

## Why Did My Child Go Along With The Abuse?

1. Children are raised to be "nice", to be courteous and polite. They have a natural outpouring of trust and affection for others. These innocent child-like qualities set up children to be abused by a person who is a master at manipulation and trickery. The fact that the child often cares about the offender adds to the confusion.
2. People who molest children usually have a pattern of establishing caring and trusting relationships with children before they sexually molest them. This is the beginning of the "grooming process". The offenders initially engage in appropriate and affectionate touching then gradually move to sexual touching. The change is often so subtle that the child is unclear about whether or not this touching is something adults normally do with children.
3. When they become aware that this is abuse, not affection, they are often confused by their earlier compliance. A skillful abuser uses the resulting guilt to convince the child she/he was somehow responsible. This guilt is one of the most difficult treatment issues for the child.
4. Children do not agree to being abused; they feel as if they have no real choice. They are sometimes convinced by offenders or other adults that they went along, but in reality they were forced, tricked, confused and/or manipulated into complying. This is a far cry from consent.

## The Grooming Process: Steps Offenders Take to Set-Up Children

- 1. Seek Out Approachable Child:** Offenders usually select children who are readily available to them - e.g. relatives, friends, and neighbors. They focus on children who have emotional needs for friendship and attention.
- 2. Establish Relationship with Child:** Offenders find ways to build up trust and friendships with children.
- 3. Break Down the Child's Resistance to Touch:** Offenders find ways to touch the child a lot. As a result the child is often unaware or confused when the touch becomes sexual.
- 4. Find Ways to Isolate the Child:** Offenders find excuses to be alone with children so they can molest them.
- 5. Blame the Child and Keep the Secret:** Offenders try to make the child feel responsible so they won't tell.