

Sexually Assaulted Children: National Estimates & Characteristics

Published August 2008

- In 1999, an estimated 285,400 children were victims of a sexual assault and 35,000 were victims of some other type of sex offense.
- An estimated 44% of the child victims of sexual assault and other sex offenses experienced an act of sexual penetration.
- Sexual assault victims were disproportionately female (89%) and ages 12-17 (81%).
- Most (95%) of the sexual assault victims were assaulted by a male. Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ (71%) were assaulted by someone they were acquainted with or knew by sight, 10% by a family member.
- 29% of the sexual assault victims were assaulted by a youth age 17 or younger.
- Police were contacted in regard to only 30% of the sexually assaulted children.
- The most common reason for not contacting the police was that the victimized youth did not want the caretakers to find out about the episode because of circumstances they probably would have disapproved of, such as the youth's being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the assault.
- 31% of these children were assaulted during the summer and were more likely to be victimized on a Friday or Saturday compared to other days and least likely to be attacked in the morning compared to other times of the day.
- Rape (defined as anal, oral or vaginal penetration in this study) was the most common sex crime (44%) perpetrated against youth.