

Green Bear Guidelines

Preventing Abuse in Children with Disabilities



-Children with disabilities are especially vulnerable to being sexually abused.

-Children with disabilities are 4-10 times more vulnerable to sexual abuse than their non-disabled peers.

Source: National Resource Center, Child Sexual Abuse

Protecting Your Child

- A background check should be performed for all service providers (44% of children with disabilities are victimized by service providers).
- Children should attend *developmentally appropriate* child abuse prevention programs. *Many times children with disabilities are provided with no prevention education classes or one that is not developmentally appropriate.*
- Attempt to make children less dependent on caretakers and drop in unexpectedly on caretakers when they are caring for your child. Children with disabilities have strong dependence on caretakers—sometimes these children consider caretakers their only “friend” - they dress the child and take them to the restroom. Many times children with disabilities cannot verbalize their feelings or fears.
- Know the signs of possible abuse, such as
 - Sudden changes in or unusual behavior
 - Cuts and bruises
 - Broken bones (not due to a medical condition)
 - Burns
 - Complaints about painful genitals.

For more information contact Southeast Missouri Network Against Sexual Violence at 573.332.1900 or log on to www.semonasv.org or www.greenbearmo.org.