

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/sexual-abuse-of-children-with-disabilities-a-national-snapshot>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

Children with disabilities are three times more likely than children without them to be victims of sexual abuse, and the likelihood is even higher for children with intellectual or mental health disabilities. These children face many challenges in reporting the abuse and receiving vital services designed to meet their needs. Without receiving support, these children suffer long-term aftereffects, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and depression, as well as an increased risk of victimization in adulthood. Vera's Center on Victimization and Safety partnered with the Ms. Foundation for Women in 2012 to examine the prevalence of this abuse and existing responses and to recommend next steps for a national strategy to respond to this epidemic. This issues brief summarizes the study, its findings, and its recommendations.

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