A checklist to help prevent sexual abuse and molestation.

In the U.S., roughly one in 10 children will be sexually abused before they turn 18, and only 38% of such cases are reported.\(^1\) Plus, the frequency of sexual assault against people with intellectual disabilities is high when compared with the rest of society.\(^2\) Molestation incidents can be devastating to victims and to human services providers, which can incur liability claims and loss of reputation and clients.

Check all the boxes to help reduce the likelihood of abuse in your facility.

- Develop a written, legally reviewed zero-tolerance sexual abuse and molestation prevention policy, and communicate it to all levels of staff and volunteers who work with children and vulnerable populations.
- In your policy, make sure the terms sexual abuse, molestation and related misconduct are clearly defined, and ensure that response actions to alleged perpetrators include suspension or reassignment.
- Conduct screening and background checks on all prospective employees and volunteers.
- Develop and implement an employee and volunteer training program that requires signatures to acknowledge they reviewed the policy.
- Limit one-on-one interactions to the extent feasible.
- Monitor your staff to detect signs of misconduct.
- Ensure that procedures for reporting suspected or observed allegations include at least two internal contacts with authority to implement response actions immediately.
- Maintain an anti-retaliation policy so that those reporting suspected abuse will be protected.
- Develop and practice specific investigation procedures for a trained internal team or outside third party.
- Be prepared to notify and cooperate with state and local law enforcement agencies if and when any instance of abuse takes place.