions and the ability to identify and empathize with the emotions of others. Children that develop a high emotional intelligence are more likely to have strong social skills, develop positive relationships, resolve conflicts, and manage stress. Here are four ways parents can help children build emotional intelligence:



1. **Help children recognize their own emotions.** When children are feeling upset, discouraged, or even happy, ask them to describe what they are feeling or get them to write it down or draw it. Once you help your children name their emotions, they can start taking ownership.

2. **Talk about your emotions with your child.** The best way to foster emotional intelligence is to show it. Tell your children how you are feeling and demonstrate how you deal with your own negative emotions such as, anger or disappointment in a productive and healthy way.
3. **Help your children recognize their moods and feelings based on their environment.** Children's moods and feelings change based on the environment they're in. Allow children to explore the different feelings they have when they're at home, at school, or at the grocery store. For many children, being at school feels different from being at a playground, going to the library feels different from going to the supermarket, and summer feels different from winter. Have your children explain the feelings or emotions that go along with the different environments they're in. Bringing awareness to the emotions and moods that are felt or perceived in different situations helps your child assess the emotional intelligence of each place.



4. **Help your child recognize the feelings of others and practice empathy.** Have your children talk about feelings that they see in others and help them to come up with ways they could show empathy. Parents can raise emotional awareness and teach empathy by asking the right questions in emotionally stimulated situations. Parents can ask their children questions such as, "Do you hear her laughing?", "Do you think she is happy?", "She fell down, how do you think she feels?", "What is something you can say or do that will help your friend feel better?".

### **Teach Children Frustration Tolerance**

Many young children struggle with frustration tolerance. Anger and frustration are powerful emotions that are experienced by both adults and children. Many children do not have frustration management skills and may express their frustration in inappropriate ways. Developing coping strategies to deal with frustration requires time and practice. Here are some ways that parents can help children build frustration tolerance skills at home:

1. **Teach your child body mapping.** Young children do not make the connections between their bodies and their emotions. Body mapping helps kids of all ages. Have your child draw the outline of a person. Ask your child to think about all the places on his or her body that feel tense or different when he or she is mad. You might want to describe how your body feels when you are frustrated or experiencing a difficult emotion. Point out that your heart races when you're mad, your voice gets shaky when you are nervous, and your eyes gets watery when you are sad. Color all of those places red. Tell your child that when those places start to feel red, his or her body is signaling to him or her to get help in a frustrating moment.



2. **Teach your child about triggers.** All kids are different and no two will have the exact same triggers of frustration. You can help your child understand his or her specific triggers by paying attention to the circumstances surrounding your child's meltdown. When your child has a meltdown, make a note of what happened just prior to the event, the time of day, and what was happening when the meltdown occurred. When your child has calmed down, talk to him or her about what you observed and suggest better ways he or she could respond to his or her frustration. Here are a few common triggers to watch for:
  - Transitions
  - Negative peer interactions
  - Challenging academics/activities
  - Feeling misunderstood by adults or peers
  - Lack of control
  - Hunger
  - Exhaustion
  - Unexpected situations
3. **Teach your child the different ways he/she can deal with feelings.** Talk to your child about the positive and negative ways feelings can be expressed. Teach your child strategies to use when experiencing negative emotions (e.g., anger, frustration, sadness). Strategies to share with your child might include taking a deep breath when frustrated or angry, getting an adult to help resolve a conflict, asking for a turn when playing with others, and finding a quiet space to





calm down when distressed. Let your child come up with a few strategies on his or her own and practice the strategies every chance you get. For example, you can talk to your child about emotions he or she may be feeling when at school, playing a game, riding in the car, or eating dinner. There will be all kinds of things that happen every day that will serve as opportunities for you to talk about feelings.

## Conclusion

Children are experiencing so many new and exciting things for the first time and it can be quite overwhelming! Many have a difficult time managing and responding to those emotions in appropriate ways. Understanding and managing emotions is a critical part of overall development. It is up to adults to teach children to understand and deal with their emotions appropriately. Parents should teach their children how to identify emotions in themselves and others, help them understand what are appropriate and inappropriate responses to frustration, help them come up with productive ways to deal with emotions, and provide positive encouragement when they express their emotions appropriately!

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# Helping Introverted Children Make Friends

By Brittney Clemons

## Introduction

Many parents of introverted – or quiet, shy, children -- worry that their child will not be able to make friends. While some children enjoy being social and making new friends, introverted children may prefer to read a book or spend time alone doing an activity. There is nothing wrong with those behaviors, but it is important for all children to be able to confidently interact with others and make friends when they want to. For many introverted children, making new friends can be difficult because it can place them outside of their comfort zone. However, parents can play a supportive role in helping their children develop social skills and make friends in their peer group.

## Objectives

This e-press provides information to help parents with the following:

- Understand their introverted child's temperament
- Help their introverted child make friends
- Understand what they should not do in attempt to help their child make friends

## Techniques for Parents Providing Social Support to Their Introverted Child

Some children are talkative and outgoing, quickly making friends. But others are more introspective, less talkative, and prefer solitary activities such as reading books. They aren't necessarily shy, but introverted. For introverted kids, making friends can be challenging. This is because introverted children can become overwhelmed by loud, peer groups, making it more difficult to engage in small talk with their peers.

While it may be challenging for introverted children to make friends at times, parents can help their children develop meaningful relationships with children in their peer group.

Here are some things parents can do to help their introverted child make friends:

**Teach Small Talk:** If your child is struggling to make friends, encourage him/her to make small efforts each day to build friendships. The first step to creating friendships is engaging in small talk. Have your child start off small by encouraging him/her to just smile or wave at a person of their choice. Then, when they are comfortable, challenge them to go further by engaging in conversations about things they have in common, such as a favorite game or television show.

You could start by giving them little challenges: today they might wave to a classmate, tomorrow they can say hello, the next day they can give a compliment, and the next day



they can discuss something they have in common. It is important that you avoid pressuring your child and allow him/her to go at his/her own pace. Remember to award small accomplishments because your support can have a major impact on your child's self-esteem.

**Facilitate a playdate:** Setting up a one-on-one or small group playdate is a great way of getting

your child to interact with children his/her age. The great thing about facilitating a playdate is that you can manage the interaction. You and your child can choose the playmate, frequency of interactions, and the location that will make your child the most comfortable.

From time-to-time you can also join in to help both children open up and discover things they may have in common. Younger kids need direction so you may want to assist them depending on the difficulty of the activity or game. You also may want to leave out some art materials depending on your child's interests. Another good thing about play dates is that it provides you the opportunity to observe how your child interacts with other children and provide feedback later on.

**Role play:** If your child is nervous about meeting new people, it may be helpful to role play those initial encounters. You can pretend to be another child or use stuffed animals to act out an initial encounter, a follow-up encounter, and a playdate. When your child is ready, encourage him/her to apply his/her new skills by inviting a friend over. Prior to the playdate, role play with your child and discuss ideas on what to say and do, and what games to play. Allow your child to tell you about his/her fears and other emotions. Gently encourage your child but never force them to interact with others if they are not ready. Forcing them to interact could damage their self-confidence.



**Sign them up for an extracurricular activity:** The best way for an introvert to make friends is through shared interest. When your child is doing something that they love they are less focused on the fear of social interaction and more on their love for the



activity. When two people love something, a genuine friendship can develop out of their shared interests and compatibility. Signing up for an extracurricular activity is a great way to interact with others in ways that do not increase social burnout. Extracurricular activities provide kids with a sense of community, creates opportunities to build their confidence, and gives the child more control over their social interactions. Assuming the activity or sport continues over several weeks or months, your child will have plenty of time to ease into possible friendships on his/her own terms.

**Don't play the numbers game:** Sometimes people have a tendency to evaluate a person's worth by how popular they are. This makes life more difficult for introverted children, who typically prefer their own company. It is important that you protect your child's self-esteem by reminding him/her that their worth is not based on the number of friends they have. Explain to your child that having a lot of friends is nice, but having a few genuine friends is even better. Instead of playing the numbers game, focus on helping your child make at least one positive friendship that makes him or her happy. Teaching your kid what makes a good friend and how to be one will lay the foundation for strong, intimate relationships in the future.



**Gradually expose your child to new people:** If your child is reluctant to meet new people, it is important for you to expose them gradually. When the fear of social interactions gets to be too much, do not allow your child to stop trying, but respect his or her limits and allow him/her to take a break. Letting your child tackle this at his or her own pace will ease some of the pressure. Ensure your child that there is nothing to be afraid of and let your child know that you are proud of his or her efforts. Point out to your child that they enjoyed the things that they were initially afraid of, this will give him/her more confidence to do it again.

## Conclusion

Learning how to form successful peer relationships is a critical skill for kids, but some kids have a harder time making friends. While parents can't make friends for their children, they can help them cultivate social skills that will help them in their interactions with others. If you see your child struggling to make friends, help them develop their social skills by teaching them small talk, facilitating play-dates, role-playing social interactions, and signing them up for extracurricular activities. It is important to encourage your introverted child to make friends but do so with patience and refrain from focusing on the number of friends. A few good friendships are more important than many insincere ones. It is important that you appreciate your unique child, and treasure him/her for who they are. Introverted children are often kind, thoughtful, focused, and

very interesting company, they just need a little extra support when it comes to socialization.

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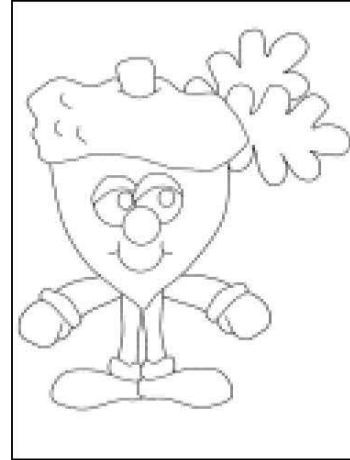
**The next page has Fall Craft ideas for parents and their children.**

# Fall Crafts

Some of our favorite activities for Fall are also the simplest!

## Coloring Projects:

<http://www.coloring.ws/autumn1.htm> has very easy coloring projects, like Acorn Men and cornucopia.



## Handprint Fall Tree:

<https://www.craftymorning.com/kids-handprint-fall-tree-craft/> Follow the instructions to create a fun handprint fall tree using washable paints.

## Paper plate owls:

<https://happyhooligans.ca/paper-plate-owls/>  
Using paper plates, washable paints, and a few other materials, you can create plate owls!



# Training Manual for Florida's Supervised Visitation Programs

## Referrals to Supervised Visitation in Child Sexual Abuse Cases

# JUVENILE SEXUAL OFFENDERS

### Case Scenario

A child physical abuse case was referred to a program one month ago including a father, Mr. Smith, and his two children, Jack (12 years old) and Susie (8 years old). The two children were removed from the home because Mr. Smith physically abused Jack in front of Susie a month ago. Both children have been removed from the home and placed with their Aunt while the court has ordered Mr. Smith to have supervised visitation with his two children. The Smith family was previously involved with child services when Jack was six and Susie was two because their mother sexually abused Jack.

The first two visits were relatively uneventful, but during the third visit, Jack was sitting next to his sister and braiding her hair while she read a book to her Dad. Mr. Smith seemed increasingly agitated when he asked Jack to stop playing with his sister's hair. Jack responded that Susan liked when he braided her hair. Mr. Smith immediately rose from the table and screamed at Jack, "Don't make me come over there, stop touching her." The visit monitor immediately terminated the visit and asked Mr. Smith to leave the premises. The visit monitor wrote about the terminated visit in her case notes and alerted the case manager handling the Smith case.

The next day, Mr. Smith called the program and asked to speak to the visit monitor about what happened at the visit that made him upset. Mr. Smith disclosed to the visit monitor that he walked in on Jack sexually abusing his little sister at their home a month ago. It happened the same night as Mr. Smith's physical abuse incident with Jack. He told the visit monitor that he knows that physically abusing Jack a month ago was wrong, but he doesn't know how to protect Susie now that the two children have been placed with their Aunt. He told the visit monitor that he didn't disclose this information earlier because he didn't want his son to get in trouble.

*After completion of this chapter, you will be able to answer the following questions:*

- With this new information, what risks exist between the siblings?
- What red flags exist in the Smith family that the monitor could have noted during intake?
- What should the visit monitor do with this new information to ensure Susie is safe?
- How does Jack's sexual offending affect the parent-child relationship?
- What is the visit monitor's role in helping Mr. Smith address his child's sexual offending during visitation?
- How could Jack affect Susie's testimony in a court case?



## Introduction

Sexual abuse offenses are usually associated with crimes committed by adults. However, more than one-third of all sexual offenses against minors are committed by other minors. As such, it is important to understand the nature of juvenile sexual offenses. Juvenile sexual offenses should not be ignored due to the serious harm it can cause and its lasting consequences for victims.

As a supervised visitation monitor you will likely work with children who have either committed sexual offenses or are at-risk for offending later in life. This chapter will help you develop a working knowledge about juvenile sexual offenders and gain the skills necessary to interact with juvenile sexual offenders and at-risk youth.

As a group, juvenile sexual offenders are an incredibly diverse group. There is not an absolute set of defining characteristics. However, the majority of them are adolescent males. It is important to note that female juvenile sexual offenses may go underreported due to preconceived notions about how sexual abuse can occur. Both males and females are capable of being juvenile sexual offenders and visit monitors should keep this in mind to ensure the safety of every family and child in supervised visitation.

## Objectives

Upon completion of this chapter, a visit monitor will be able to:

- Understand current information and statistics regarding juvenile sexual offenders
- Understand Florida Laws related to juvenile sexual offenders
- Recognize the subgroups of juvenile sexual offenders and potential causes for why juveniles commit sexual offenses
- Explain the differences and similarities between male and female juvenile sexual offenders
- Understand the stereotypes that prevent juvenile sexual offenders and their families from seeking services and assistance
- Identify how juvenile sexual offenders are different from adult sexual offenders
- Understand how increased public awareness about juvenile sexual offenders influenced the creation of federal legislation and policies
- Employ a strengths-based approach when working with families
- Incorporate empathy building exercises during visitation



- Help families strengthen the parent-child relationship after their child has committed a sexual offense
- Implement specific program safety measures for juvenile sexual offender referrals
- Assist parents in safety planning for if/when their perpetrating child comes home to prevent recidivism

## Statistics

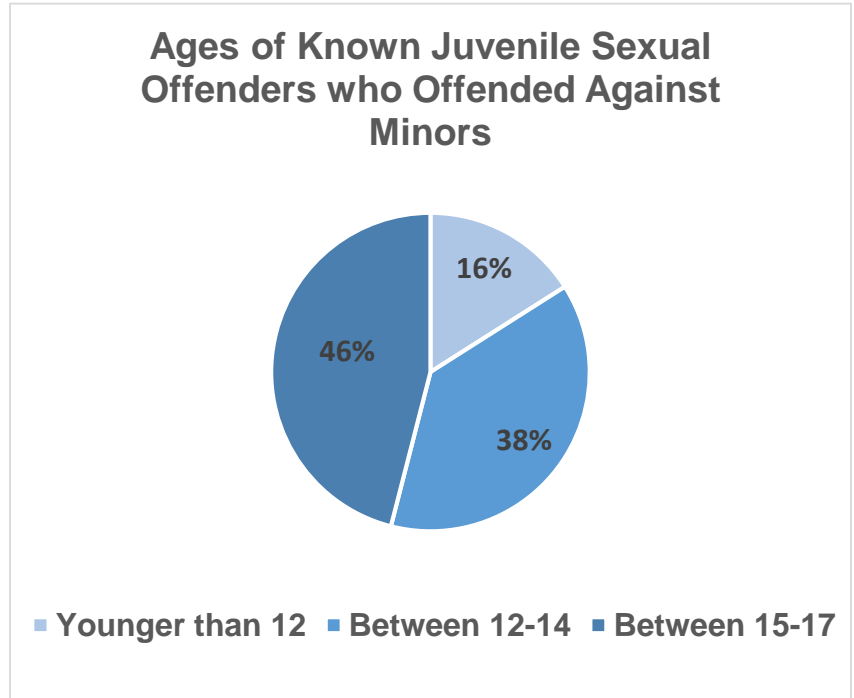
These statistics and information will help visit monitors better understand the juvenile sexual offender population. It is important to note that the majority of research conducted around juvenile sexual offenders is based on males. There is a limited body of research about female juvenile sexual offenders.

This chapter contains current information about this population of offenders, but visit monitors should continue their education about juvenile sexual offenders after this training to stay up to date about new research studies and findings.

### **Current statistics and information relevant to juvenile sexual offenders:**

- Juveniles account for more **than one third (35.6%)** of those known to police to have committed sex offenses against other minors.
- **In 2014**, 21% of individuals arrested for sexual offenses were juveniles.
- Juvenile sexual offenders comprise **25.8% of all sex offenders**.
- Juveniles who commit sexual offenses target children who **are likely to be** similar in age or slightly younger than the juvenile offender.
- **Males account for 93%** of the known population of juvenile sexual offenders to law enforcement.
- A small number of juvenile offenders, **1 out of 8, are younger than age 12**.
- **Female juvenile offenders commit offenses at younger ages, and are more likely to offend with a co-offender than male juvenile offenders.** These female juvenile offenders were also more likely to be victims of sexual violence at earlier ages than male juvenile sexual offenders.

- Of the juvenile sexual offenders who offended against minors, **46%** were between the **ages of 15 and 17**; **38%** were between the **ages of 12 and 14**; **16%** were **younger than 12**.



- Clinicians and social service professionals do not consider children under 12 who have committed sexual offenses to be juvenile sexual offenders. Recognizing the developmental gap

between teenager offenders and pre-teen offenders, clinicians will use the term “children who have sexual behavior problems” when referring to children younger than 12 who have committed sexual offenses.

## Florida Law

The following Florida Statutes are specific to juvenile sexual abuse and juvenile sexual offenders:

***Florida Statute Section 39.01(7)***

Juvenile sexual abuse is defined in Florida’s Child Welfare statute as:

(7) "Juvenile sexual abuse" means any sexual behavior by a child which occurs without consent, without equality, or as a result of coercion. For purposes of this subsection, the following definitions apply:

- (a) "Coercion" means the exploitation of authority or the use of bribes, threats of force, or intimidation to gain cooperation or compliance.
- (b) "Equality" means two participants operating with the same level of power in a relationship, neither being controlled nor coerced by the other.
- (c) "Consent" means an agreement, including all of the following:
  1. Understanding what is proposed based on age, maturity, developmental level, functioning, and experience.
  2. Knowledge of societal standards for what is being proposed.

3. Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives.
4. Assumption that agreement or disagreement will be accepted equally.
5. Voluntary decision.
6. Mental competence.

Juvenile sexual behavior ranges from noncontact sexual behavior such as making obscene phone calls, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and the showing or taking of lewd photographs to varying degrees of direct sexual contact, such as frottage, fondling, digital penetration, rape, fellatio, sodomy, and various other sexually aggressive acts.

***Florida Statutes Section 985.475***

“Juvenile sexual offender” is defined in Florida’s Juvenile Justice statute as:

- A juvenile who has been found by the court under an adjudicatory hearing to have committed a violation of sexual battery, prostitution, lewdness; indecent exposure, sexual performance by a child, or knowingly selling, renting, loaning, giving away, distributing, transmitting, or showing any obscene material to a minor.



*Or*

- A juvenile found to have committed any felony violation of law or delinquent act involving juvenile sexual abuse. “Juvenile sexual abuse” means any sexual behavior that occurs without consent, without equality, or as a result of coercion. For purposes of this subsection, the following definitions apply:
  - “Coercion” means the exploitation of authority, use of bribes, threats of force, or intimidation to gain cooperation or compliance.

- “Equality” means two participants operating with the same level of power in a relationship, neither being controlled nor coerced by the other.
- “Consent” means an agreement including all of the following:
  - a) Understanding what is proposed based on age, maturity, developmental level, functioning, and experience.
  - b) Knowledge of societal standards for what is being proposed.
  - c) Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives.
  - d) Assumption that agreement or disagreement will be accepted equally.
  - e) Voluntary decision.
  - f) Mental competence.

## Characteristics of Juvenile Sexual Offenders

In this section, you will learn about the characteristics that have been found to be associated with some juvenile sexual offenders. You will first learn about the typology research (classification based on types or categories) and then the etiology research (the cause of something) of juvenile sexual offenders.

### Typology

Typology research on this group of children has defined at least three broad subgroups of juvenile sexual offenders. However, the differences between these groups are not profound.

#### Subgroups:

1. **Delinquent youth:** those who commit crimes not exclusive to sexual offenses
2. **Paraphilic youth:** those who have sexual interests or behaviors that are atypical and extreme
  - This is a small number of juvenile sexual offenders.
  - Adolescents with sexual offenses were more likely to have atypical sexual interests than delinquent youth who had nonsexual offenses.
3. **Neither delinquent or paraphilic youth:** those whose sexual victimization is situational or experimental. This is the largest group out of the subgroups.

Although these subgroups are broad, they are supported by research. It is important to recognize that juvenile sexual offenders may come from various backgrounds and life experiences. These children may have unresolved mental health issues, a dysfunctional family life, and other influential factors that played a role in their sexual offending. A child's unique life experiences can influence whether or not a child becomes a juvenile sexual offender. As such, addressing the impact of those life experiences should be a part of any treatment or rehabilitative program.

*A majority of juvenile sexual offenders do not commit sexual offences out of atypical sexual interests. Instead, their sexual offenses are situational or experimental. While this is no excuse for their abusive behaviors, this means that most sexual offenders will never commit a sexual offence again in their future since it is not a typical part of their behavior.*

Understanding typology allows monitors who work with juvenile sexual offenders to gain insight into children's life experiences. Typology research helps classify juvenile sexual offenders into groups with unique interventions. When professionals understand the unique need of each child and subgroup, they are better able to adapt their interventions to help children stop their abusive behaviors and move forward to lead healthy and productive lives. In supervised visitation, it is important to understand that each subgroup can be

a risk to other children and families, whether the child has atypical sexual interests or their abusive behaviors were situational. Following safety protocols and rules will help reduce this risk and prevent victimization. You will learn more about safety measures later in this chapter.

## **Etiology**

While there is never a justification for abuse, it is important to learn about some of the possible causes for why juveniles commit sexual offenses in order to address it. This section is relevant to both juvenile sexual offenders and child victims of sexual abuse. As you will learn from the research findings below, being victimized as a child can increase a child's later risk for sexually offending against another person.

### Research Findings

- *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*. **Adam S. Grabell & Raymond A. Knight (2009)** studied 193 juveniles who had committed sexual offenses. They examined the ages of children who had been sexually abused and who later became offenders themselves. The researchers found that sexual abuse committed



against a juvenile from ages 3 to 7 can do the most damage and places a juvenile at a higher risk for engaging in sexually abusive behavior in the future.

- *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*. **David L. Burton (2008)** conducted a study that compared 74 incarcerated sexual abusers and 53 nonsexual abusers to study the influence personality traits and childhood sexual victimization has on the development of sexually abusive behaviors. Burton's results suggest that sexually abusive youth may have learned to be sexually abusive from their own victimization and their sexual offenses are often similar to their own victimization experience.

### REMINDER:

There is NOT a single set of characteristics or defining life experience that can predict whether or not a child will become a juvenile sexual offender. However, there are influential factors and life experiences that may play a role in the development of sexually abusive behaviors.

- *The Sex Offender: Offender Evaluation and Program Strategies*. **Deborah J. Cavanaugh, Ann Pimental, & Robert A. Prentky (2008)** study included 667 boys and 155 girls who were involved in social services. A large majority had sexual offending behaviors. The study found that almost all of the children came from highly dysfunctional families and experienced multiple forms of maltreatment, such as neglect, physical, psychological, and sexual abuse. The researchers of this study believe their findings emphasize the importance of addressing these co-occurring issues that are often influential in the development of sexual offending behaviors.
- *Psychological Bulletin*. **Michael C. Seto & Martin L. Lalumiere (2010)** conducted a meta-analysis of 59 independent studies which compared explanations for male adolescent sexual offending to male adolescents who committed non-sexual offenses. The results suggested that a sexual abuse history, exposure to sexual violence, other abuse or neglect, social isolation, early exposure to sex or pornography, atypical sexual interests, anxiety, and low self-esteem may play a role in male adolescent sexual offending.

- *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*. **Raymond A. Knight & Judith E. Sims-Knight (2004)** studied 218 juveniles who had been adjudicated for their sexual offenses and were residing in inpatient specialized treatment facilities. The results showed that early traumatic physical and sexual abuse played an important causal role in increasing the likelihood of future sexually abusive behavior.
- **Leibowitz, Burton, & Howard (2010)** compared pornography exposure between male adolescents who sexually abused others and non-sexual offending male delinquents. This study found that juveniles who had engaged in sexually abusive behavior reported more exposure to pornography when they were younger than age 10, than the non-sexual offending delinquents.

### Summary of Research Findings

Juvenile sexual offenders come from a variety of backgrounds, but in most cases there is a history of family dysfunction, exposure to violence from an early age, parental neglect, and sexual, physical, and emotional/psychological abuse.

### Considerations for Female Juvenile Sexual Offenders

Most of the existing research regarding juvenile sexual offenders includes only adolescent males in their samples, which means that our knowledge base is incomplete regarding all juvenile sexual offenders. Although the current information about juvenile sexual offenders is important, it is still mostly relevant to males. One common misconception is that more boys are committing sexual offenses than girls, since there is more research about males. Researchers and professionals alike attribute this misconception to the fact that perpetration committed



by girls is viewed by others as less harmful. Thus, their crimes are less likely to be reported to law enforcement. This is especially true when the victim is a boy. Victims may experience difficulty reporting their victimization by a juvenile who is a female because they fear that their experiences may be invalidated or ignored.

In an effort to address the gap in knowledge about female juvenile sexual offenders, researchers have started to direct more research toward this issue. The results of that research are very valuable, as they help us to understand the differences between the two groups, which can be helpful for intervention purposes.

The chart below details frequently reported background characteristics of female juvenile sexual offenders:

<b>Table 1: Characteristics of Female Juvenile Sexual Offenders</b>	
<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Description</b>
Prior Sexual Victimization	One consistent finding within the literature is that female juvenile sexual offenders have high levels of prior sexual victimization. A compilation of studies regarding female juvenile sexual offenders revealed that over 80% of participants reported being prior victims of sexual abuse. Many of them first experienced sexual victimization at a very young age, and their victimizations often involved multiple perpetrators and penetration.
Child Maltreatment	In several clinical studies, over 60% of female juvenile sexual offenders reported being prior victims of physical abuse. High rates of physical abuse, emotional abuse, and/or neglect were frequently reported. Several studies noted that more than half of the girls in their respective studies experienced multiple forms of maltreatment.
Dysfunctional Families	The family lives of female juvenile sexual offenders can be described as chaotic and dysfunctional. Research studies have reported that these girls experienced dysfunction in their families in a multitude of ways such as: witnessing domestic violence, excessive drug or alcohol use by

	parents, inconsistent parenting, parental abandonment, or lack of parental supervision and support.
Inadequate Social Skills	Several clinical studies have shown that female youth who had committed sexual offenses had inadequate social skills and/or did not have healthy peer relationships. It was also noted that girls who committed sexual offenses may compensate for their inadequate social skills by associating with delinquent peers.
Psychopathology	Several research studies have found correlations between some psychiatric disorders and sexual offending. For example, in several studies over 40% of female juvenile sexual offenders were diagnosed with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, experienced suicide ideation, or attempted suicide.

Comparison of Female and Male Juvenile Sexual Offenders

- Young female sexual offenders are **more likely to report a history of sexual abuse, and having been abused by multiple perpetrators.**
- Female juvenile sex offenders are generally younger than male juvenile sex offenders.
- Females are more likely to commit a sexual offense with a co-offender (in groups) than males.

Similarities

Both female and male juvenile sex offenders are similar in their psychosocial and developmental histories. It has been reported that juveniles of both genders had similar rates of being previously involved in mental health treatment, attempted suicide or attempting to run away from home.

Working with Female Children

Current research has provided four concrete ways that professionals, parents, and communities can work together to prevent female juveniles from sexually offending. These prevention methods can be used with at-risk girls who have a history of trauma, family dysfunction, and childhood adversity.

Even though these methods were developed for working with female children, the following four prevention methods can be effective in preventing sexually abusive behaviors with all at-risk children in supervised visitation.

**1. Offer support to female children and adolescents who disclose sexual abuse.**

- If there are female children in your program who have been identified as sexual abuse victims, it is important to consider the potential they have for offending later in life. Intervening as soon as possible and offering a supportive environment can help reduce the likelihood that they will become sexual offenders later on.

**2. Teach girls what constitutes sexual abuse and the harm it causes.**

- This kind of discussion is relevant for both young boys and girls. Discussing what sexual abuse is and the harm it causes may help young children speak out about their own victimization experiences that may not have been previously disclosed.

**3. Offer educational programming for youth that includes information about why it is both morally wrong and illegal to have sexual contact with younger children.**

- This education should include the definition of consent as well as an explanation about how younger children cannot consent to sexual interactions with older children. In some cases, juvenile sexual offenders perpetrated against a younger child because they were curious. However, it needs to be explicitly explained to children that it is never okay to engage in sexual contact with a younger child.

**4. Refer to specific training for professionals about the issue of juvenile female sexual offenders.**

- Most of the existing literature about juvenile sexual offenders is based on research studies that focused on male juvenile sexual offenders. As such, it is important for visit monitors to continue their education about female juvenile sexual offenders by keeping up with

How can you incorporate these four preventative measures during supervised visitation?

- Refer to the Clearinghouse website [familyvio.csw.fsu.edu](http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu) to read about how parents can talk with their children about healthy relationships.



current research. There can be important differences between juvenile males and females who offend and these differences can affect how a visit monitor works with each child.

## Stereotypes and Stigmatization

It is important for supervised visitation monitors to be knowledgeable of the stereotypes that surround juvenile sexual offenders when working with them. Believing inaccurate stereotypes about this group may impede monitors from performing their job effectively and place children at risk of being stigmatized during visits.

While it is important for visit monitors to understand how juvenile sexual offenders may pose a risk to other families and children at visits, it is also a monitor’s job to ensure that **every child** feels comfortable and capable of strengthening his or her family relationships while participating in supervised visitation.

Table 2: Stereotypes about Juvenile Sexual Offenders	
Stereotype	Reality
All juvenile sexual offenders are pedophiles.	<p><b>Several research studies have found that most juveniles do not commit sexual offenses against minors out of a paraphilic interest such as pedophilia.</b></p> <p><b>In fact, juvenile sexual offender’s crimes are not limited to sexual offenses committed against young children. Their crimes may also include peers of a similar age as well as older individuals.</b></p>
Cases that juvenile sexual offenders are involved in only include small children as victims.	<p><b>Juveniles account for more than one-third (35.6%) of those known by police to have committed sexual offenses against minors and more than one-quarter (25.8%) of all sex offenses that include small children, peers, or even adults.</b></p>
All juvenile sexual offenders are male.	<p><b>While most research and treatment programs have been developed for male juvenile sexual offenders, there are also female juvenile sexual offenders,</b></p>

	<p><b>although they comprise a smaller portion, between 7%-8% of cases. A significant number of preteen offenders are female, as opposed to teenage sexual offenders, who are predominately male.</b></p>
<p>Juvenile sexual offenders cannot be rehabilitated and will be end up reoffending as adults.</p>	<p><b>There is no reason to believe that juveniles cannot be rehabilitated. In fact, juvenile behaviors are not fixed or stable since their brains are still developing. Particularly, the frontal lobe of the brain, which is responsible for impulse control, moral reasoning, and regulating emotions is not fully developed.</b></p> <p><b>When juvenile sexual offenders do commit crimes as adults, it is often for non-sexual crimes, such as property crimes or drug crimes.</b></p>
<p>Juvenile sexual offenders are exactly like adult sexual offenders.</p>	<p><b>Several of the existing treatment programs developed for juveniles were modeled after adult sexual offender programs. Researchers and mental professionals have now reached a consensus that this practice is ineffective and fails to consider the vast differences between adolescents and adults.</b></p> <p><b>Overall, juvenile sexual offenders differ from adults in their recidivism rates and risk/protective factors.</b></p>

**Stigmatization of Juvenile Sexual Offenders**

The stereotypes mentioned above contribute to the stigmatization of juveniles who commit sexual offenses. This stigmatization can make it much harder for families to receive the assistance they need. The stigma that surrounds juvenile sexual offenders is compounded by policies and state laws that require juvenile sexual offenders to register, just as adult sexual offenders do, in the state sexual offender registry. This practice illustrates the tension that exists between the interest of keeping the public safe, and allowing perpetrators to re-enter society with limited stigma.

In the state of Florida, juvenile sexual offenders who have been found guilty by a judge for a qualifying sexual offense are required to register up to four times a year in the Florida Sexual Offender/Predator Registry. This means that their personal information, including their addresses, full names, and details of their sexual offenses are listed on the public registry website. While the registry serves to notify members of different communities about people who may pose a threat to safety, juveniles and their families may experience discrimination or harassment as a result of these community notification laws.

Juvenile sexual offenders have committed crimes that have caused harm to another child or individual. However, while it's important to understand the risk offenders pose, they should be treated with the same respect and dignity afforded to every other child and family in your visitation program. Remembering this can help reduce the stigma around the issue of juvenile sexual abuse.

## Comparing Juvenile and Adult Sexual Offenders

One common misconception about juvenile sexual offenders is that they are similar to adult sexual offenders. In reality, juveniles are developmentally and characteristically different than adults who commit sexual offenses. This section will help to dispel some common myths surrounding juvenile sexual offenders.

Viewing juvenile sexual offenders as comparable to adult sexual offenders is problematic because it can prevent juveniles from receiving the help and treatment they need. In addition, when juveniles are treated like adults, it creates a stigmatization around juvenile sexual offenders that perpetuates incorrect stereotypes and unfair treatment of juveniles.

An example of how adults differ from juveniles is seen in the recidivism rates for each respective group. Researchers and professionals alike point out **that juveniles have a significantly lower recidivism rate of sexual offenses than adults do.** The lower rates of recidivism for juvenile sexual offenders can largely be attributed to the juvenile's developmental maturation and changing life circumstances. A juvenile's behavior or motivation is considered to be less fixed than that of an adult, so often with intervention and therapy, juvenile sexual offenders have a higher success rate than most adult sexual offenders.

The following section details how juvenile sexual offenders are different from adult sexual offenders.

### Developmental Differences

- Recent advances in neuroscience and developmental criminology have contributed greatly to our understanding of juvenile sexual offenders. Scientific evidence has shown that juveniles differ from adults in the following:
  - o Cognitive abilities;
  - o Capacity for self-management and regulation;
  - o Susceptibility to social and peer pressure;
  - o Other factors related to judgment
  - o Criminal intent.
  
- Juveniles' behaviors/sexual interests cannot be considered fixed or indicative of future actions because they are still developing, cognitively and psychosocially. Adult sexual offenders on the other hand, have fully developed cognitive functions, and their sexually abusive behaviors cannot be attributed to a lack of development.
  - o Many people mistakenly believe that juvenile sexual offenders are pedophiles that cannot be rehabilitated. However, researchers believe that labeling juveniles as pedophiles is highly premature, considering the amount of development they have left to undergo.
  
- As children get older, they are increasingly able to process the information they receive. However, their psychosocial development occurs at a much slower rate than their cognitive development, which is why they have less capacity than adults to manage their emotions and control their behavior. This does not mean that they are incapable of controlling their behavior, but that the impact of external influences on decision making is greater in juveniles than in adults.

## **Motivation**

- Research has shown that adolescents are more likely to engage in heightened risk-taking activities and recklessness than adults are. For many juvenile sexual offenders, their lack of development is a factor in their sexual offenses. Whereas adult sexual offenders are generally seeking to gain power and control over their victims.
  
- Adult sexual offenses often involve extreme forms of sexual aggression, fantasy, and compulsivity whereas juvenile sexual offenses are normally influenced by impulse.
  
- Accordingly, juveniles are less likely to continue to engage in sexually abusive behavior when their actions are discovered.

## Different Treatments

- The involvement of family members is key for the successful treatment of juveniles in these cases. Parents particularly play an important role in preventing their child from offending again. During treatment, parents of juvenile sexual offenders are presented with skills and strategies to better enforce rules and structure that will help them supervise their child's actions and behaviors within the household.

The research discussed in this section illustrates that juvenile sexual offenders are different than adults who commit sexual offenses. It is imperative that a visit monitor recognize that juvenile sexual offenders are still children and it is important to treat them as such.

## Increased Public Awareness

Juvenile sexual offending gained attention in the 1970's and 1980's. As public awareness increased about juvenile sexual offenders, legislation and policies were established.

### Late 1970s, Early 1980s

Prior to the release of a few key studies, juvenile sexual offenders were not viewed in the same light that they are today. The general public's attitude toward these occurrences was simply "boys will be boys," and juvenile sexual offending wasn't considered to be a significant safety threat. Females who engaged in these behaviors were also not generally viewed as harmful or destructive. Public attitudes shifted though when findings from several research studies conducted in the late 1970s and 1980s found that a majority of adult male sexual offenders started their sexual offending during adolescence. It then became apparent that juvenile sexual offenses needed to be addressed so that they did not continue their abusive actions as adults.

In an attempt to prevent adult sexual offending, policy makers and practitioners started to focus more attention on juveniles who committed sexual offenses.

### Early 1990s



The Federal government, along with multiple states, developed and enacted several extensive policies to reduce sex offending. These laws focused on managing identified sex offenders through public state registries and community notification laws. The same laws that applied to adult sexual offenders were also applied to juvenile sexual offenders.



One such act, the Adam Walsh Act which took effect in 2006, established a federally enforced system of registration and community notification for adult and juvenile sexual offenders for all states. The act requires states to use an “offense-based” community notification system, rather than a risk-based system, and requires juveniles to register for certain offenses committed at age 14 or older.

Understanding juvenile sexual offenders is relevant to supervised visitation work in child-sexual abuse referrals because many adult and juvenile sexual offenders were once child victims of sexual abuse. While their actions are never excusable or justifiable, monitors have a unique opportunity to incorporate preventative measures to reduce the risk of later abuse from former victims.

This chapter provides monitors with the information needed to work with children who are sexual offenders and those children who have been victims of abuse. It is likely that monitors will encounter many children who have experienced both, and supervised visitation programs play an important role in helping to end the cycle of victimization. Supervised visitation also provides monitors the opportunity to work with parents and children to strengthen the parent-child relationship, which is essential in creating a healthier, and happier future.