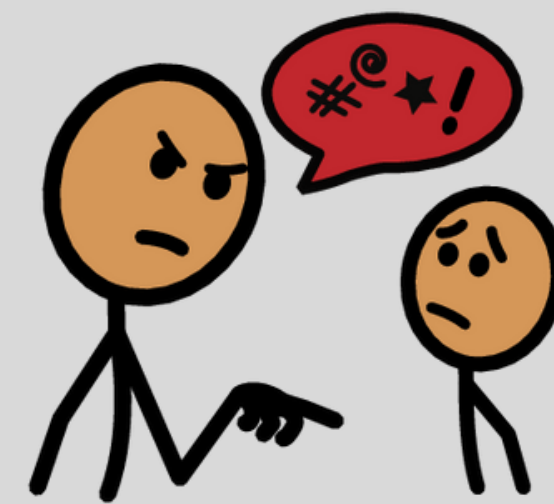


# ABUSE & AAC

## open access resource centre



1 in 3

**ALMOST ONE IN THREE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WORLDWIDE HAS EXPERIENCED ABUSE.**

Almost **one in three** children with disabilities worldwide has experienced abuse, according to a (2022) study published in The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health. Abuse is defined as physical, emotional or sexual violence, as well as neglect. The study found disabled children are more than two times as likely as non-disabled peers to be victims of violence.

<https://hollandbloorview.ca/>

Source: Holland Bloorview, Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Toronto, ON

<https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/>

Source: Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

Find the 2022 study here:

[The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health study](#)

3.5x

**CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES WERE 3.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO HAVE A SEXUAL ABUSE REPORT COMPARED TO THEIR PEERS WITHOUT INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES.**

Children with intellectual disabilities were **3.5 times more** likely to have a corroborated sexual abuse report when compared to their peers without intellectual disabilities, according to a 2023 study published in National Library of Medicine.

<https://nouvelles.umontreal.ca/en/>

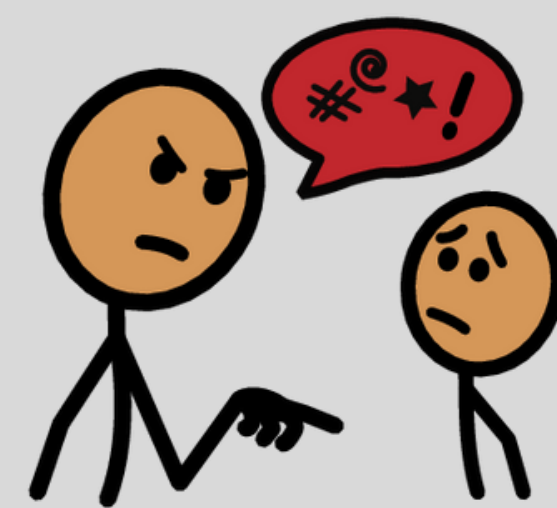
Source: Udem Nouvelles, Université de Montréal

Find the 2023 study here:

[National Library of Medicine study](#)

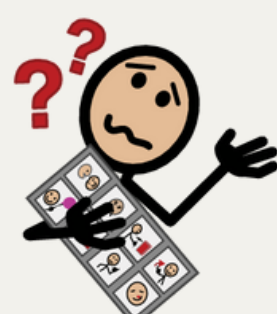
# ABUSE & AAC

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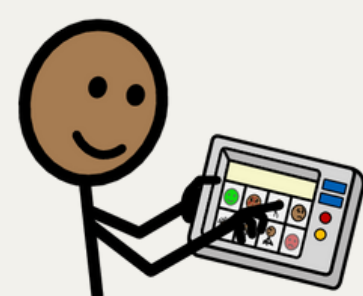
*Before deciding to remove vocabulary that might be considered inappropriate like private body parts or certain phrases:*

### CONSIDERATIONS



- What is the **age** of the user? Are the words age-appropriate?
- Are these words **new** to them?
- Are these words in their favorite movie/book/tv show?
- Is there a “Body Safety” folder to accompany it (ie. “good/bad touch, Stop that, No hugs”)?
- Does the removal of these words respect the user’s **autonomy**?
- Is family aware &/or did family request the words to be deleted?
- Do words need to be updated (to current social standards, or change to what specific words the family may use)?
- Does the user know how to **spell**?

### AAC USER



AAC User may use these words/phrases to:

- Report abuse or bullying.
- Communicate if/when something does not feel right.
- Communicate if/when something feels good.
- Communicate if/when something, someone or someplace makes them uncomfortable.
- Communicate if/when someone touches them inappropriately.
- Describe pain location (ie. rash, UTI, pain from an accident, etc).

### COMMUNICATION PARTNERS



Communication partners should, and may currently model these words when:

- In the bath or shower.
- Toileting.
- Dressing.
- Describing pain location.
- During Health/Sex Education or “Stranger Danger” classes.
- Teach the user when it is **appropriate** to use these words.
- Teach the user how to **turn down** (never mute!) the volume on their device.
- Always believe that the user **intended to say** what button they pressed, even if you think it was random, or an access issue/error.
- Respect **autonomous** communication. No one can really know what the user wants to say.
- Model other words like stranger, bully and safe.
- Ensure as many “People” are clearly listed and easy to find (ie. extended family members, neighbors, all School Staff-Custodians, Librarian, Substitutes).
- **NEVER USE HAND-OVER-HAND**, or hand-under-hand. It teaches them it is okay for others to touch their bodies and often results in aversion to their AAC device.