



keep kids safe
prevention. healing. justice.

**U.S. NATIONAL BLUEPRINT TO
END SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

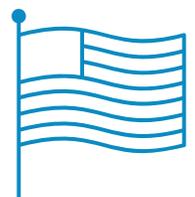
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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PUBLISHED IN RECOGNITION OF THE INAUGURAL

*World Day for Prevention, Healing and Justice
to End Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents*



Children and adolescents are exposed to sexual violence in multiple forms: child sexual abuse, incest, child sexual exploitation, rape, online child sexual abuse and exploitation, sexual violence in dating/intimate relationships, sexual violence among peers, child marriage, and sexual harassment. Sexual violence is happening in families, local communities, schools, sport, places of worship, and online. Children and adolescents of every age, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity are impacted, as are children with physical, intellectual, and cognitive disabilities. Millions of Americans are survivors and affected family members.

Violence against children and adolescents contributes to an insidious cycle of violence throughout people's lifetimes and can lead to juvenile-on-juvenile and adult perpetration. Additionally, child sexual abuse victims are at increased risk of re-victimization and are at twice the risk of intimate partner violence (IPV) later in life. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has noted that these adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) impact victims' short-term and long-term social and emotional development. Many victims experience devastating mental health challenges including depression, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse, and increased risk for suicide or suicide attempts.

Research, data, and evidence are essential to effectively understand the magnitude of the problem, support policies and programs that are science and evidence-based, and track progress in effectively addressing the problem. Unfortunately, the data, statistics, and evidence are outdated, have substantial gaps in information, or are nonexistent. In fact, there are no exact estimates of the percentages of children and adolescents in the U.S. that experience some form of sexual violence. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), child sexual abuse is a significant but preventable public health problem. Many children wait to report or never report child sexual abuse. Although estimates vary across studies, the data show:

- About 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys experience child sexual abuse at some point in childhood.
- One in 10 children will be sexually abused before the age of 18, a rate of sexual victimization 2.3 times higher than adults experience.
- 91% of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone the child or child's family knows.
- The total lifetime economic burden of child sexual abuse in the United States in 2015 was estimated to be at least \$9.3 billion. (This is a conservative figure since an estimated 90% of child sexual abuse is not officially reported).
- Sexual violence starts early. One in 3 female rape victims experienced it for the first time between 11–17 years old and 1 in 8 reported that it occurred before age 10. Nearly 1 in 4 male rape victims experienced it for the first time between 11–17 years old and about 1 in 4 reported that it occurred before age 10.

- Studies that exist show that rates of sexual violence are seven to 10 times higher for children and adolescents with cognitive and physical disabilities.
- Gender nonconforming and transgender children and adolescents, and LGBTQ+ adolescents are also at greater risk.
- A recent study indicated that 13% of athletes experienced one form of sexual abuse at least once as a child in sport. With sport participation levels as they are today, there are an estimated 5.91 million survivors of sexual abuse in sports in the United States alone.
- An estimated 12 percent of child sexual abuse is reported to authorities each year. Studies suggest that as many as 33% of victims never tell anyone they were abused. One study found that 60% to 80% of victims of childhood sexual abuse wait until adulthood to disclose their abuse. In fact, the average age of disclosure of child sexual abuse in a study of 1,000 victims was 52 years old.

Sexual violence against children and adolescents is a public health crisis that has been put on the backburner for far too long and has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, lockdowns, increased online activity, economic instability, and other factors intensified the problem. Many children have been hidden from the caring adults, community members, and mandated reporters who could have protected them. Additionally, children are spending unprecedented time online, increasing exposure to technology-facilitated violence, sexual exploitation, and abuse. Disruptions in routine, isolation, more time spent at home and online, financial insecurity, stress, and anxiety increased the risk and incidents of violence against children.

As our nation recovers from the pandemic, it is critical that our response focuses on policies and systems that not only prevent child abuse from happening in the first place but also on those that deliver effective interventions to assist children and families during and after crisis. Equally important are systems that can help survivors heal and seek justice to hold offenders accountable and prevent further victimization. We must seize this opportunity to ensure that all children and adolescents are safe. The time to act is now.

By making smart federal policy and funding investments, we can deliver practical and cost-effective programs that can break the cycle of violence in the United States. The latest evidence and data have identified *three equally important and mutually interdependent pillars of action:*



Prevention: Prevention efforts must be taken to scale in families, communities, schools, nonprofit organizations, sports, and online



Healing: Children, adolescents, and adults who experienced sexual violence as children must have access to culturally appropriate, child- and survivor-centered services so they can engage in processes that help them heal



Justice: Children, adolescents, and adults who experienced sexual violence as children must have access to fair child- and survivor-centered justice.

We ask the Administration and Congress to launch initiatives to end sexual violence against children to deliver prevention, healing, and justice solutions at full scale in the United States:

1. **Approve an executive order mobilizing prevention, healing, and justice of sexual violence against children and adolescents to include:**
 - a. **Declare Nov 18 as the “National Day for Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention, Healing and Justice.”**
 - b. **Mobilize Financial Resources** from existing funding, upcoming budget, and appropriations cycles as well as investments from the private sector, foundations, and others for domestic and global programs.
 - c. **Declare sexual violence against children and adolescents a U.S. public health emergency** and authorize an annual Surgeon General’s report that defines the problem and progress in our national response.
 - d. Convene a **federal interagency Task Force** on the prevention, healing, and justice of Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents, chaired by the White House, to develop and implement a National Plan to End Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents. The establishment of a senior leadership position in the White House with authority to coordinate with federal agencies with direct roles in combatting child sexual abuse will elevate the importance of the issue.
 - e. Establish an interagency “End Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents **data working group** to develop standard definitions for child sexual abuse prevention, healing and justice that can be applied across the Federal government and on updating data and statistics on the scope of the problem.
 - f. Hold a **Keep Kids Safe National Summit** on the prevention, healing, and justice of sexual violence against children and adolescents convened by the White House, supported by appropriate executive agencies, and attended by survivors and families, thought leaders, researchers, federal, state, and local leaders, and others from allied organizations around the U.S. to promote awareness and to generate

executive and legislative recommendations and best practices from experts in the field.

- g. Mobilize the Federal government, State governments, civic groups, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector to **launch public education and engagement campaigns** to end stigmatization and encourage public action., including promoting and participating in the November 18 day of recognition.
2. **Develop and pass into law comprehensive national legislation, the “Keep Kids Safe Act,” and include an expanded annual budget request and appropriations. We encourage bipartisan legislation to invest in policies, programs, and research to increase the reach of programs that protect survivors, reduce the cost of sexual violence to society, and provide access to justice for victims.**
3. **Establish a diverse, bipartisan “Keep Kids Safe Commission” comprised of experts including researchers, practitioners, bipartisan policymakers and survivors and families to gather a comprehensive understanding of the crisis, the costs to society, and the potential for available solutions to better protect children against sexual abuse and alleviate the impact of abuse on children when it occurs.**
4. **Expand U.S. support for global programs to end sexual violence against children and adolescents, both through support to U.S. government bilateral programs, as well to encourage contributions to the multilateral [End Violence Fund](#).**

ABOUT KEEP KIDS SAFE

[Keep Kids Safe \(KKS\)](#) was formed in June 2020 to catalyze a national movement to end sexual violence against children and adolescents by advocating for “prevention, healing, and justice” policies and programs implemented across the United States. The unique voices and perspectives of adult survivors of sexual violence as children have guided and informed our federal policy advocacy. Keep Kids Safe, partners, and allies created the National Blueprint to share a vision for transformative federal policy to go to scale with prevention, healing, and justice policies and programs, including specific objectives that require executive and legislative action.