



Honor Thy Children

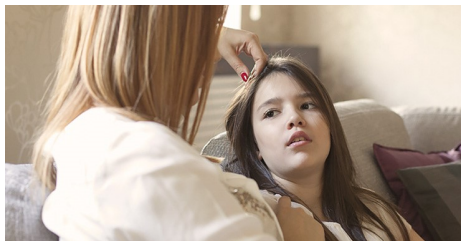
Archdiocese of Louisville continuing education for the awareness and prevention of child abuse

"CAN WE TALK ABOUT THIS?"

Prevention starts with understanding

Talking to our children about child sexual abuse is never an easy task. With National Child Abuse Prevention Month just two months away, it's worth asking "is now the time to have a conversation about child safety?" When you think about it, we don't hesitate to ask our children if they have their helmet on before they ride a bike or stay away from that hot stove or you'll get burned. Granted those are everyday occurrences and most of us would agree talking about sex with our children especially abuse isn't exactly something we look forward to. We tend to think this will never happen to my child, but research has shown one in four girls are sexually abused by age 18 and for the boys that number is one in 6. Don't only talk "stranger danger". As discussed in the Archdiocese of Louisville's "Honor Thy Children" most abusers are often well known to the child and the family. It's important that children

understand and can identify their private parts using the correct names. Doing this will empower children to talk about their bodies accurately while encouraging a positive body image



and self-confidence. This also allows for open communication when talking about any sexual abuse that may occur. Be sure children understand what "safe touch" is. Do they understand what's appropriate when interacting with family members, teachers, friends and others. Help children to trust their instincts when something doesn't feel right. Even if they are around what appear to be trustable adults. They should stop, say no and go to a parent or trustable adult. Help them understand "no secrets". Many times, as a

child "keeping a secret" can be harmless play between children. Unfortunately, sexual perpetrators use the same language to make children feel special. Encourage your children to keep no secrets. Finally, repetition is paramount. Insist on bringing up the topic of sexual abuse throughout childhood. As your child gets older you can start to talk about sexual abuse and dating. In 2013, 10% of high school students reported sexual victimization from a dating partner within the previous 12 months. See the previous comments about "doesn't feel right". Reinforce to them that just because they are dating someone that doesn't give them the right to make their partner uncomfortable. Everyone has a right to say "no". Whatever approach you take, communication is essential to preventing sexual abuse. Remind children frequently they can talk to you about anything and they will never get in trouble for informing you about anything when it comes to safety.

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If you need support or someone to talk to:

- © Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky or Indiana: 800.CHILDREN/800.422.4453 www.pcaky.org www.pcaain.org
- © Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline 800.4.A.CHILD 800.422.4453 www.childhelp.org

Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained pain, itching, redness or bleeding in the genital area
- Increased nightmares or bedwetting
- Withdrawn behavior
- Angry outbursts/mood swings
- Loss of appetite or difficulty swallowing
- Sudden/unexplained avoidance of certain people or places
- Sexual knowledge, language or behavior that is unusual for the child's age.

ARE YOU SAFE ENVIRONMENT COMPLIANT? DO YOU NEED TO BE?

Do you work regularly with children? If so do you know what is required of you and what you can and can't do when working with children? Remember anyone working regularly with children **MUST** have a background check no older than 5 years and have attended an Archdiocese of Louisville Safe Environment Training. See your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator today for details! If you don't know who that is contact Scott Fitzgerald via email (sfitzgerald@archlou.org) or 502.471.2132.

REDUCING THE RISK OF ABUSE

Research has shown us that sexual abuse can happen to children of any race, socioeconomic group, religion or culture and unfortunately, often by someone they know.

While there is no foolproof way to prevent abuse, there are ways you can reduce the risk.

Below are some precautions you can take now before the abuse happens. But remember if you suspect something has happened to a child, you are obligated by law to report it to the authorities at 1-877-KYSAFE1. Always remember the perpetrator is to blame. Not you and not your child.

PRECAUTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

BE INVOLVED IN A CHILD'S LIFE

- Show interest in their daily lives: Be sure to find a good time to talk about how their day went. Who did they spend it with? Who did they sit with at lunch? For those in after school care, what games did they play after school. Did they have fun?
- Get to know the people in your child's life: Who are they spending time with (both other kids and adults). Ask your child about their friends and what they think about their friend's parents. Ask about coaches. Talk about these people with your children and ask questions so your kids feel comfortable talking about them.
- Get to know the caregivers in your child's life. Talk to them frequently. Don't be afraid to ask if they've had a background check in the last five years or if they've attended the Archdiocese of Louisville's Safe Environment training. Don't feel comfortable asking them? Reach out to your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator and ask them.
- Educate (and re-educate yourself) on the warning signs of child sexual abuse

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO SPEAK UP

- Teach children about boundaries. Reinforce to them NO ONE has the right to touch them or make them feel uncomfortable (this includes hugs from family members). Also remind them they don't have the right to touch someone else who does not want to be touched.
- Teach your children how to talk about their bodies. Beginning at an early age teach your children the correct names for bodies parts.
- Be available. Find a time and place when you have your child's undivided attention. It can be anywhere or anytime, but let your children know they can come to you with anything and when they do be sure to follow through on your word.
- Remind them they won't get in trouble, no matter what they say
- Give them a chance to raise new topics by asking direct questions. "Did you have fun?" or "Was it a good time?" won't allow the answers you need. Always follow up with "Is there anything else you want to talk about?" giving them a chance to bring up their own concerns or ideas.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

A current list of trainings is always available at www.archlou.org/safe
All trainings are at 6:30p unless otherwise indicated.

3.1.19
Annunciation
(SPANISH SPEAKING ONLY)

3.4.19
Sacred Heart
(SPANISH SPEAKING ONLY)

3.11.19
St. Albert the Great

3.18.19
Incarnation

3.25.19
St. Athanasius

4.15.19
St. Joseph (Bardstown)

4.29.19
Holy Spirit (Louisville)

More trainings are being scheduled for May, June and July.

Keep checking www.archlou.org/safe for updates as trainings cancelled due to inclement weather will be posted here

When children know they will be heard and taken seriously, they will develop the courage to speak up!



Start having conversations with them as soon as they begin to talk. If they're older start now.

It's NEVER too late!

PERPETRATORS: KNOW THE FACTS

FACT: Abusers look and act just like everyone else.

Abusers can reside in schools, sports leagues and churches. They can be neighbors, friends and family members. In some cases abusers can be other children

FACT: About 90% of the children who are victims of abuse know their abuser.

Only 10% of sexual abused children are abused by a stranger. While approximately 30% of children who are sexually abused are abused by family members. The younger the victim, the more likely it is that the abuser is a family member. Of those abusing a child under six, 50% were family members.

FACT: Not everyone who sexually abuses a child is pedophile.

Child sexual abuse is perpetrated by a wide range of individuals with diverse motivations. There are two basic forms of child molesters:

A **preferential child molester** is a pedophile. Pedophiles have a sexual preference for children. Preferential child molesters gain ready access to children by virtue of their occupations such as teacher, day care worker, nanny, coach or youth worker. Pedophiles usually have multiple victims and often collect child pornography.

Situational child molesters may not have a true sexual preference for children, but engage in sex with children because of the availability of a child and/or their own feelings of inadequacy



MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

Spring sports season is here!



Will you be coaching (or serving as an assistant coach?)

If you are working regularly with children you must have completed the Archdiocese of Louisville's Safe Environment Training AND have completed a background check that is NOT OLDER than 5 years.



If you are unsure of your status see your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator today!

If you don't know who that is, feel free to contact

Scott Fitzgerald
Coordinator of Safe Environment Services (fitzgerald@archlou.org) or phone (502) 471.2132



Parents don't hesitate to ask your son or daughter's coach if they are Safe Environment compliant.

WHEN THE CAREGIVER IS THE ABUSER

What happens when you suspect a caregiver of child sexual abuse?

First and foremost you are required by law to report the suspected abuse immediately. You can do so by contacting the Kentucky Statewide Hotline at 1-877-KYSAFE1

Remember it is better to err on the side of over-reporting than under-reporting. Persons acting upon reasonable cause in reporting are immune from civil and criminal liability. This exists with respect to the reporting,



the investigation and any judicial proceedings resulting from the report.

Also the source of a report of abuse, neglect or exploitation is kept confidential unless it is ordered released by a court order.

You can expect the caregiver to be defensive and angry. Do not confront the alleged caregiver about the abuse. Allow law enforcement personnel and investigators to handle this. Your responsibility is to ensure the safety of the child.

**Archdiocese of Louisville
Office of Safe Environment**

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No child or adult should ever experience abuse by anyone, especially a church minister. We all have the right to be treated with dignity and to expect our church to reflect the goodness of God in all of its dealings.

We hope that this information is helpful to all in our communities who are working to prevent and respond to childhood sexual abuse. Please let us know if you need further assistance or information by calling or emailing our victim assistance coordinator, Ms. Martine Siegel, at 502/636-1044; victimassistance@archlou.org or the Chancery at 502/585-3291.

We must heed God's call to care for the most vulnerable among us and to continue our efforts toward wholeness and health in dealing with sexual abuse.

THE COST OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Not only does child sexual abuse have long term detrimental effects on children it is costly.

Findings published in the Child Abuse & Neglect journal tell us that child sexual abuse in the United States costs \$1.1 million per death of female victims and \$1.5 million per death of male victims.

Costs include child welfare costs productivity losses,

violence/crime costs, special education costs and health care costs.

Based on data from 2015 the total lifetime cost of child sexual abuse in the United States totaled \$9.3 billion.

In nonfatal cases of abuse the estimated costs per female totaled \$282,734. The information on males was incomplete.



If you believe a child is being abused or neglected
call the Child Protection Hotline number

**1-877-KYSAFE1 or
1-877-597-2331 (Toll-Free)**