

CHILD ABUSE CHARGE

False Accusation • Child Molestation Crimes Against Children • Sexual Assault on a Child

An accusation of child abuse or molestation can have serious legal consequences and sex registration for life.

In the past several years, there has been a major increase in **accusations of crimes against children**. The media is constantly reporting on **sexual assaults on children, child abuse, molestation, pornography, neglect and other child-related crimes**.

Those accused of **child molestation, abuse or sexual assault crimes** are **despised, ostracized and/or shunned** by society—even if the accusation is **false**. The mere mention or suspicion of child molestation or sexual assault crimes is enough to have someone **chased out of the community or thrown out of his/her profession**.

A conviction could mean a lifetime registration as a **child sex offender**.

California Law

Most child abuse or molestation cases are charged under California Penal Code Sections 288(a) and 288.5(a).

- Section 288(a) states that “any person who commits a lewd or lascivious act on a child under the age of 14 is guilty of a **felony punishable in the state prison for 3 to 8 years**.” Each act constitutes one charge. Section 288.5(a) states that “any person who engages in 3 or more acts of substantial sexual conduct with a child under the age of 14, or 3 or more acts of lewd and lascivious conduct, is guilty of continuous sexual abuse on a child. This crime is also a **felony punishable with 6 to 16 years in the state prison**.”

The law defines **lewd and lascivious act** as any touching to arouse, appeal to, or gratify the sexual desires of either party. However, touching is not a required element of the accused offense.

Contact an Attorney Immediately

If you have been falsely accused or suspected of child abuse or molestation, or you're being investigated or charged formally of a crime against children, it is **critically important** to entrust your case to an **experienced attorney** who understands the law and how to defend these types of cases.

Whatever you do, **do not attempt to handle this matter on your own** or with advice from family members. If you have been contacted by the police for an interview, **do NOT speak to them unless your attorney is present**. Anything you say to the police can and will be used against you.