

## **Original Article**

Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Skills Of Parents: Literature Review

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#### **Abstract**

**Introduction:** Child sexual abuse (CSA) can negatively impact children's physical, psychological, and social impacts. Parents are responsible for preventing children from becoming victims of CSA. Unfortunately, many parents do not have good skills or behavior, so they are at risk of increasing the incidence of child sexual abuse.

**Objective:** This study aims to explore parental skills in preventing child sexual abuse.

Methods: This study was conducted using the literature review method, using the CINAHL, Science Direct, Pubmed and Proquest databases. Articles were screened using inclusion criteria published in 2010-2020, full text, in English, quasi-experimental research design, Randomized Controlled Trial, and Clinical Trial. It was found that five articles were selected after an assessment using JBI (Joanna Briggs Institute).

Results: Parents' skills or behavior in prevented child sexual abuse, including teached self-protection skills and handling steps in the event of sexual abuse, establishing good communication, providing education related to sexual abuse prevention, discussing sexual abuse, and providing a more favorable safe environment, such as child supervision and parenting skills. Some of these were skills that influence the prevention of CSA. But from various studies, it was found that the parental skills were low in preventing CSA.

**Conclusion:** It is found that parents' skills are lack in preventing CSA, because in general parents only take part of the preventive measures for CSA.

Suggestion: The need for interventions to increase the knowledge, attitudes, awareness and motivation of parents in preventing child sexual abuse.

Keywords

Child sexual abuse, parental skills, prevention

#### INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of child sexual abuse (CSA) is very worrying. CSA is sexual contact between children and older adults who use children as the satisfaction of their sexual desires involving children up to the age of 18 (1). Child sexual abuse includes exhibitionism, peeping, caressing, seducing, oral sex, and sexual intercourse (2). This





action is carried out using coercion, threats, bribes, tricks and even pressure (2). Therefore, the ability of the perpetrator makes this crime difficult to avoid. Sexual abuse currently stalks children wherever they are (3).

Tragically, CSA generally occurs in an environment that is a safe and comfortable place for children, and the perpetrator is someone that the child knows. According to Ayres et., al, in Paramastri (2014) states that the perpetrator is family that known by the child (30%-40%), people outside the family that trusted by the child (50%), people who are older or greater than the child (40%), and stranger (10%) (1). Not a few of the perpetrators were people who had close relationships with the victims, such as parents and teachers. This condition is a big concern because it has included violations of the prevailing morals and laws.

Children are a vulnerable group to sexual abuse. This is because children are always depicted as weak or helpless and have a high dependence to adults around them, which makes them helpless when threatened so that they do not tell adults what happened to them (2). With this weak role, it makes it easier for perpetrators to carry out their actions so that cases of sexual abuse occur.

Based on data obtained from the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2020, high and middle income countries in 24 countries show the prevalence of sexual abuse in children between 8% -31% occurs in girls and 3% -17% occurs in boys under 18 years (4). Meanwhile, in 14 lower middle income countries, the prevalence of girls experiencing sexual abuse under 18 years was 4% in Cambodia, 7% in Laos, to 33% in Zimbabwe and 35% in Uganda (4). The prevalence of child sexual abuse in the Asia-Pacific region in 2014 most occur in boys 16.46% in low-income countries (North Korea, Myanmar and Cambodia) and for girls 21.86% most of sexual abuse occur in lower middle income countries (including Indonesia) (5). Based on a survey in 2017 conducted in 5 regions of Indonesia, namely Sumatra, Java and Bali, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi, the prevalence of child sexual abuseren was 6.36% for boys and 6.28% for girls who at least experienced one form of sexual abuse under 18 years old (6). According to the latest data from SIMFONI PPA (Sistem Informasi Online Perlindungan Perempuan dan Anak) on January 1 - June 19 2020, there have been reported 1,848 cases of child sexual abuser (7). With the high prevalence and number of cases of child sexual abuseren, it needs to be in the attention so that parents are able to take precautions.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) related to the abuse prevention, sexual abuse of children often coincides with other forms of abuse and neglect which can be a direct or indirect cause of incidents of child sexual abuse (8). Combination of individual, relational, community and social factors contributes to the risk of harassment and neglect (8). Certain factors that can increase the risk of child abuse and neglect, such as: a family environment that is not supportive or in a high stress situation, poverty, low parental education, absence of the role of parents in educating children or single parenting, domestic abuse, lack of love, parental understanding of the needs and development of children, and the lack of parental ability to educate children (9). The environment, family, especially the role of parents are important factors that influence the incidence of abuse against children

CSA will have various negative impacts on children, both physically, psychologically and socially. The impacts that often occur in children with sexual abuse

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are: children feel betrayed and do not trust others so that children do not dare to tell stories related to events that occur, become traumatized by sexual relations, feel helpless and tortured when disclosing the incident of abuse (2). CSA can make victims feel guilt and shame which formed due to helplessness and a feeling that they do not have the power to control themselves, also victims will have a bad self-image because they think that their condition is different from other children, even some victims use drugs and drinking alcohol to punish his body and trying to avoid memories of sexual abuse (10). This bad impact will affect the quality of life of the victim.

Indirectly, the condition of the family or family environment, the capacity of parents to provide protection, education, and parenting skills is an important factor in preventing child sexual abuse and is closely related to the role of parents against children. There are six roles that parents can play in efforts to prevent sexual abuse against children, including: (1) As a booster (encouraging children to be confident and independent in fighting crime); (2) As educators (parents are a place where children get an education), as well as parents, are also the first and foremost educators for children by providing early education as a provision for experience for children (11); (3) As a communicator, two-way communication between parents and children about how to prevent child sexual, (4) As supervisors, parents can supervise the use of cellular telephones and the internet that accessible for children. As role models, parents can provide examples of positive internet use; (5) As counselors, parents have a role in discussions with children about whether there are problems the child is experiencing (12).

The role of family or parents in preventing sexual abuse is most important, therefore in efforts to prevent sexual abuse against children, skills are needed for parents because parents play a leading role in the overall child sexual abuse prevention system (Sandarwati, 2014; Xie et al, 2016). Views on sexual abuse against children will influence the way parents to educate and protect their children. How the sexual abuse against children seen as something that can affect how parents educate and protect their children. Knowledge in prevention and self-protection skills in children is positively influenced by parent's views on child sexual abuse and parent-child communication regarding the prevention of child sexual abuse (15). When child sexual abuse has occurred, warning signs of sexual abuse against children can be identified by trained and skilled parents, and parents will be able to be supportive and sensitive, so it can reduce feelings of self-blame, isolation, and anger in terms of responding to disclosure of child sexual abuse by children (victims) (Xie et al., 2016). Therefore, it has been suggested for parents to be able to participate in efforts to prevent child sexual abuse by many to protect children from incidents of sexual abuse against children (14). Based on the background described, the researcher intends to compile a systematic literature review to explore the skills of parents in preventing sexual abuse against children.

### **METHODS**





An articles search by using an electronic database in September 2020. The databases used in the search for related literature were CINAHL (EBSCO), ScienceDirect, Pubmed, and Proquest. Article searches using English keywords are list in table 1.

Table 1. Article search keywords

Child Sexual Abuse	Parental Skills	Prevention
"child sexual abuse" OR	"skill of parent"	"prevent" OR
"child sexual harassment"		"prevention" OR
OR "child sexual abuse"		"preventing"

Inclusion criteria for article searches include the year articles are from 2010 to 2020, articles in full text, and English. Selected articles were research articles with research designs other than quasi-experimental, RCT (Randomized Controlled Trial), meta-analysis, and systematic review. Comments, thesis, editorial, and proceedings types will eliminate during the search process.

Based on the search results using keywords, found in CINAHL (EBSCO) are 86 articles, Sciencedirect is 197 articles, Proquest is 2586 articles, and Pubmed as many as 193 articles. Through selection with inclusion criteria, there were 352 remaining articles, include CINAHL (EBSCO) with 26 articles, Sciencedirect with 60 articles, Proquest with 149 articles, and Pubmed with 117 articles. The remaining articles were further analyzed and identified by focusing on the relevance of the article title to the literature review theme in preventing sexual abuse against children. The search exclusion criteria are articles that not match with the research theme, including the articles that focus on the knowledge and abilities of children and teachers in sexual abuse, preventive efforts to prevent sexual abuse in schools, focus on victims of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), the programs which only addresses children, legality and legal aspects related to victims of CSA, abuse against children in general, institutional responses to CSA, child exploitation, and therapy for victims of CSA. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 7 articles are selected then assessed using the JBI (Joanna Briggs Institute's) appraisal, and 5 final articles are selected.



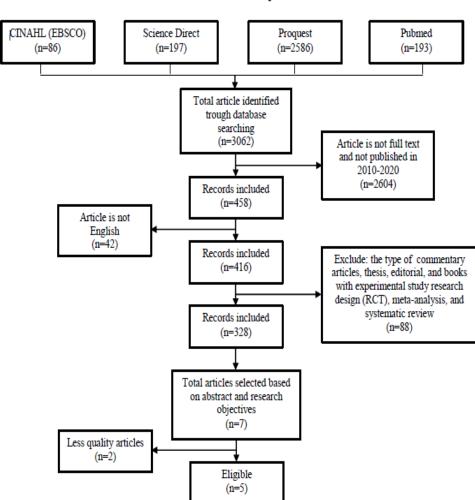


Chart 1. Article selection process

### **RESULTS**

Based on 5 articles selected by the type of cross-sectional research conducted in Colombia, Australia, UK, and China, there were 5 different studies regarding the skills or behavior of parents in preventing child sexual abuseren. The first article is about parental communication skills.

This research was conducted by C. Ramirez et al. (2011) in Colombia, who stated that the prevalence of child sexual abuseren was 1.2%. The majority of cases occurred in families with boys and girls, namely 56.3%, while boys were 22.3% and girls 21.4%. This study also states that parent-child communication has an impact on reducing child sexual abuse by 3.5 times compared to those who do not with an OR = 3.63. Meanwhile, positive parent-child interaction (affection) obtained an OR = 0.62 and negative parent-child interactions obtained OR = 0.01 (16).

The second study revealed that the majority of parents of preschool children have positive attitudes towards CSA prevention education. Parents who had preschool-age children from 16 grades at 3 preschools in Beijing were respondents in this study (response rate = 80%). Less than a third of parents believe that child sexual abuseren is



often carried out by their closest people, and less than 30% of parents believe that there are no clear physical signs of a child who has experienced sexual abuse. Less than half of parent respondents taught their children skills to protect themselves from sexual abuse and how to handle sexual abuse when it occurs. From the results of the multivariate linear regression calculation, it shows that the knowledge of both parents (B = 0.11, SE B = 0.05, p = 0 0.03) and attitudes (B = 0.27, SE B = 0.10, p = 0 , 01) is an important factor in communication between parents and their children regarding the prevention of CSA (17).

Multivariate linear regression was used to determine the relationship between parental scores on education provision and seven independent variables, including parental knowledge, parental attitudes, parental education history related to CSA taught by their own parents, parental education level, age of the parents, age of the child and sex of the child. Multivariate linear regression showed that among all variables, the history of parents receiving CSA education from their own parents (B = 0.61, SE B = 0.17, p <.00), age of the child (B = 0.30, SE B = 0.09, p = .00), parents 'attitudes (B = 0.27, SE B = 0.10, p = .01), and parents' CSA knowledge (B = 0.11, SE B = 0.05, p = 0.03), were significant factors. The four variables contributed 10.0% to the variation in scores obtained by parents in the practice of providing CSA education (F = 10.17, p <.00, R2 = 0.10) (17).

The third article is qualitative research on the perceptions and practices of parents in the prevention of child sexual abuse in Beijing, China. This research was conducted by Xie et all (2016). This study aims to explore how Chinese parents perceive and respond to the problem of child sexual abuse in the way they do. Initially, the sample of this study was 27 people who met the assessment criteria, but only 26 completed interviews and 1 person resigned during the interview. The result of this study is that parents' definition of child sexual abuse includes four levels of sexual activity (sexual intercourse, other physical sexual activity, non-physical sexual activity, and verbal sexual activity) and raises several additional factors. Many of the parents who were respondents in the study did not believe that child sexual abuse was an important or serious issue and said that child sexual abuse is rare in the general population of children in China. Although all parents in this study agreed that it was necessary to educate their children about the risks of sexual abuse in children, only 9 parents discussed that preventing child sexual abuse with their children. It was also found that several obstacles hinder their practice of CSA prevention, especially their ability or willingness to discuss CSA with their children (14).

The next article is in the form of a qualitative study conducted by Rudolph et al (2018) in the country of Australia regarding the views of parents on the protection and prevention of child sexual abuseren. The sample consisted of 24 people, consisting of 17 mothers and 7 fathers who met the assessment criteria. The results of this study were that the data were then compressed into five major themes, namely: (a) parents' understanding of child sexual abuse, care, and risks; (b) parent-led child sexual abuse prevention education; (c) beliefs about child sexual abuse education for parents; (d) children who recognize and reject child sexual abuse; and (e) the responsibility of parents for child protection. The results show that parents have good knowledge about the prevention of child sexual abuse and its risks. However, they did not provide comprehensive prevention messages to their children as recommended by prevention

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campaigns and many concentrated on the dangers of kidnapping (18). Gaps between parents 'knowledge and communication with children can be caused by the parents' belief that there may be dangers associated with educating the child about child sexual abuse (for example, such as triggering new fears and worries or reducing trust in others) and that the method may not be effective in protecting children from child sexual abuse (18).

The fifth article was obtained by parents from Australia and the UK (N = 248), with children aged 6 to 11 years, conducting an online survey. About half of parents discussed CSA directly, while 35% told their children that the CSA perpetrator may be a family member. More in-depth discussion of other topics about CSA such as bodily integrity and kidnapping The analysis showed that parents who discuss CSA with their children also conduct practice more positive, have more discussion about other sensitive topics, and can assess the risk of CSA for children (in general) more significant (18).

### **DISCUSSION**

In the research of Ramirez, C., et al. (2011), prevalence of child sexual abuse at 1.2%. The majority of cases occurred in families with boys and girls, which was 56.3% while for boys it was 22.3% and girls 21.4%. One factor in the low prevalence rate is due to the ignorance and unwillingness of the mother in reporting it to the interviewer. This study also found that parent and child communication had an impact in reducing child sexual abuse by 3.5 times compared to those who did not with an 0R=3.63 rating. While the interaction of parents-children positive (affection) obtained a value of 0R=0.62 and negative parent-child interaction obtained a value of 0R=0.01. There are other factors in child sexual abuse, namely families experiencing partner and community abuse, maternal beliefs, maternal childhood abuse experiences, and external abuse (community fights) (16).

Parental communication presents family values by communicating to their children about the child's feelings, child's fears, child emotions, child friendships and child problems, time spent listening to the child, and knowledge related to the child's location. Good communication and parenting patterns can be a protective factor in the occurrence of child abuse including child sexual abuse. This is because parents who communicate regularly with their children are more likely to identify potential risks of child sexual abuse before this risk occurs and children who communicate more often with their parents may become better prepared to cope with situations leading to child sexual abuse (16).

In the study of Zhang et al. (2019) regarding the attitudes and knowledge of parents about the prevention of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), there was a gap in the knowledge of parents who have preschool age children about CSA prevention. On the results of the questionnaire, there are some items that have a low true answer rate such as the point "the most violent offenders are the closest person" and the point "parental trust in the child who reports an incident of abuse". But more than half of parents in China believe the culprit is a foreigner, which is the main focus of parents in educating their children (17). On the second point more than half of parents in the study doubted

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that children could be trusted when they reported incidents of abuse. This discovery may be due to some traditional cultural traits with the influence of Chinese traditions of sexual conservatism that make it difficult for children to express about sexual problems openly and describe incidents of abuse clearly. Therefore, the limited knowledge of parents in China about CSA makes it difficult to correct judgment based on the description of their children which is less clear (17).

Other variables such as the influence of educational practices by parents on the prevention of CSA in the form of discussions with their children become one of the important aspects. The results revealed that most parents only discuss about self-protection in general and do not discuss specifically about CSA or what steps to take if sexual acts occur. Less than half of respondents said their children were taught to tell their parents or other trusted adults if CSA occurred. The practice of providing education by parents about the prevention of CSA with attitudes and knowledge owned by parents is interconnected with each other. Research shows that parents' CSA knowledge is significantly related to educational practices. It was seen that parents with higher scores on the CSA knowledge test tended to discuss sexual risk with their preschool-aged children. In addition to preventing by teaching more CSA knowledge and self-protection skills, parents with higher CSA knowledge also provide a safer environment such as supervision and skills in good parenting for their children.

The last variable is the relationship between the practice of education by parents and the sex and age of the child. The results found that more girls received education on CSA prevention than boys (told girls: 84.3% vs boys: 74.4%, p = 0.02). The lack of parental communication with preschool-age children is due to consideration of the age of the child who is too young, thus raising concerns about the difficulty of the child in understanding and too much exposure to sex (17).

According to Xie et all (2016), many parents in Beijing China think that the problem of child sexual abuse is a less important or serious problem because the government and the public at large have not noticed or tried to deal with the problem of child sexual abuse in China, and many parents prefer to handle the problem for themselves if it happens to their child. Regarding the practice of preventing child sexual abuse by parents in Beijing China, only a few of the parents in this study did so to their children, for several reasons including: (1) feel that the protection given to the child is sufficient; (2) may be harmful to the child (may increase curiosity more about sex so that it will lead to the involvement of bad things); (3) the shame of talking about sex with a child; (4) do not know how to educate children about the prevention of child sexual abuse, and respondents who practice the prevention of child sexual abuse in children only explicitly. In the absence of adequate government attention and due to the lack of professional intervention services to deal with child sexual abuse cases in China, culturally relevant child sexual abuse prevention programs need to be developed in China and child sexual abuse prevention education for parents should be an important part of this initiative (14).

In Rudolph et al's (2018) study, overall, the findings show that parents have a good understanding of sexual abuse in children and their risks. But in this study, parents are reluctant to provide comprehensive education to their children about the risk of child sexual abuse. In this study, the fact is that none of the parents reported providing education related to the prevention of child sexual abuse according to the

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recommended guidelines (e.g. Darkness to Light and Stop it Now). Even parents who described education as the key to preventing sexual abuse against children reported that they had not provided comprehensive education to their children. The majority of parents in this study also doubted the effectiveness of child sexual abuse prevention education in helping their children avoid child sexual abuse and only one-third of parents supported education as an effective technique and/or the primary choice of prevention technique which supports the view that it will help children to deal with cases of child sexual abuse. Almost all parents also described potential dangers, such as fear, anxiety, loss of trust and innocence, and relationship breakdown. However, some parents can put their worries aside. The results of the interview analysis show that many parents have high expectations to their children who will avoid or flee from child sexual abuse scenarios. Parents expect their children to assess social situations, be aware of signs of danger, and be able to make appropriate decisions to avoid incidents of sexual abuse against children (18).

Parents whose test results showed more positive parenting practices were more likely to communicate about CSA with their children, felt that their children were less at risk, and more confident about their ability to protect their children from sexual abuse. This shows that positive interactions between children and parents can increase protective behavior from CSA. In this study, less than half of the parent respondents conveyed more in-depth information regarding CSA to their children, but almost all parents taught their children general things such as about private body parts.

Therefore, efforts should also be made to understand the reasons why most parents do not discuss specifically the risk of CSA with their children. There are several possibilities for this, e.g. parents who may have understood the prevention of CSA and make it happen by being directly involved in positive care, rather than discussing the risk of CSA directly. Also, some parents provide direct education about the risk of CSA.

## **CONCLUSION**

Child sexual abuse is a common thing that happened around us, based on several articles that we found that many parents believe that perpetrators of sexual abuse come from people they know or near. Parental skills are very effective in preventing sexual abuse against children and there is a relationship between the knowledge parents have in preventing sexual violence against children.

Based on the article, we found that prevention that parents can take to prevent sexual abuse includes maintaining good communication between parents and children, discussing prevention of sexual abuse, having positive interactions (affection), teaching self-protection to children, and provide a safe environment for children. However, in the article, we found that many obstacles can hinder parents' skills in preventing sexual abuse against children, including the ability or willingness of parents to discuss with their children regarding sexual abuse, the presumption of parents that discussing with children regarding the prevention of sexual abuse is not effective in the prevention of CSA, and parents are concerned that the child's curiosity about sex will increase and lead to unwanted things.

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Suggestions for future researchers are to use more articles or journals related to the latest research to add data related to parental skills that can prevent sexual abuse in children. The results of this literature review are expected to be a reference for future researchers in conducting research related to parental skills in preventing sexual abuse against children and improving parental skills in preventing child sexual abuse.

Table 2. Results of review articles related to parental skills in preventing child sexual abuse

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No	Author Name, Year, & Place	Aim	Design	Sample	Result
1	Ramírez, C., Pinzón- rondón, A. M., & Carlos, J., 2011. Colombia	To determine the prevalence and assess the role of parent-child interactions in the incidence of child sexual abuse in Colombia.	Studi cross- sectional	1,089 biological mothers who have children under the age of 18 years	1.2% of the mothers reported that their children had been sexually abused. Families that communicated with their children were less likely to report child sexual abuse, each additional standard deviation of communication reduced child sexual abuse 3.5 times. The indicators of parental affection and negative treatment of the children were not associated with child sexual abuse. Families who experienced intimate partner and community violence were more likely to experience child sexual abuse.
2	Julia Rudolph et al, 2018. Australia and UK	Investigated whether parents who reported more positive parenting practices (i.e., monitoring, involvement, and communication) reported more discussion of child sexual abuse (CSA) with their children.	Cross- sectional study	248 parents (217 mothers and 23 fathers), aged from 20 to 59.	<ul> <li>Positive parenting was significantly positively correlated with discussion of CSA risk.</li> <li>Involvement was significantly positively correlated with discussion of CSA risk (r = 0.26, p &lt; 0.01), body integrity (r = 0.20, p &lt; 0.01), and sensitive topics (r = 0.13, p &lt; 0.05). Monitoring was significantly positively correlated with discussions about body integrity (r = 0.17, p &lt; 0.01), and communication was significantly positively correlated with discussion of CSA risk (r = 0.16, p &lt; 0.05), body integrity (r = 0.18, p &lt; 0.01), and sensitive topics (r = 0.23, p &lt; 0.01).</li> </ul>



3	Qian Wen Xie, Dong Ping Qiao, Xiao Lei Wang 2016. China	Explores how parents in China perceive and respond to child sexual abuse issues in the way they do.	Qualitative study	participants from diverse demographic backgrounds in seven districts of Beijing. Participants consist of 14 men and 12 women aged 30-46 years who have children at preschool or primary school age.	The results show that:  The parental definition of CSA includes four levels of sexual activity (sexual intercourse, physical other sexual activity, non-physical sexual activity, and verbal sexual activity) and raises several additional factors.  Many respondents didn't believe that CSA is a necessary or serious problem and that it was rare in the general population of children in China.  Parents feel that the risk of CSA varies between all children and their children, between boys and girls, and between poor and non-poor children. They insisted that perpetrators were more likely to be known than strangers.  Although all respondents agreed that it is necessary to educate children about the risks of CSA, only 9 respondents discussed the prevention of CSA with their children.  Several obstacles hinder their practice of CSA prevention, particularly their ability or willingness to discuss CSA with their children.
4	Julia Rudolph, Melanie J. Zimmer- Gembeck 2018 Australia	The aim of this qualitative study of 24 Australian parents was to 1) explain the parents' definition of CSA and their views on the prevention of CSA; 2) a preventive research approach with parents as the main agents in prevention; 3) explore parental prevention strategies; 4) identify parents' attitudes towards children's education as a method of prevention, and 5) inform future prevention research with parents.	Qualitative study	Participants were 17 mothers and 7 fathers with children under 18 years of age, aged 30-59 years, who live in suburban, coastal cities in Australia.	Overall, the findings suggest that parents have a good understanding of CSA and risk, but vary widely in the frequency and detail of the CSA education they provide their children.
5	Wenjing Zhang, Ping Ren, Guijin	The purpose of this study was to investigate Chinese parents'	Studi cross- sectional	373 participants who had	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Educational Practices of parents on the prevention of CSA:



Yin, dan Yichen Jin, 2019. China	attitudes, knowledge, and practices with their preschool-aged children on sexual abuse prevention education, and to explore the associated factors of	presci	choolers.	More than 90% of respondents have told their children not to accept gifts from strangers unless they have parental consent,
	parental educative practices on child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention.			80% of parents have told their young child that their private parts should not be touched by others, only 60% tell their child if someone wants to see or touch a part of the personally, they should say "no" and leave immediately. In addition, less than half of parents have told their children that if sexual abuse occurs, parents or adults other trusted trusts should be notified. Less than 10% of respondents reported that they provided audiovisual books or products on CSA prevention to their children.  Association between demographic factors and knowledge, attitudes, and educational practices:  - Parents with a bachelor's degree or higher have a higher average knowledge score compared to those with college or below  - Attitudes and values of practice, parents there is no significant difference between the two groups of Education level  - Parental gender is not associated with differences in knowledge scores, attitudes and practices, but further analysis shows that in two
				subscale items of knowledge, there are significant parental gender differences.

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