



If Your Child Has Been Sexually Violated A Guide to Selecting an Attorney

Keep Kids Safe 
Stop Childhood Sexual Abuse

A Guide to Selecting an Attorney if Your Child Has Been Sexually Violated

Keep Kids Safe suggests that victims and their families begin seeking legal representation during the criminal process. This allows your chosen attorney to begin investigating and preparing for your civil case without risk of exceeding your state's statute of limitations. But how do you find the right attorney? This guide can help.

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Introduction

Child sexual abuse carries life-long mental and emotional consequences on victims. If you are the parent or guardian of a child who has been the victim of sexual abuse, an experienced child sexual abuse attorney can be of great help when navigating the legal process. The right

attorney will be your advocate and will fight to protect the rights of you and your child in an effort to hold the perpetrator(s) accountable for their reprehensible actions in criminal court while also making it easier for you to seek civil action.

Regardless of who violated or molested your child, it's critical to put an end to the abuse before the predator harms any more children. To do this, it will become necessary to take legal action against the abuser.

Seeking Criminal Justice

Pursuing criminal action is an important first step in achieving justice for the victim of child sexual abuse and, if found guilty, a predator will serve time in jail. If an institution is found liable for criminal actions, such as failing to prevent or report the sexual abuse, they too can be charged with a crime and be held accountable.

A prosecutor as assigned by the local District Attorney handles criminal cases against child molesters. During the criminal case, a prosecutor will usually help victims and their families with the criminal process. It is also advisable that you immediately consult with an attorney experienced with child molestation cases. Having an attorney advocate from the onset ensures that your legal rights in a civil case along with evidence is preserved for any potential civil action.

Criminal Law versus **Civil Law**

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Victims of childhood sexual abuse may pursue justice through both the criminal and civil courts.

DEFINED

CRIMINAL Where the accused is found either innocent or guilty of a crime, such as sexual abuse, and the appropriate punishment is decided.

CIVIL Where victims can seek justice against their abuser and any organization that enabled their abuse, in the form of compensation.

PURPOSE

CRIMINAL To punish predators through incarceration and mandatory sex-offender registration. Punishment hopes to create a safer society by deterring other would-be predators.

CIVIL To compensate victims for the lifelong effect of sexual abuse. Holding institutions and organizations liable for enabling predators also hopes to encourage preventative measures.

Pursuing Civil Justice

Pursuing civil justice is a vital tool in obtaining compensation for your child's medical expenses including psychological treatment such as therapy or counseling. In most cases, survivors of child sexual abuse will need special care to best help them recover emotionally and psychologically from their trauma.

A childhood sexual abuse victim will be affected in many ways during their lifetime. Even the best counseling does not guarantee that a child will think of or attempt suicide, engage in self-destructive behavior such as sexual promiscuity,

alcohol or drug abuse, or experience difficulty maintaining healthy relationships of both a personal and professional nature. Your child needs an attorney who understands that the effects of child sex abuse are life-long and will require adequate compensation to cover the damage caused to your child.



Additionally, an experienced child sexual abuse attorney will fight to ensure that victims are vindicated by holding all parties responsible, whether a single predator or an institution. By holding institutions such as religious institutions, youth organizations, or schools you can help make meaningful change and protect others from future harm.

When to Consult a Civil Attorney

The danger in cases of child sexual abuse is waiting too long to step forward. It is important to understand that each state enforces a statute of limitations restricting how much time can go by before filing a civil lawsuit.

For this reason, Keep Kids Safe suggests that victims and their families begin seeking legal representation during the criminal process. This allows your chosen attorney to begin investigating and preparing for your civil case without risk of exceeding your state's statute of limitations.

How to Choose a Civil Attorney

Finding a good attorney will have long-term implications for the welfare of child sexual abuse victims — not only in regards to the compensation received, but in the level of comfort and personal attention the victim and your family experience throughout the life of your civil case.

When speaking with an attorney, you will want to ensure that they:

- Are knowledgeable and experienced in handling child sexual abuse cases
- Are dedicated to helping victims and their families and are attentive to your situation
- Have the financial resources to properly investigate, prepare, and take your case to trial

To minimize the risk of any further trauma to the victim, families should look for an attorney who takes a multidisciplinary approach by working with local law enforcement, the District Attorney, mental health professionals, and other experts.

Questions to Ask an Attorney

When filing a civil case, it's important that your legal representation is concerned with more than winning monetary restitution. To provide the best support, an attorney should be capable and willing to take the time necessary to help you fully understand your options, as well as prepare you for the challenges and difficulties that lay ahead.

Despite any challenges, the process of seeking civil justice should provide child sexual abuse victims with the opportunity to heal. The following questions are useful in determining whether an attorney shares this goal:

- What percentage of your practice is dedicated to representing child sex abuse victims?
- Provide examples of child sexual abuse cases that you have tried and what were the outcomes?
- How many childhood sexual abuse cases have you taken to trial?
- Do you typically conduct focus groups in a child sexual abuse case? If so, how many?
- Do you have the financial resources to go up against institutions?
- Has your work with child sex abuse victims ever resulted in meaningful change to protect other kids?
- Have you spoken to groups on child sexual abuse or received honors for your work on these type of cases?

Getting Started

Confronting a predator who has victimized you or a member of your family takes courage. To aid in the process, Keep Kids Safe has established a list of preferred attorneys who will help you and are actively involved in holding predators and the institutions that enabled their behavior accountable for their actions. These attorneys have demonstrated a commitment to victims throughout each step of the process.

Corsiglia McMahon & Allard, LLP
www.child-molestation-attorney.com
(408) 289-1417



The law firm of Corsiglia McMahon & Allard has a national reputation and a proven record of holding child molesters and their enablers accountable for their negligent actions.

Mr. Robert Allard has been the driving force in uncovering the largest sexual abuse scandal in amateur athletics in the United States and twice has been honored by major swimming publications for his work in making the sport of swimming safer through litigation and advocacy.

Lauren Cerri has represented numerous child sex abuse victims against individual perpetrators and institutions. In teaming up with Mr. Allard to protect children, Ms. Cerri says that she is frequently asked, "How do you what you do? Isn't it difficult?" Her response is, "How can I not do what I do?"

Estey & Bomberger, LLP
www.childmolestationvictims.com
(800) 925-0723



The mission of Estey & Bomberger is to end the sexual abuse of our community's most precious commodity – our children.

Founding partner Stephen Estey's knowledge and expertise has allowed the firm to successfully represent numerous victims of institutional sexual abuse.

In 2010, Estey obtained a \$30,000,000 verdict in the case of John Doe vs. Giarretto, the largest sexual abuse settlement ever awarded in California to a single recipient. In 2012, Estey represented a victim of Martin Stobbe, a teacher at Queen Anne Elementary School in the Los Angeles Unified School District. The jury in that case awarded \$23 million to the victim following a 15-day trial.

The Reeves Law Firm

www.thereeveslawfirm.com

(256) 355-3311



Mr. Reeves has practiced law for 24 years and has represented children as a guardian ad litem for victims of child sexual abuse and helped injured children recover for their injuries in civil cases.

He has taught trial skills to attorneys in Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia and Wyoming. Mr. Reeves has also taught, adjunct, at the University of Alabama School of Law.

In 2008, Reeves was elected to the City Council for Decatur, Alabama where he led the funding of projects that resulted in millions being spent to help children with the arts, sports and recreation, and education. In 2011, he was recognized by his alma mater, the University of North Alabama, with the Political Service Award."

No representation is made that the quality of the legal services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers.

Saeed & Little, LLP

www.sllawfirm.com

(317) 721-9214



Jon Little started his career as a law clerk in the County Attorney's office in Flagstaff, Arizona in 2007. Since then he has tried numerous civil and criminal cases to jury across the US.

Within a year of graduating law school Mr. Little started what was to become the first of several cases against United Swimming for harboring known-child molester coaches inside their organization for decades. Due to the advocacy of Mr. Little and Robert Allard the United States Olympic Committee created the first Safe Sport program in the history of Olympic Sports in 2010.

Mr. Little focuses his practice on helping the victims of institutionally protected molesters fight for cultural change to protect future children particularly in athletics.

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If you have questions or would like more information about us, please e-mail attorney Robert Allard at info@keepkidssafe.com