



Parents as Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Educators: Problems and Future Directions

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Parent-Led CSA Prevention Education

Sample 1: High SES

n = 248 parents (UK & Au)

Child Age = 6-11

Recruited: uni, schools,
parenting magazine

74% Some University (30%
postgraduate quals)

15% < \$50,000

50% > \$150,000

Sample 2: Vulnerable

n = 92 parents (Gold Coast)

Child Age = 2½ - 7

Referred by Child Safety, Health,
other services.

50% Some university

25% < \$50,000

36% > \$150,000

Sample 3: Qualitative

n =24 parents, 17 ♀ ,7 ♂ (Gold Coast)

Child Age = 1½ -15 years

Recruited through uni & schools

75% Caucasian, 12.5% Asian, 4% ATSI

66% Some university

17% < \$50,000

62% > \$150,000

Parent-led CSA Education

Child protective behaviours education is the main prevention method.

Parents should tell their children about CSA:

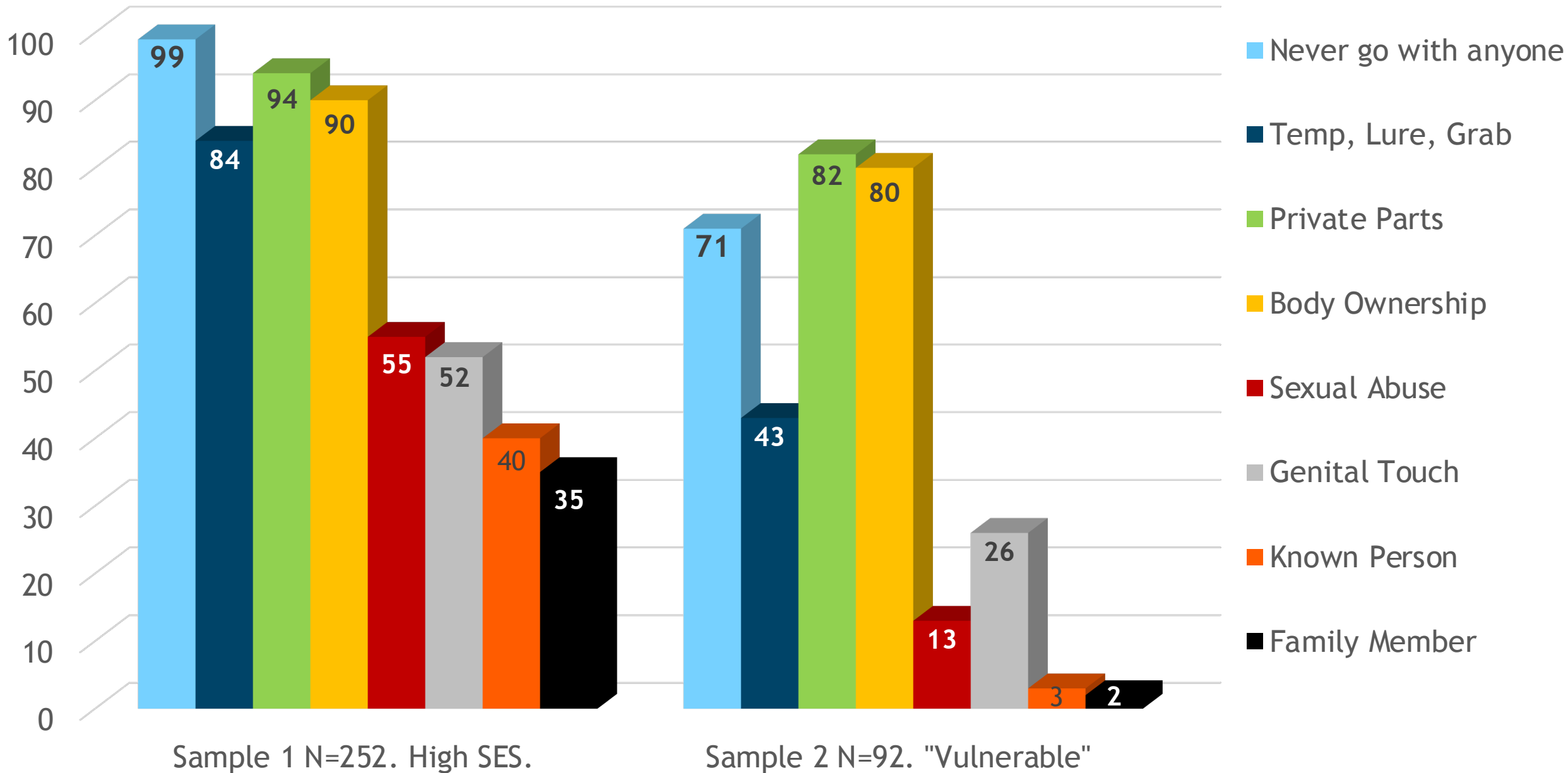
- often, & from a young age,
- using concrete examples,
- reinforcing identity of perpetrators,
- with a description of incentives
- and the safe responses the child should enact

Problem:

Evidence suggests they are not very good at it!



Rates of Parent-Led CSA Education (%)



Support for Parent-Led CSA Education ≠ Action

90+%

Children should be taught to recognise, resist and report CSA

52/55%

95%

Parents should teach CSA prevention

52/55%

74%

Children should be taught that known people and family members could be perpetrators

40/35%

Support for PLE ≠ Comprehensive Messages

50% said child education was the most effective method

BUT: None gave their children recommended comprehensive sexual abuse prevention messages.

“I’ve not been specific. I’ve not kind of said, you know about sexual acts or anything like that. I’ve just talked about being comfortable and not being pushed into something you don’t want to do. Basically, I’ve not gone into great detail.”

“I spoke with my 8-years-old once, telling her about the parts of the body and asking: ‘has anyone ever done anything that you weren’t happy with?’ and she said no. And I said, well, if anyone ever does you need to tell an adult that you trust.’ .. I was probably a bit vague.”

Lack of Awareness of the Risks?

Most perpetrators are family members and known people

- Sample 1:
93%
- Sample 2:
88%

CSA is most likely to happen at home (the child's or someone they know)

- Sample 1:
88%
- Sample 2:
91%

Adolescents make up 30-50% of perpetrators

- Sample 1:
73%
- Sample 2:
74%

Awareness ≠ Correct Messages

“

The risk “is quite low [...] they are never alone with strangers.”

“I’ve taught them what to do if they are grabbed.”

“If a stranger touches you there you need to tell me.”

“Like, if someone tries to take you...these are the things you should do....

”

Parental Concerns

Sample 3: Qualitative ($n=24$)

83% negative consequences telling children about CSA, including:

Fear/anxiety

Damage to relationships

Hypervigilance

Loss of trust

Loss of innocence

Negative body image

Sample 1: High SES ($n=248$)

66% negative consequences to CSA education.

SUMMARY

Is Parent-Led Education the Best Way to Involve Parents in CSA Prevention?

Rates of Parent-Led CSA Education in two samples

- Low rates of reported, especially in at-risk parents with younger children, leaving most children unprotected.

Support for PLE ≠ Comprehensive Messages in two samples

- Parents overwhelmingly supportive of PLE
- Even parents supportive of CSA education did not give comprehensive messages

Awareness ≠ Correct Messages in three samples

- Most parents concentrated on strangers despite having the correct knowledge.

Parental Concerns about Harms of PLE in two samples

- Up to 83% of parents had concerns



Two Pathways of Parental Protection:

1 The creation of **safe environments** where CSA is less likely to occur. Achieved through effective parent supervision, monitoring and involvement.

2 Fostering **child well-being**, lessening the child's risk of being a vulnerable target. Derived from adequate parenting practices, parent-child relationships and communication.

Parents as Protectors rather than Educators



Questions?

