



Stop It Now! Georgia

The Campaign to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

a program of  Prevent Child Abuse Georgia

Child Sexual Abuse: Attitudes, Beliefs, and Actions Taken* Report Highlights

Author:

Stop It Now! Georgia is a public health campaign engaging adults and communities in preventing the perpetration of child sexual abuse before it occurs. Stop It Now! Georgia empowers adults to take positive action by:

- Increasing the public's knowledge of the perpetration of child sexual abuse in Georgia.
- Teaching adults the skills to recognize warning signs of abusive behavior and to intervene before the abuse occurs.
- Challenging adults in the lives of children and adolescents who abuse, or are at risk to abuse, to seek help to prevent and/or stop abusing through specialized treatment.

Stop It Now! Georgia commissioned a random digit dial survey of 700 residents in Georgia to measure attitudes, beliefs, and actions taken relating to child sexual abuse. Survey results will be used to inform Stop It Now! Georgia's efforts to empower adults to take action to prevent the perpetration of child sexual abuse.

Call to Action:

This study shows that Georgians clearly understand the seriousness of child sexual abuse. However, it also demonstrates that Georgians still believe that it doesn't happen in their neighborhood or family. With nearly 90% (McGrath, 1998) of children abused by a relative or family friend, this belief is clearly a barrier to prevention.

While 77% of Georgians agree that child sexual abuse is preventable, only 15% feel that increasing public awareness is important. To prevent child sexual abuse before it happens, adults need to recognize warning sign behaviors and intervene when they see adults or youth interacting inappropriately with children. Parents need to understand which sexual behaviors are common in children of various ages so they recognize uncommon behaviors that may be cause for concern. Adults need to know that specialty treatment works, is available for sexual behavior concerns, and how to find this treatment.

Adults need resources and support for taking action when they see warning sign behaviors in adults and youth.

88% of Georgians feel that child sexual abuse is a serious problem

- 86% Clarke-Oconee
- 80% Glynn
- 89% Dublin JC

71% of Georgians feel that child abuse can be prevented

- 79% Clarke-Oconee
- 71% Glynn
- 68% Dublin JC

15% of Georgians believe increased public awareness is important for prevention

- 13% Clarke-Oconee
- 19% Glynn
- 17% Dublin JC



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Primary Findings:

Awareness that child sexual abuse is high:

Stop It Now! Georgia's survey indicates that residents are aware of the issue of child sexual abuse and believe it is a problem in Georgia. Most Georgians are familiar with the basic facts, such as children are abused by someone they know. Yet, far fewer believe that the abuser lives in their neighborhood. This disconnect in beliefs leaves gaps in prevention strategies for the children of Georgia.

To move beyond awareness of the problem of child sexual abuse to the **prevention** of child sexual abuse, adults need to take responsibility and learn what actions they can take to prevent this childhood epidemic.

95% of Georgians believe children are sexually abused by someone they know and trust

- 95% Clarke-Oconee
- 94% Glynn
- 90% Dublin JC

70% of Georgians believe sexual abusers live in their communities

- 75% Clarke-Oconee
- 70% Glynn
- 75% Dublin JC

Georgians are Positive Toward Treatment:

Many Georgians agree that abusers can stop abusing children if they want to. More Georgians believe that treatment can help abusers stop their abusive behavior and should receive specialized treatment while in prison. Unfortunately, Georgians are not clear on where to refer abusers for help. When asked what they would do if they suspected that an acquaintance might be abusing a child, only 7%, or less than 1 in 10, Georgians would refer that person to help.

To prevent child sexual abuse, people need to know that specialized treatment works, is available, and how to access it.

55% of Georgians believe sexual abusers can stop abusing if they want to

- 62% Clarke-Oconee
- 53% Glynn
- 64% Dublin JC

70% of Georgians believe specialized treatment can help sexual abusers stop abusing

- 83% Clarke-Oconee
- 68% Glynn
- 79% Dublin JC

Residents Unclear About What Action to Take When They Know Abuse is Occurring:

While all Georgians surveyed would take action if they knew a child was being sexually abused, they were not clear on what action should be taken. More Georgians would talk to a relative about their abusive behaviors (15%) than would talk to a non-relative (6%), indicating that adults in Georgia are not comfortable talking to each other about this very serious issue. While most Georgians would call the police or social services if they felt they knew an acquaintance was sexually abusing a child (88%), significantly fewer (75%) would call the police if that person were a relative. This isn't surprising when often times, sexual abuse is a family secret.

Breaking the silence by giving adults information, tools, and a place to call for confidential discussions about what they are observing is a great place to start.

15% of Georgians would talk to a relative who they knew was sexually abusing a child

- 18% Clarke-Oconee
- 11% Glynn
- 10% Dublin JC

6% of Georgians would talk to a non-relative who they knew was sexually abusing a child

- 7% Clarke-Oconee
- 4% Glynn
- 3% Dublin JC

3% on average of Georgians would refer a confirmed abuser to a helpline

- 2% Clarke-Oconee
- 4% Glynn
- 4% Dublin JC



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Actions Taken				
	Relative MIGHT Be Sexually Abusing a Child	Non-Relative MIGHT Be Sexually Abusing a Child	Relative DEFINITELY Sexually Abusing a Child	Non-Relative DEFINITELY Sexually Abusing a Child
Talk to Them About It	56% (state) 61% (C-O) 47% (G) 52% (D)	27% (state) 28% (C-O) 22% (G) 25% (D)	15% (state) 18% (C-O) 11% (G) 10% (D)	6% (state) 7% (C-O) 4% (G) 3% (D)
Call Police or Social Services	33% (state) 27% (C-O) 41% (G) 32% (D)	60% (state) 55% (C-O) 68% (G) 57% (D)	75% (state) 56% (C-O) 76% (G) 77% (D)	88% (state) 89% (C-O) 88% (G) 90% (D)
Refer them to Help	6% (state) 7% (C-O) 5% (G) 7% (D)	7% (state) 6% (C-O) 4% (G) 9% (D)	6% (state) 4% (C-O) 4% (G) 8% (D)	3% (state) 2% (C-O) 4% (G) 6% (D)
Give Helpline Number	3% (state) 1% (C-O) 1% (G) 2% (D)	3% (state) 2% (C-O) 4% (G) 6% (D)	2% (state) 3% (C-O) 6% (G) 2% (D)	2% (state) 1% (C-O) 3% (G) 0% (D)
Do Nothing	1% (state) 1% (C-O) 0% (G) 0% (D)	1% (state) 1% (C-O) 1% (G) 1% (D)	0% (state) 0% (C-O) 0% (G) 0% (D)	0% (state) 0% (C-O) 0% (G) 0% (D)
Don't Know	4% (state) 5% (C-O) 6% (G) 7% (D)	3% (state) 9% (C-O) 2% (G) 3% (D)	3% (state) 3% (C-O) 3% (G) 3% (D)	2% (state) 1% (C-O) 1% (G) 1% (D)

(C-O = Clarke and Oconee Counties; G = Glynn County; D = Dublin Judicial Circuit)

Survey Methodology:

Schapiro Research Group, Inc. conducted this survey. A total of 700 residents were surveyed (400 statewide, 100 from Clarke and Oconee Counties, 100 from the Dublin Judicial Circuit – Johnson, Laurens, Treutlen, and Twiggs Counties, and 100 from Glynn County). Respondents' telephone numbers were generated using a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) procedure. Interviewers randomly chose an adult age 18 or over to interview. Interviewing was conducted from May 12 to May 16, 2003.

All surveys involve a margin of error. The margin of error for this study is plus or minus 5 percentage points for the statewide sample and plus or minus 10 percentage points for the pilot site samples. Findings for the statewide survey indicate there is a 95% chance the difference is real and not due to a sampling error. The smaller pilot site samples are less significant due to sample size with a 90% chance that the difference is not due to a sampling error.



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Demographics:

This survey collected information on respondents' age and race and the type of community they live in. The respondents were also asked if children lived in their home.

Type of Community				
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Don't Know
Statewide	28%	39%	32%	1%
Clarke/Oconee	39%	47%	23%	1%
Glynn	24%	56%	16%	4%
Dublin JC	21%	13%	63%	3%

Age				
	18-29	30-39	40-49	50 and over
Statewide	15%	18%	20%	47%
Clarke/Oconee	19%	21%	18%	40%
Glynn	13%	17%	12%	58%
Dublin JC	18%	18%	20%	43%

Race				
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Statewide	71%	24%	2%	1%
Clarke/Oconee	78%	18%	1%	3%
Glynn	76%	23%	0%	0%
Dublin JC	68%	31%	0%	0%

Children Living in Home		
	Yes	No
Statewide	35%	65%
Clarke/Oconee	35%	65%
Glynn	30%	69%
Dublin JC	44%	56%

*This report was contributed to by Stop It Now! Minnesota.