



# EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION SCIENCE, SYSTEMS AND POLICIES PROMOTING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Universitätsklinikum Bonn (UKB), Biomedizinisches Zentrum (BMZ)

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SESSION 2: GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

## Things are not what they seem: Review of diverse forms of child abuse in Iceland



UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

FACULTY OF SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY  
AND FOLKLORISTICS

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- **Aims**



- Give an overview of the prevalence of different types and forms of child abuse and prevention in Iceland

- **Methods**

- Analysis of published research on child abuse in Iceland

## REVIEW ARTICLE

## Review shows that Icelandic society is taking firmer steps to tackle the diverse forms of child abuse and neglect that its children are exposed to

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### Keywords

Child abuse, Prevalence, Preventative policies, Sexual abuse, Violence

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### ABSTRACT

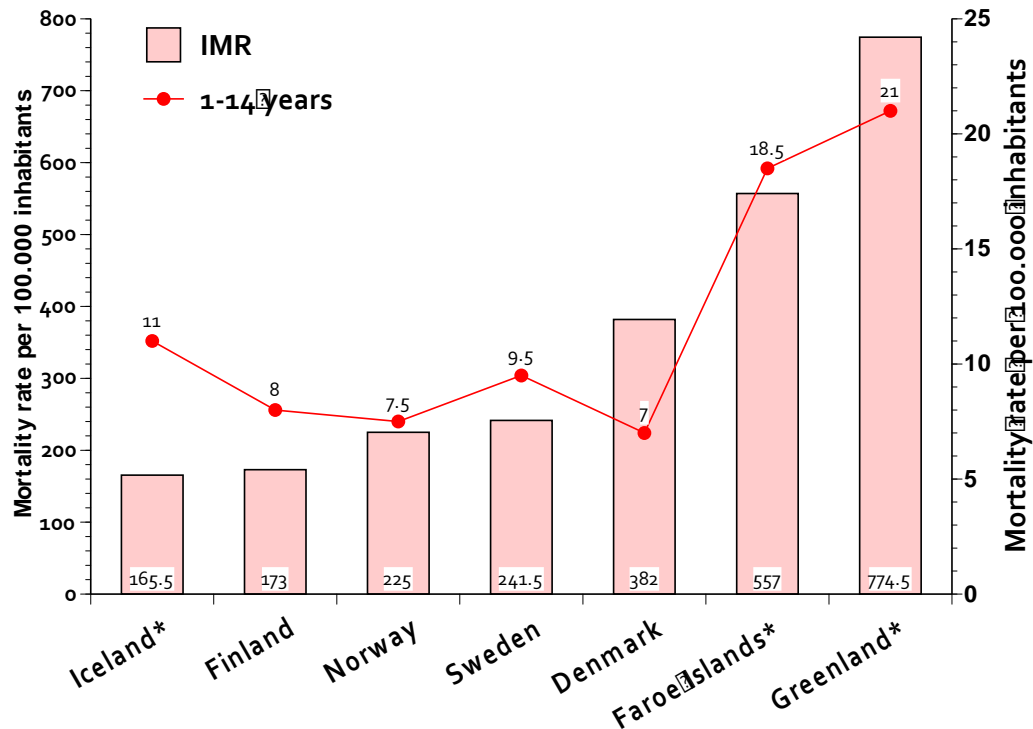
**Aim:** This review examined and summarised the research published on child abuse in Iceland, which was mainly in the country's native language, to make the findings more accessible to English speakers. It specifically focused on child rearing and the physical, emotional and sexual abuse, neglect and intrafamilial conflicts suffered by children at the hands of their parents and other carers.

**Method:** The review drew on published research, books and reports and compared the findings with Nordic research and global estimates of child abuse.

**Results:** Qualitative and quantitative research revealed that the prevalence of different forms of child abuse, child neglect and intra-familial conflicts in Iceland was similar to, or higher than, global and Nordic estimates. Younger respondents reported less physical abuse than older respondents, but higher levels of emotional abuse. Legislation, greater awareness, public debates and research on child abuse in Iceland have contributed to the growing recognition of the negative consequences of child abuse and strengthened support for prevention strategies.

**Conclusion:** Icelandic children have reportedly experienced diverse forms of child abuse and neglect from their parents and other carers. Diverse initiatives have been put in place that underline the urgent need to tackle such behaviour.

# Child mortality in the Nordic Countries 2015



Nomesco 2017; \*2011-2015

## 2018 END OF CHILDHOOD INDEX RANKINGS

TOP 10		BOTTOM 10	
RANK	COUNTRY	RANK	COUNTRY
1	Singapore	166	DR Congo
1	Slovenia	167	Sierra Leone
3	Norway	168	Guinea
3	Sweden	169	Nigeria
5	Finland	170	Somalia
6	Ireland	171	South Sudan
6	Netherlands	172	Chad
8	Iceland	173	Central African Republic
8	Italy	174	Mali
8	South Korea	175	Niger

22 Denmark

Save the children 2018

Social Progress Report 2018

Iceland no. 2/128 countries

**RANNSÓKNARNEFND  
KAPÓLSKU KIRKJUNNAR  
Á ÍSLANDI**

Skýrsla  
um viðbrögð og starfshætti kapólsku kirkjunnar á Íslandi  
vegna ásakana um kynferðisbrot eða önnur ofbeldisbrot  
viðvora þjóna og annarra starfsmanna kirkjunnar.

apóllis 1950-1969,  
6-1972  
946-1973

# Special investigative committees on child abuse in state institutions 2007-2012

slas 1945-1971,  
ferðarheimilis  
79-1994

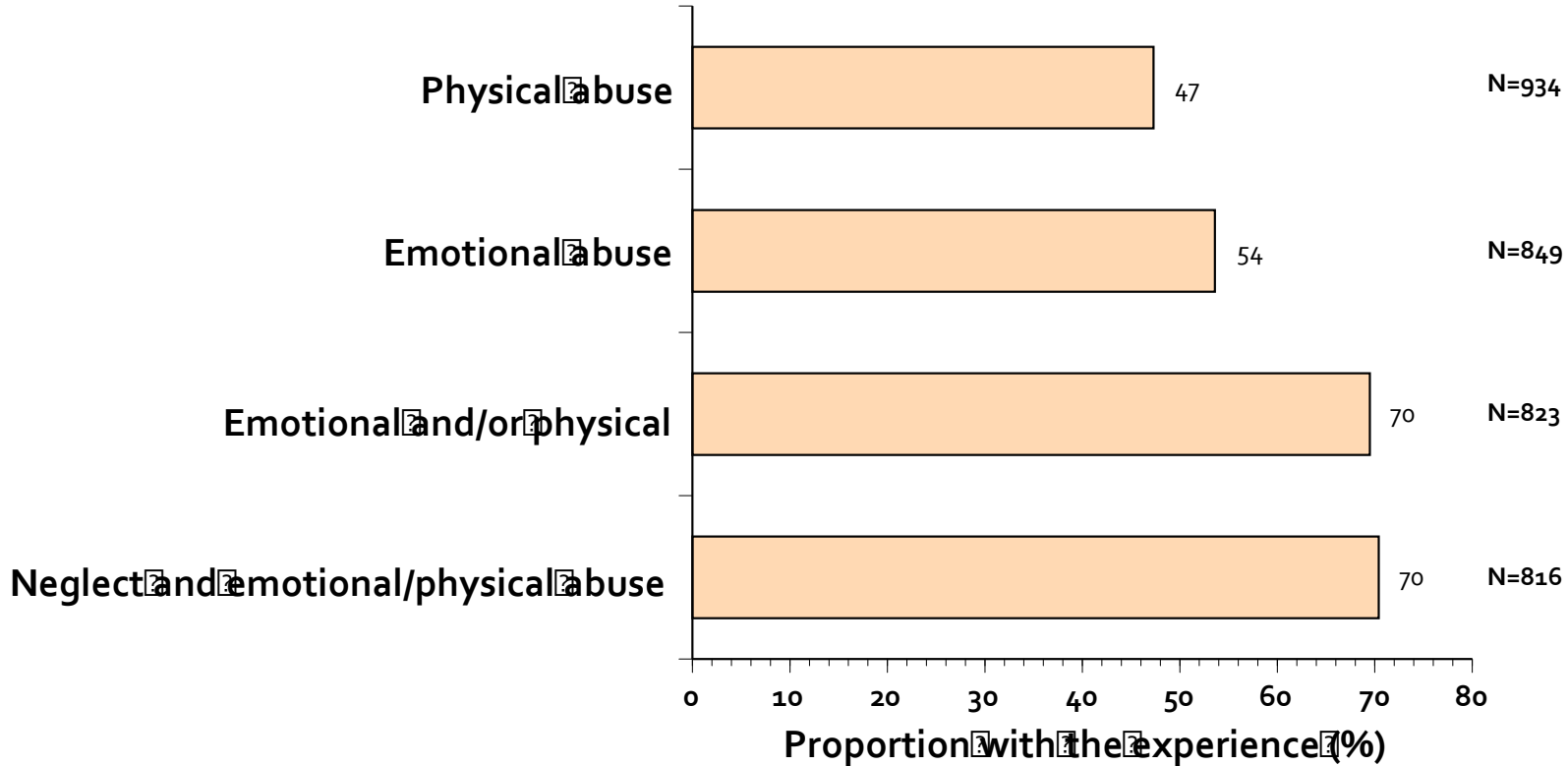
REYKJAVÍK, 2. NÓVEMBER 2012

## Confirmed abuse of disadvantaged children in institutional care

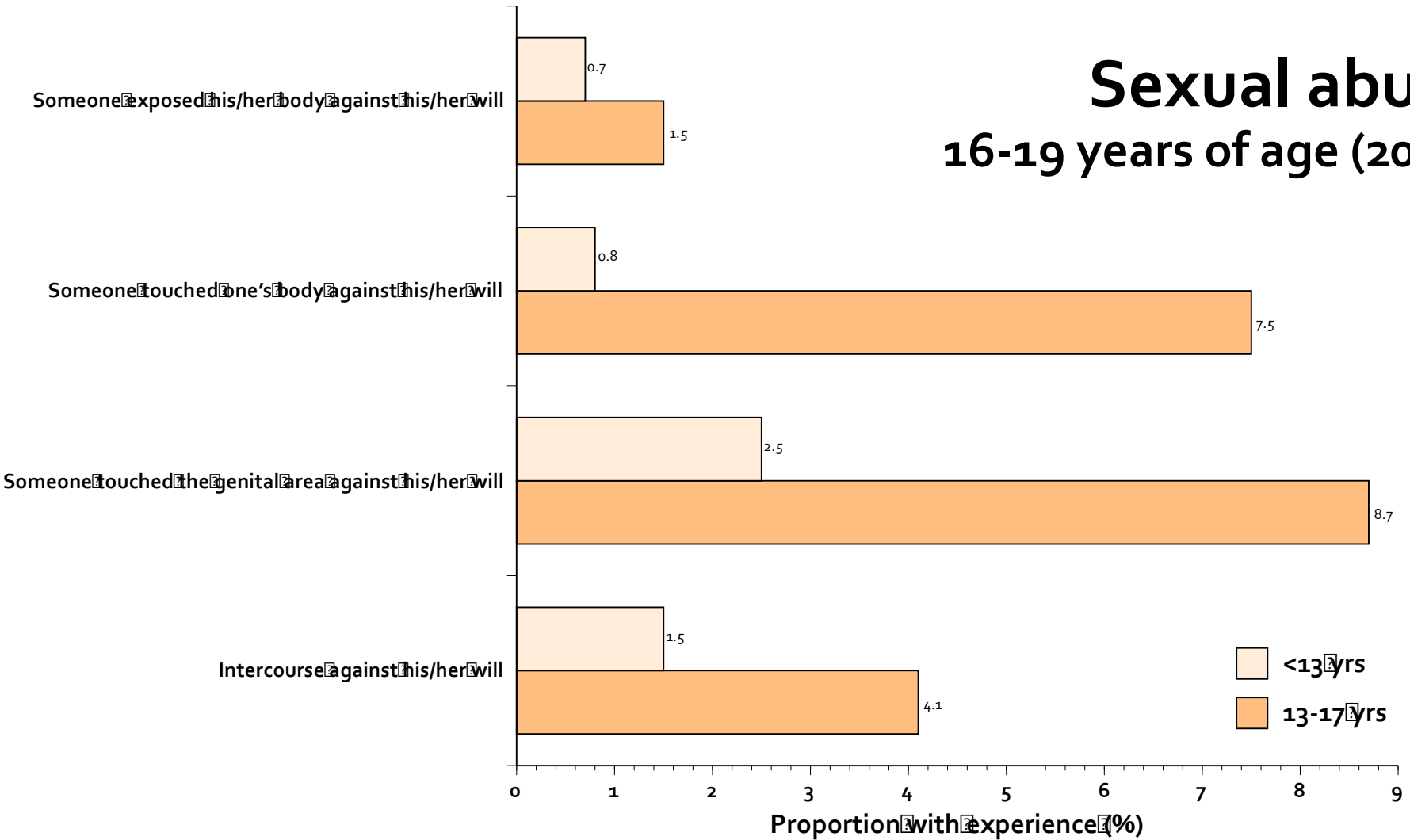
## ... and students of the Catholic Primary School

# Prevalence of experience of at least one form of abuse in childhood

Recall by randomly selected group of adults (2010)



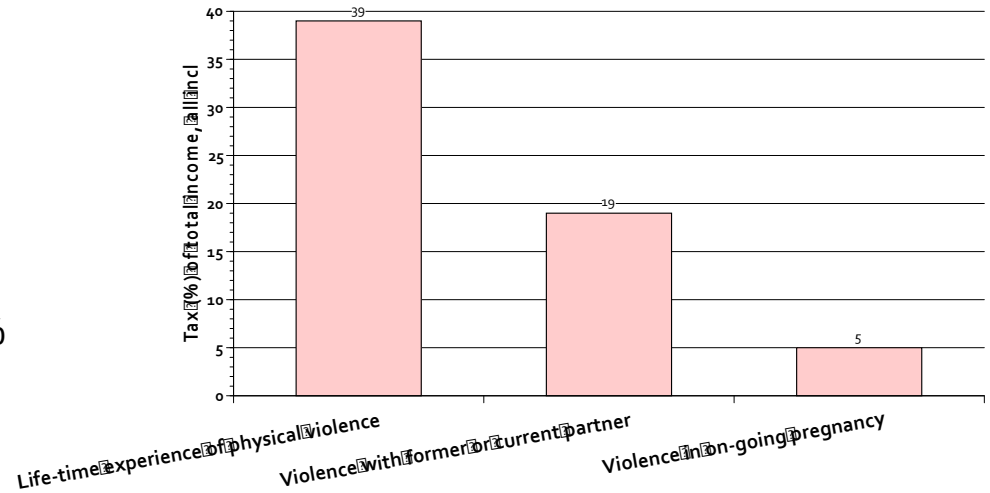
# Sexual abuse 16-19 years of age (2004)



# Intimate partner violence (IPV) in Iceland

## • Quantitative studies

- In 1996
  - 3.000/74% response rate
  - 13.8 of women and 3.9% of men with experience of IPV
- In 2006
  - 7.613 women 18-67 yrs in sample/36.1% response rate
  - 10% with experience of IPV

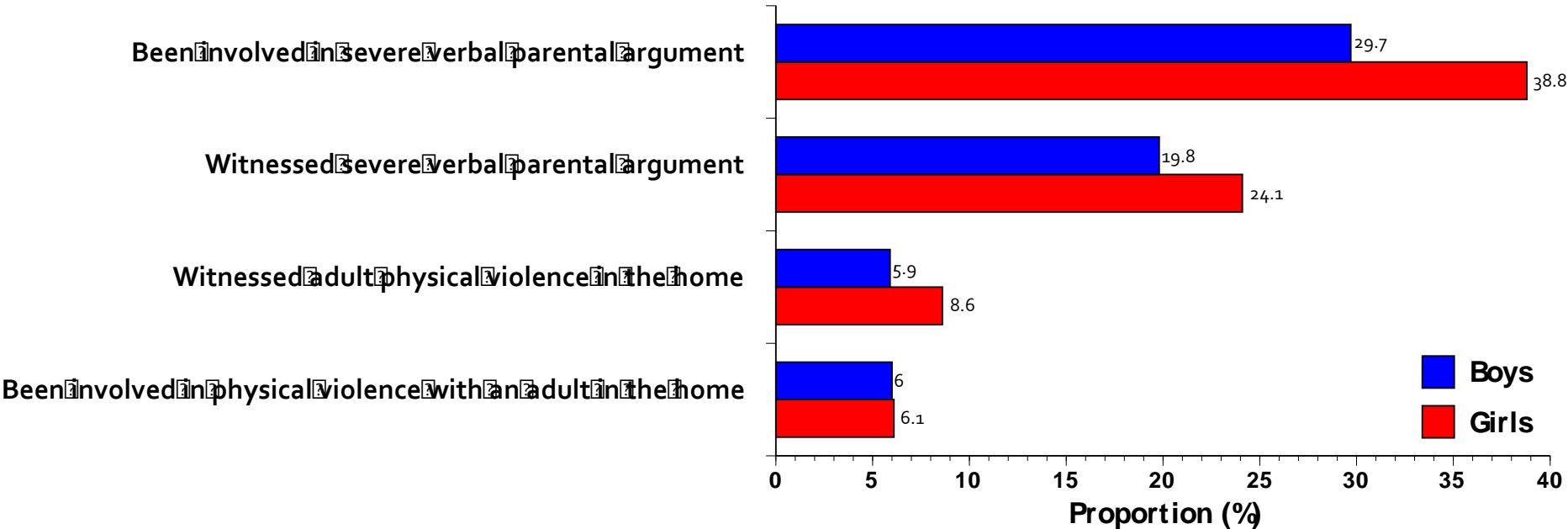


**High risk pregnancies  
107 out 110 took part in 2006**

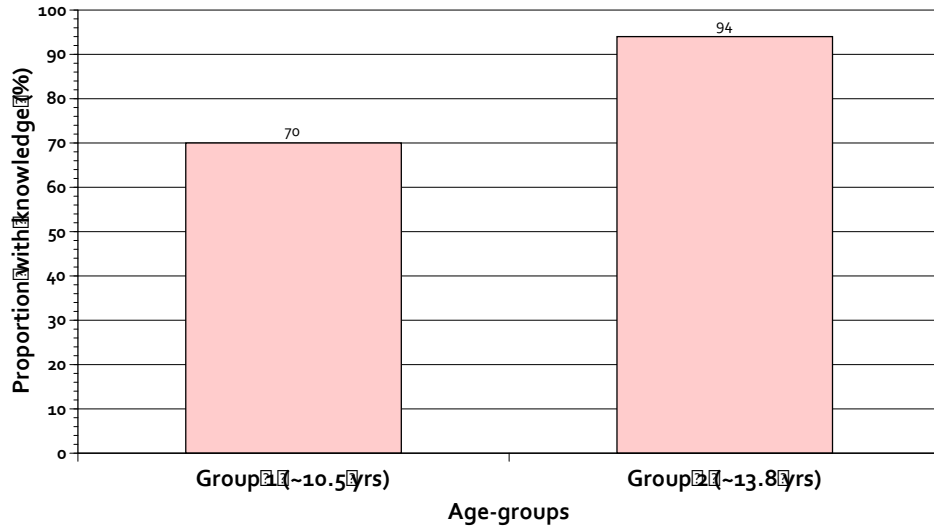


# Intrafamilial conflicts in Iceland

## Adolescents 14-15 years (2003)



# Children's knowledge of *domestic violence*



13 primary and secondary schools

N=1125 participants; 68% response rate

- Quarter of the participants knew someone who had been a victim
- Qualitative interviews
  - Dominant feeling of the children with the experience was fear, anger and distress
  - Teachers were not prepared to help



**Since 2000**

**Child homicide (n=4)**

# Can child abuse be prevented?





<https://www.stjornarradid.is/verkefni/felags-og-fjolskyldumal/malefni-barna/ofbeldi-gegn-bornum-fraedsluefni/>

LEIÐIN ÁFRAM

LEIÐIN  
ÁFRAM ▶

Leiðin áfram eru tvö myndbönd ætluð 14 ára og yngri og 15 ára og eldri. Þar er farið í gegnum ferlið innan réttarvörslukerfisins eftir að kynferðisbrot hefur átt sér stað.

RÉTTARKERFIÐ



Fraðslubóð Kynferðisofbeldi gegn börnum: Málsmeðferð réttarkerfisins og réttarvernd barna.

SEGBU FRÁ



Stuttmynd fyrir börn um að segja frá  
- Stuttmynd fyrir börn um að segja frá - táknnáttúlu

STATTU MED PÉRI

úttítt líkaminn  
ofbeldi  
STATTU MED PÉRI!  
að setja mörk  
fyrir myndir?

Stattu með þér! er stuttmynd ætluð miðstigi grunnskóla. Myndinni er ætlað að spyrna gegn kynferðisofbeldi og klámvæðingu með sjálfsvirðingu og jákvæðni að leiðarljósi.

HLUTVERK SKÓLA



Vitundarvakning og Námsgagnastofnun Reykjavíkur hafa gefið út handbókina Ofbeldi gegn börnum – hlutverk skóla.

FÁÐU\_JÁ

#FÁÐU\_JÁ

Fáðu Já! er stuttmynd sem skýrir mörkin á milli kynlífs og ofbeldis, vegur upp á móti áhrifum klámvæðingar og brýtur ranghugmyndir á bak aftur. Myndin er ætluð framhaldsskólastigi.

KRÁKKARNIR Í HVERFINU



Á hverju ári fá allir aðrir bekkir í grunnskólum landsins sýningu á brúðuleikritinu Krakkarnir í hverfinu sem er ætlað að auðvelda börnum að segja frá ofbeldi sem þau verða fyrir. Boðskapur sýningarinnar er: Þú færð hjálp ef þú segir frá.

# Other initiatives

- **A policy against abuse of children (2012)**
  - Unicef and Save the Children together with
    - Child Protection Authorities, Barnahús, Faculty of Social Work, Directorate of Health, National Hospital, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Welfare, Police, Primary Health Care Services, Children's Ombudsman, State Prosecutor
    - Red Cross, Heimili og skóli (Home and School), Kvinnathvarfið (The Women's Shelter), Stígamót - Education and Counseling Center for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence, Verkefnastjórn gegn einelti (Against Bullying), Blátt áfram (Straight Forward)
- **Working group: measures against sexual abuse, harassment and digital sexual violence (2018)**
  - Ministry of Justice

# Conclusion

- **Convention on the Rights of the Child**
  - all children should be protected from violence
  - have the right to enjoy a childhood that is free of abuse
- **Prevalence of child abuse and neglect in Iceland**
  - similar to, or slightly higher, than for the Nordic countries, and similar to, or lower, than global figures
- **Increased general understanding of the problem at hand**
- **Preventive actions are ongoing**
- **Lack of intervention studies**





*Danke!*