



SECRETARIAT OF CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION • UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Bulletin Announcements

The bulletin announcements provided may be customized and added to local parish bulletins. Replace text highlighted in yellow with contact information for your (arch)diocese and local municipality. Replace the word “(arch)diocese” with “archdiocese,” “diocese,” or “eparchy” as applicable.

For your convenience, each bulletin announcement appears on its own page here.

These announcements are offered courtesy of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

1

Did You Know?

Take the Child Safety Quiz

Parents, guardians, and adults who care for children face constant challenges when trying to help keep children safer in today's fast-paced world. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) offers easy-to-use safety resources to help address these challenges. NCMEC's Web site offers a range of practical information for parents and guardians that will help keep children safe from harm. The site also features an interactive quiz on child safety designed for both adults and children. To take the quiz, visit the NCMEC Web site and click on "Child Safety": www.missingkids.com.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

2

Did You Know?

Who Are the Abusers?

Estimates are that approximately 60% of abusers are men, 15 to 20% are women, and 20 to 40% are men and women acting together. So while men are indeed the majority of sexual abusers, it is dangerous to underestimate the risk that female sexual abusers also pose to children. Among educators, 57.2% of abusers are male, and 42.4% of abusers are female.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Charol Shakeshaft, Hofstra University, from speech given at the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

3

Did You Know?

The Prevalence of Abuse in Society

In surveys of adults, one out of five women and one out of ten men reported that they were sexually molested before they were 18 years old. This means that an estimated 40 million adult survivors of child sexual abuse are living in the United States today. An estimated 9.6% of all school children will be molested by an educator or an employee of a school between kindergarten and 12th grade. Between 13 and 34% of all females will be victims of sexual assault before the age of 18, and 7 to 16% of all males will also be victimized before they are 18.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact***

Source: D. Finkelhor, "Current Information on the Scope and Nature of Child Sexual Abuse," *The Future of Children* 2 (1994): 31-53.

4

Did You Know?

Five Steps to Safer Environments

The (arch)diocese mandates that all people who work with children and youth in our parishes and schools must undergo child abuse prevention training through the VIRTUS program. The training details five steps to prevent child sexual abuse: Know the warning signs of an inappropriate relationship with a child.

1. Know the warning signs!
2. Control access to children by carefully selecting the adults who work with children and youth.
3. Monitor all programs for the safety of children and youth.
4. Be aware of and sensitive to what is going on in the lives of children.
5. Communicate concerns to the appropriate person in authority.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.virtusonline.org/virtus

5

Did You Know?

Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is national Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is most appropriate that Child Abuse Prevention Month is held during the Easter season. There is no better time than Easter to celebrate the protection of our most valuable gift from God—our children. For information on how you can become more informed and involved in keeping our children safe, please call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.childwelfare.gov/preventing/preventionmonth

6

Did You Know?

Test Your Knowledge of Abuse Prevention: True or False?

True or false: It is common for both child and adult victims of sexual assault to wait some time before telling someone about the abuse. True. It is common for victims of sexual assault to wait some time before telling someone. When the person was assaulted as a child, he or she may wait years or decades. The reasons for this are numerous: victims may want to deny the fact that someone they trusted could do this to them; they may want to just put it behind them; they may believe the myth that they caused the assault by their behavior; or they may fear how other people will react to the truth. For more information on learning how you can help ensure the safety of children, **add appropriate contact.**

For particular help you may call: **Insert diocesan contact.**

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Did You Know?

Test Your Knowledge: True or False?

True or false: Child sexual abusers are only attracted to children and are not capable of appropriate sexual relationships. False. While there is a small subset of child sexual abusers who are exclusively attracted to children, the majority of the individuals who sexually abuse children are (or have previously been) attracted to adults. Child predators are difficult to identify precisely because they look just like everyone else. In some cases, they are our most trusted friends and even our family members.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

How Old Does a Child Need to Be in Order to Stay Alone?

Don't assume that when your child understands what you're saying, he's ready to walk out the door by himself. Besides the fact that many states have laws against leaving children of certain ages alone (for example, younger than 12), experts say children shouldn't be left by themselves until they're capable of fighting off an abductor or handling a crisis situation. Experts also say children do not have the mental maturity to cross busy streets by themselves until they're about 10 or 12 years old. (Did you know that pedestrian injuries rank third in child fatalities, behind traffic accidents and drowning?) Finally, parents who are certain their young children would never walk away with a stranger will be shocked to learn that studies show they probably will. Stay alert and vigilant, even if you believe your child is aware of possible dangers from others.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: "Know the Rules . . . After-School Safety Tips for Children Who Are Home Alone," www.missingkids.com.

9

Did You Know?

Learn to “Stop” Inappropriate Activity Before It Happens

Child safety tip: Teach your child to respect the word “stop!” Teach your preschooler that “stop” means “stop,” and that your child has the right to stop people from touching his or her body. Obviously, exceptions will have to be made for doctors and parents, but even parents must listen when a child doesn’t want to be tickled or hugged anymore. Reinforcing this excellent lesson gives your child the power to recognize—and to stop—“bad touching” by others if it should happen.

For particular help, you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: “Know the Rules . . . After-School Safety Tips for Children Who Are Home Alone,”
www.kidsafe.com.

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Did You Know?

Recognizing Signs of Child Sexual Abuse

Changes in behavior, extreme mood swings, withdrawal, fearlessness, excessive crying, bed-wetting, nightmares, fear of going to bed, sleep disorders, and a fear of certain places, people, or activities can be signs that a child has been traumatized by sexual abuse.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Philip J. Lazarus, "Trauma and Children: A Parent Handout for Helping Children Heal," VIRTUS, May 12, 2003.

11

Did You Know?

Teach Kids to Protect Themselves at Home

We consider our homes to be safe places for our children. But being home alone can pose risks for children. Here are a few tips to teach kids that will help keep them safe when you are not with them at home: Never answer the door if alone. Do not invite anyone in the house without the permission of a parent or babysitter. Don't tell anyone on the phone that your parents are not home. Instead tell them that your parents can't come to the phone, and take a message. For more tips, please visit www.kidsafe.com.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: "Know the Rules . . . After-School Safety Tips for Children Who Are Home Alone," www.kidsafe.com.

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Did You Know?

Help Reduce Abuse Statistics

Nationally, more than 2 million reports of abuse or neglect of minors are made each year. Only a small percentage of child abuse is ever reported. Learn how to spot suspected abuse or neglect, and how to report it to the proper authorities. For more information, please contact those in your parish who are in charge of programs to safeguard children.

For particular help, you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.missingkids.com

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Did You Know?

Know Your Kids' School

Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for protecting their children from all potential harm. When choosing a nursery, daycare center, or school, parents should inspect the building and grounds to make sure there are no areas where children play or work that are “off limits” to parents. Such facilities should have a policy that welcomes parents to visit the center or school without prior appointment.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Philip J. Lazarus, “Characteristics of Safe and Responsive Schools,” VIRTUS, January 14, 2002.

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Did You Know?

An Appropriate Way to Report Inappropriate Behavior

How should you communicate your concerns to someone who may be behaving inappropriately with children? The “I” message is a simple way to reframe what you want to say so that the listener hears you speak of your feelings and concerns rather than hearing a complaint against him- or herself. The “I” message, simply diagrammed, says, “I feel [feeling] when [situation] because [reason].” For example, you can say, “I feel anxious when you drive a child home alone after religious education classes, because that could put you or the child in a potentially risky situation.” It is a much more constructive approach than saying, “You shouldn’t be driving children home alone because it is against the rules and puts them in danger.”

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Paul J. Ashton, “CAREfronting vs. Confronting Those Who Behave Inappropriately,” featured August 9, 2004, at www.virtusonline.org/virtus.

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Did You Know?

Road to Priesthood Involves a Rigorous Formation Process

Seminary formation involves much more than academic study. Prior to Ordination, a candidate for priesthood goes through a lengthy evaluation period, including an internship during which he lives in a rectory and works with priests, staff, and parishioners. During this time, the candidate is judged as to his suitability to be a priest. No one is ordained unless the seminary staff, including the lay faculty and formation advisers, concludes that the candidate has attained an emotional, psychological, and sexual maturity appropriate for his age and for the celibate life of a priest.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Internet Safety for Kids

The Internet has become the new schoolyard for child molesters seeking girls or boys to victimize. Internet “chat rooms” provide a teenager with an opportunity to engage in a “live” conversation with friends from school or church, or with other teenagers from around the world. A chat room is similar to an old-style telephone party line, except that the teens are typing. Law enforcement has found that child molesters use chat rooms to gain easy and safe access to teens. Because of the seemingly caring and seductive talent of child molesters, teenagers should be warned that when they are in a chat room, they should never provide anyone with private information, personal information, and especially their specific physical location.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Bob Farley, “Exposing the Dangers of Chat Rooms,” featured March 14, 2005, at www.virtusonline.org/virtus.

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Did You Know?

Educational Materials on the Danger of Abuse

The overwhelming majority of our clergy and lay leaders are hardworking individuals who are dedicated to serving the People of God in our parishes and schools. All of us together are responsible for making sure that all of our ministries are as safe as possible for our children and young people. That means each of us has a responsibility to educate ourselves about the real danger of sexual abuse.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Where Do Your Kids Spend Their Time?

You can help keep your children safe by knowing where they spend their time. Get to know the adults who show up at the various locations in the community where children gather and where they play together. Be wary of any adult who seems more interested in creating a relationship with a child than with other adults. Pay attention when an adult seems to single out a particular child for a relationship or for special attention. Warning signs include treats, gifts, vacations, or other special favors offered only to one specific child.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: "Know the Rules . . . After-School Safety Tips for Children Who Are Home Alone," www.missingkids.com.

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Did You Know?

Get Involved in Parish Safety Programs

Parents and guardians play a key role in the success of parish programs for young people. Parents and guardians who are involved in parish programs and events will be in the best position to protect their own children as well as all the children in the parish community. Involvement and communication are important factors in helping to ensure safe environments for all of our children. Contact the parish office for more information on how you can become actively involved in the safe environment training programs in our parish.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Listen to Your Children

This summer, when your children are out of school and on different schedules, meeting new people and going to new places, make sure that you talk to them often about their experiences and the people they've met. Listen carefully to your children. If possible, observe and get to know the other children and adults who are part of your children's summertime fun. Above all, communicate your safety concerns to your children. Make sure they know that they can come to you with any concerns they may have about the people they interact with. And if you hear of or observe behaviors that may be inappropriate, make sure to communicate your feelings to people who are in a position to intervene. Communication is key to creating and maintaining a safe environment all year round.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.kidsafe.com

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Did You Know?

Summertime, Safe Time

All teachers, staff, and volunteers in the (arch)diocese who work with children must undergo fingerprinting and criminal background checks. (Arch)diocesan guidelines and abuse prevention training programs currently in use emphasize the importance of parents' knowing who has access to their children at school and other Church-sponsored activities. Summertime is here, and parents should remain vigilant regarding who is granted access to their children. Make sure camp counselors have undergone criminal background checks. And make sure you know the camp's daily routine. In particular, make sure that no camp activity results in a child being left alone with one adult. All activities should be supervised by more than one adult, and the camp should be open to unannounced drop-in visits from parents.

For particular help you may call: *Insert diocesan contact.*

Source: Sharon Womack Doty, "Summer Safety—Monitor All Programs!", VIRTUS, July 17, 2006.

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Did You Know?

Tips for Summer Camp Safety

Summer is almost here. School is almost out, and a whole host of new opportunities for recreation and relaxation await. Maybe you are sending your children to a music or sports camp. Or maybe they have been invited by their friends to go camping in the mountains or at the beach. Whatever the situation, it is important to remember that parents still have the responsibility of controlling access that new people will have to their children. If your children are attending a summer camp, insist that every counselor or anyone else who might have access to your children has undergone an application process that includes a criminal background check and reference checks.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Sharon Womack Doty, “Summer Safety—Monitor All Programs!”, VIRTUS, July 17, 2006.

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Did You Know?

Preventing Child Abuse Is Everyone's Responsibility

It is every adult's moral responsibility to protect possible victims by reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to the responsible authorities. Sexual abuse of minors is a pervasive societal problem, and only concerted and sustained efforts by all adults in every segment of society can help to protect children and youth. ***Add information on how to report suspected abuse of a minor.***

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Numbers You Should Know

Law enforcement agencies investigate and prosecute those who abuse children. To report criminal sexual abuse of a minor, you may phone the following:

[Add information on appropriate local contacts: County District Attorney, Child Protective Services, Sheriff's Office, etc.]

For particular help you may call: *Insert diocesan contact.*

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Did You Know?

What Happens When Abuse Is Reported?

Most people who hold positions of trust in Catholic institutions are mandated by law to report child abuse. Teachers, teacher's aides, and counselors in our schools; therapists and social workers in our counseling agencies; nurses and doctors in hospitals; and clergy in parishes or other ministries all have the obligation to report the reasonable suspicion of child abuse to the local police, child protective services, or other appropriate agency. This is true for those ministering in facilities owned and operated by the (arch)diocese, as well as Catholic institutions owned and operated privately by religious communities.

[Customize this text to reflect the laws and policies governing your jurisdiction.]

For particular help you may call: *Insert diocesan contact.*

Did You Know?

CyberTipline Fights Internet Crimes Against Children

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other government agencies all work together to fight Internet crimes against children. They've established a "CyberTipline," a reporting mechanism for cases of child sexual exploitation including child pornography, online enticement of children for sex acts, molestation of children outside the family, sex tourism of children, child victims of prostitution, and unsolicited obscene material sent to a child. Reports may be made—24 hours per day, seven days per week—online at www.cybertipline.com or by calling (800) 843-5678.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

IOW, Knowing Internet Lingo Can Help Parents Safeguard Kids

Online chat rooms, instant messaging systems, and even cell phones equipped to send text messages are environments rich in abbreviations, acronyms, and other shorthand that help increase the speed of communication. Parents need to become aware of some of the common lingo that is used in these environments. Some of these terms may be found to be vulgar, degrading, or otherwise offensive. However, parents and educators need to have a level of understanding of the dangers that face our children.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Bob Farley, "Exposing the Dangers of Chat Rooms," featured March 14, 2005, at www.virtusonline.org/virtus.

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Did You Know?

Ensuring Your Child's School Is Safe

Every teacher, coach, and volunteer who works with children in the (arch)diocese's parishes and schools must have a background check before he or she is permitted to work in any school- or parish-related job or activity that involves contact with children. But what about the children who attend non-Catholic private or public schools? Talk with school administrators and find out what steps they take to protect children from harm. Suggest that they review other abuse prevention programs to ensure that their policies and practices are up to date. And demand that all employees and volunteers who work in the school be properly screened, including background checks, before they are allowed to be near your children.

For particular help you may call: *Insert diocesan contact.*

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Did You Know?

Where Do Your Kids Go to Have Fun?

Protecting children from harm extends beyond the time that they are under your direct supervision. Know where your children spend their time when school is out or they are not in the house. Where do they gather and play with other kids? Are there other adults in the area? If so, who are they, and what reason do they have to be there? Knowing the answers to these questions will help you to keep your kids safe even when you are not with them.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.missingkids.com

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Did You Know?

Internet Spammers Target Kids, Too

Does your child know what to do when he or she gets an e-mail from an unknown person? If you are allowing your children to communicate with others online, be aware that they will be exposed to spam. The easiest way to avoid spam is to make sure that your children do not give out their personal information or e-mail address to anyone they do not know. Adjust the security settings on their e-mail account to filter or block unwanted messages. Encourage your children to delete any messages they get from anyone they don't know. Even when your children get e-mail or instant messages from people they know, make sure that they scan everything they are downloading for viruses first. You can do this by making sure that you have your antivirus software up to date.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.netSMART.org/safety/safetytips.htm

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Did You Know?

Always Keep an Up-to-Date Photo of Your Child

Picture this: A good photo could save a child's life. One of the most important tools for law enforcement in the case of a missing child is an up-to-date (take a new one every six months), good-quality photograph. The photograph should be a recent head-and-shoulders color photograph of the child in which the face is clearly seen. It should be of school-portrait quality, and the background should be plain or solid so it does not distract from the subject. When possible, the photograph should be in a digitized form and available on a compact disk (CD), as opposed to just a hard copy. This minimizes the time necessary to scan, resize, and make color corrections before disseminating it to law enforcement. The photograph should have space for accurate, narrative description useful to identify the child, such as name, nickname, height, weight, sex, age, eye color, identifying marks, glasses, and braces.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: "The Importance of Photos," www.missingkids.com.

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Did You Know?

How to Report Inappropriate or Illegal Content on the Internet

One of the main reasons that children do not report the inappropriate content they find online is fear of punishment from parents. If you let them know that it is not their fault if they come across an inappropriate site, they will be more willing to come to you when it happens. If your children ever show you a site that contains illegal behavior, such as pornographic images of children, contact your Internet service provider and the CyberTipline at www.cybertipline.com.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Internet Filter Software Is No Substitute for Parental Monitoring

There is a lot of material on the Internet that is inappropriate for children. Parents can use filtering software to protect children from that material, but filters do not guarantee that children will not be exposed; a filter will never be a substitute for parents' presence. Monitor your child's online behavior. Keep your family computer in a highly visible, common area, like the family room or the kitchen. Ask your children to show you what sites they go to, and be open and willing to discuss the inappropriate material they might come across.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.netsmartz.org

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Did You Know?

Keeping Your Child's Personal Information Personal

If your children give out personal information over the Internet, not only is it easy to track, it's tough to completely remove. Emphasize to them how important it is that they keep personal information private. Make sure that they have a strong (ideally, alphanumeric) username and password that don't reveal anything personal. Encourage them not to give out their e-mail address, if they have one. If your children tell you that they have given out personal information online, contact your Internet service provider or the site where the information is posted to see what you can do to have it removed. For more information, visit www.netsmartz.org.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

What Do Molesters Look Like?

Child molesters belong to every profession, gender, and ethnic group, and they live in rural, urban, and suburban areas. There is no “look” about them that indicates that they are a danger to the physical and emotional health of our children. It is imperative that we look beyond demographic characteristics and focus on the behaviors of adults when they are around children. We must regularly refresh the basic knowledge and actions required to keep children safe. For tips on recognizing and reporting inappropriate behavior, please visit www.virtus.org.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.virtusonline.org/virtus

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Did You Know?

Be Vigilant

It is vitally important that we are constantly vigilant—that we always observe the behaviors of those who interact with children. And we must always communicate our concerns to the appropriate parties. Sometimes this means communicating our safety concerns to our children. And sometimes this means communicating our concerns about seemingly inappropriate behavior to those who are in a position to intervene. Parents must also listen carefully to their children and observe both their children’s activities and the behavior of older children and adults who interact with them. When children exhibit dramatic behavioral changes, adults must find out what caused the changes. Being aware of what’s happening with our children means talking to, listening to, and observing them—at every opportunity.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.virtusonline.org/virtus

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Did You Know?

God's Call to Love and Respect Others

To know that we are children of God is to live in complete love with deep abiding security and the ability to dream, to sing, to create, to laugh, and to play without worry. It is a freedom to love—with full trust and confidence—the creatures whom God has sent to us in our world. As we grow older, we face a new reality. We cannot approach all God's creation with the same trust and confidence. We learn, through sometimes hurtful and damaging experiences, that some people reject the ability that God gave them to love and respect others—they ignore God's call to love and respect others.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Parents and Guardians: Get Involved

Parents and guardians play a key role in the success of parish programs for young people. Parents and guardians who are involved in parish programs and events will be in the best position to protect their own children as well as all the children in the parish community. Involvement and communication are important factors in helping to ensure safe environments for all of our children.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Did You Know?

“Grooming” Behaviors

Most child abuse occurs after the perpetrator has gained the trust of the child and of his or her parents/guardians through a process called “grooming.” The grooming process has three basic elements, which are both separate and interrelated: physical grooming, psychological grooming, and community grooming. Physical grooming can begin with a simple pat on the back, but over time it becomes more intimate. Psychological grooming takes many forms, all of which are designed to drive a wedge between the child and the parent or guardian and to pull the child under the control of the perpetrator. Psychological techniques include a wide variety of activities, from telling a child that sexual contact is “an act of love sanctioned by God” to threatening harm to someone the child loves if he or she tells anyone about the abuse. Community grooming usually happens at the same time that physical and psychological grooming is progressing with the child. It targets the parents, guardians, and the rest of the community. The purpose is to convince us that this is someone who really cares about kids and is committed to their well-being, so that we will not notice or will disregard the warning signs because we can’t believe the perpetrator would commit such a crime. The process can take as little as a few days or as long as a few months, but the perpetrator is willing to be patient to gain the trust of everyone involved. This is how child molesters avoid being caught. For more information on child protection efforts and programs, call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: VIRTUS® “Protecting God’s Children” Facilitator Training Manual, 36-38.

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Did You Know?

Reporting Suspected Abuse Takes Courage

When any adult in the faith community has reason to suspect that a child is being or has been abused, he or she has a moral (and often a legal) responsibility to report those suspicions to civil authorities. Reporting suspected abuse takes courage. However, adults who take a stand for children and make the call are often responsible for saving a child from terrible torment. ***[Add information on how to report suspected abuse of a minor.]***

For particular help you may call: ***[Insert diocesan contact.]***

Did You Know?

Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is a great deal more prevalent than many imagine. In fact, studies tell us that one in ten adult men and one in five adult women say that they were molested before the age of 18. That means that, directly or indirectly, child sexual abuse will touch most of us during our lifetime. And although we would like to believe that most accusations are false, the facts tell us that children rarely lie about being molested. In fact, they rarely tell anyone at all. An adult study about the prevalence of sexual abuse found that 42% of the men and 33% of the women who were victimized as children had never told anyone.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Sharon Womack Doty, “Refresher from the Protecting God’s Children® Program,” featured January 7, 2008, at www.virtusonline.org/virtus.

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Did You Know?

Where Do Your Kids Spend Their Time?

Child safety tip: You can help keep your children safe by knowing where they spend their time. Get to know the adults who show up at the various locations in the community where children gather and where they play together. Be wary of any adult who seems more interested in creating a relationship with a child than with other adults. Pay attention when an adult seems to single out a particular child for a relationship or for special attention. Warning signs include treats, gifts, vacations, or other special favors offered only to one specific child.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: "Know the Rules . . . After-School Safety Tips for Children Who Are Home Alone," www.missingkids.com.

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Did You Know?

Get Involved

Parents and guardians play a key role in the success of parish programs for young people. Parents and guardians who are involved in parish programs and events will be in the best position to protect their own children as well as all the children in the parish community. Involvement and communication are important factors in helping to ensure safe environments for all of our children.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Did You Know?

Safety Rules Bear Repeating

Research reminds us that teaching children how to resist the overtures of a potential molester requires repetition and reinforcement. Children and young people need to know the rules, and they need to hear them over and over and over again so that the rules become part of a thought process. This is done in the same way we teach the rules about looking both ways before crossing the street and the danger of getting too close to an open flame. Empowering children to speak up and resist the overtures of potential molesters can stop a child molester in his or her tracks. Molesters who fear being caught—and being labeled a molester—may decide it is not worth the risk and back off.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Where Do Your Kids Spend Their Time?

Child safety tip: You can help keep your children safe by knowing where they spend their time. Get to know the adults who show up at the various locations in the community where children gather and where they play together. Be wary of any adult who seems more interested in creating a relationship with a child than with other adults. Pay attention when an adult seems to single out a particular child for a relationship or for special attention. Warning signs include treats, gifts, vacations, or other special favors offered only to one specific child.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Children Do Not Lie About Abuse

Most children are not lying when they say that they were abused. Less than 5% of all allegations are intentionally false. It is more likely that children will refuse to tell about abuse than to lie about abuse. Several studies estimate that only about 6% of all children report sexual abuse by an adult to someone who can do something about it. The other 94% do not tell anyone or talk only to a friend. (And they swear their friend to secrecy.) To find out more about how to create an environment where children are confident in disclosing information that may indicate that they were abused, please contact ***[Insert diocesan contact]***.

For particular help you may call: ***[Insert diocesan contact]***.

Did You Know?

What Is “Relational Bullying”?

Relational bullying is unwarranted, persistent, unwelcome behavior in the form of criticism, isolation, or fabricated allegations that can damage relationships. Examples include social exclusion (“You can’t be with us”), spreading rumors (“Did you hear . . . ?”), and withholding friendship (“I won’t be your friend if you . . .”). Though relational bullying can often seem ambiguous to outside observers and often garners less attention than physical bullying or verbal bullying, it should not be discounted simply as normal, adolescent behavior. In fact, several recent studies suggest relational bullying is more strongly related to emotional distress and teen depression than any other form of bullying. Make sure your child’s school does not tolerate such behavior among its students.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Donna M. Albertone, “Relational Bullying,” featured June 15, 2006, at www.virtusonline.org/virtus.

Did You Know?

Know the Warning Signs of Abuse

Child molesters look like everyone else. They don't look like scary people that anyone should know to avoid. Rather, they live with their families in our neighborhoods. One of the most important ways to ensure the safety of children in our environments is to know the warning signs of adults who present a risk of harm to children. Among these signs are when the person (1) always wants to be alone with children in areas where no one can monitor the interaction, (2) allows children to do things their parents would not permit, (3) is always more excited to be with children than with adults, and (4) discourages others from participating in activities involving kids.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Paul Ashton, "Know the Warning Signs, Part 2," featured November 19, 2007, at www.virtusonline.org/virtus.

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Did You Know?

Where Do Kids Go After School?

You can help keep your children safe by knowing where they spend their time. Get to know the adults who show up at the various locations in the community where children gather and where they play together. Be wary of any adult who seems more interested in creating a relationship with a child than with other adults. Pay attention when an adult seems to single out a particular child for a relationship or for special attention. Warning signs include treats, gifts, vacations, or other special favors offered only to one specific child.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: "Know the Rules . . . After-School Safety Tips for Children Who Are Home Alone,"
www.missingkids.com.

50

Did You Know?

Know Your Kids' School

When choosing a nursery, daycare center, or school, parents should inspect the building and grounds to make sure there are no areas where children play or work that are “off-limits” to parents. Such facilities should have a policy that welcomes parents to visit the center or school without prior appointment.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Assistance Ministry Helps Abuse Victims

Did you know that outreach to victims of sexual abuse is one of the ministries in the (arch)diocese? The *[insert outreach office name here]* provides assistance towards healing by means of therapy, spiritual direction, and mutual support groups. *Insert the name of the Assistance Minister and describe his/her credentials and examples of his/her duties.* If now, or at any time in the past, a priest, deacon, or other person representing the Church has sexually abused you, you are urged to contact *add name and contact information for Assistance Ministry.*

For particular help you may call: *Insert diocesan contact.*

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Did You Know?

Resources to Help Keep Kids Safe

The Web site of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children offers dozens of well-produced informational brochures covering a broad range of child safety topics. Go to www.ncmec.org and click on “Resources for Parents & Guardians” to find these brochures and other helpful information about child safety.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.ncmec.org

Did You Know?

Can You Pass the “Blog Beware” Quiz?

Internet blogs and other social networking sites have recently exploded in popularity and in the news. The number of *MySpace.com* users is currently estimated at more than 67 million. The majority of activity on these and other youth-oriented Web sites is positive. However, we’ve all read stories of how those who would harm children use these sites to lure children and teens into inappropriate discussions. To combat this danger, www.netSMARTZ.org offers a wide range of Internet safety resources for parents and children. Start by taking the “Blog Beware” quiz. For kids, there’s a related site: www.netSMARTZkids.org.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.netSMARTZkids.org

Did You Know?

Sex Abuse Prevention Tips for Single Parents

Raising children as a single parent or guardian often presents a whole host of challenges. Many single parents heroically work to balance work, school, and other commitments. With so much to do, how can a single parent integrate child safety practices into his or her daily routine? In supervising their children, single parents often seek assistance from a close confidant, a trusted friend, or an extended family member. Know these people well, and tell your children that no secrets may be kept at any time from anyone. For guidelines and suggestions on sexual abuse prevention for single parents, please visit www.virtus.org.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Paul J. Ashton, "Sex Abuse Prevention Tips for Single Parents: A Four-Part Series," featured February 2006 at www.virtusonline.org/virtus.

Did You Know?

Always Keep an Up-to-Date Photo of Your Child

One of the most important tools for law enforcement in the case of a missing child is an up-to-date, good-quality photograph. The photograph should be a recent head-and-shoulders color photograph of the child in which the face is clearly seen. It should be of school-portrait quality, and the background should be plain or solid so it does not distract from the subject. When possible, the photograph should be in a digitized form and available on a compact disk (CD), as opposed to just a hard copy. This minimizes the time necessary to scan, resize, and make color corrections before disseminating it to law enforcement. The photograph should be updated at least every six months for children age six or younger, and then once a year, or when a child's appearance changes.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: "The Importance of Photos," www.missingkids.com.

56

Did You Know?

How Big of a Problem Is Child Sexual Exploitation?

The sexual victimization of children is overwhelming in magnitude, yet it is largely unrecognized and underreported. Statistics show that one in five girls and one in ten boys are sexually exploited before they reach adulthood, yet less than 35% of those child sexual assaults are reported to authorities. Creating safe environments for our children is as important as ever. Parents and all who work with children need to become better informed about the warning signs of sexual abuse so that they can prevent it. For more information on child safety policies and programs in our parish, please call the parish office.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: *www.missingkids.com*

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Did You Know?

Do Those Missing Children Postcards Really Work?

Absolutely. One in six of the missing kids featured on these cards are recovered as a direct result of the photograph. The cards with the photographs of missing children reach up to 79 million homes weekly. So the next time you reach into your mailbox and find one of these cards, take a good look at the child's picture. You never know when you might be the one who makes the difference in helping to find a missing child.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: "The Importance of Photos," www.missingkids.com.

58

Did You Know?

How Many Children Are Sexually Approached and/or Solicited Online?

According to highlights of the Youth Internet Safety Survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Justice, “one in five children (10 to 17 years old) receives unwanted sexual solicitations online.” In 1998, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), in cooperation with the FBI and other government agencies, established the CyberTipline as a means whereby people may report incidents of online child sexual exploitation. For more information, please visit www.cybertipline.com or call toll-free: (800) 843-5678.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Did You Know?

Teach Children to Say, “Stop It”

Child safety tip: Teach children to say, “Stop it,” to instructions that might encourage them to do things they really do not want to do. Reinforce the rule that children should say, “Stop it,” to requests or demands that make them uncomfortable, even if they think they should obey. A discussion of these rules can teach a child that there are some times when it is okay to say, “Stop it,” and other times when it is okay to go along with the instructions.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

@TEOTD Are Your Kids AATK?

Do you understand the sentence above? Chances are your kids do. The Internet is a great resource for information and fun; but like nearly everything else these days, cyberspace brings with it its own set of challenges for parents. Parents should monitor their children's Internet use and become familiar with the multitude of abbreviations, acronyms, and other shorthand that their children may be receiving via Internet chat rooms, instant messaging systems, and text message devices. For a searchable database of this Internet lingo, please visit www.virtus.org/virtus.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.virtusonline.org/virtus

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Did You Know?

Screening and Training of Personnel Who Work with Children

Did you know that all Catholic school personnel in the (Arch)diocese of *insert name of diocese* are screened for their ability to work safely with children, are provided information and training to help them recognize and deal with issues of child sexual abuse, and are offered guidance and instruction on appropriate professional conduct with students? Likewise, all seminarians and candidates for the diaconate go through extensive evaluation and psychological assessment before entering formation. After ordination, priests and deacons receive ongoing training on maintaining the integrity of the ministerial relationship.

For particular help you may call: *Insert diocesan contact.*

62

Did you know?

Healing Those Harmed by Clergy Sexual Abuse

The (arch)diocese has committed significant resources to help those who were harmed by clergy sexual abuse to recover from their horrible experiences. We hope our efforts will help, but we realize that only the grace of God can provide the complete healing the victims need. In the midst of this sorrowful story, lessons have been learned and taken deeply to heart. Ineffective policies of the past have been rejected. Understandings that did not measure up to human realities have changed. New insights and policies can now offer protection to all our people.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

63

Did You Know?

Where Do Your Children Spend Their Time?

Child safety tip: You can help keep your children safe by knowing where they spend their time. Get to know the adults who show up at the various locations in the community where children gather and where they play together. Be wary of any adult who seems more interested in creating a relationship with a child than with other adults. Pay attention when an adult seems to single out a particular child for a relationship or for special attention. Warning signs include treats, gifts, vacations, or other special favors offered only to one specific child.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: www.virtusonline.org/virtus

Did You Know?

The Dangers of Webcams

A webcam is a video camera that is connected to a user's computer and is most often positioned on top of the user's computer monitor. When activated in conjunction with an online service, the webcam will permit the user to transmit video images of himself or herself to others in real time. Webcams can be a source of convenience and amusement for viewing friends from other schools or relatives who live out of state. Unfortunately, due to its use by child molesters who search the Internet for unsuspecting children, the webcam is the single most dangerous peripheral device that can be attached to a child's or young person's computer. Prior to connecting a webcam or a microphone to a computer, specific rules should be established to help protect the safety of everyone involved.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Robert Hugh Farley, "Webcams and Other Real-Time Online Dangers," featured at www.virtusonline.org/virtus.

65

Did You Know?

Rejoice in Hope

Scripture tells us to “rejoice in hope” (Rom 12:12), and it is through this powerful invitation that many come to wholeness and healing. St. Augustine said: “We are an Easter people, and Alleluia is our song.” And St. Thomas Aquinas said: “We should be an Alleluia from head to toe.” They remind us about the importance of our call to be men and women of celebration about our life as fully redeemed, fully loved, and fully alive human beings. These reminders call all victims and survivors of sexual abuse to rejoice in the great hope that they will again, one day, be fully a thriver in the community—someone whose gifts are acknowledged, whose abuse is believed, and whose life is valued by others. For more information on preventing sexual abuse and on the outreach programs available to help victims to heal, please contact: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Paul J. Ashton, “Hope for Healing, Surviving, and Thriving,” featured June 14, 2004, at www.virtusonline.org/virtus.

Did You Know?

Online Child Safety

In June 2000, a study titled “Online Victimization” was conducted for the U.S. Department of Justice. In the study, a national sampling of children found that approximately one in five children had received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet in the previous year. One in four children on the Internet had unwanted exposure to naked people or people having sex in the previous year. One in 33 children had received an aggressive sexual solicitation—a solicitor who asked to meet them somewhere, called them on the telephone, or sent them mail, money, or gifts. Today, even more children in the United States are online; undoubtedly, if a national sampling of children was to be interviewed now, these numbers would be even higher. As pervasive and tempting as the Internet can be, it is essential for parents, teachers, and members of the clergy to be knowledgeable and fluent in both the negative and the positive aspects of the Internet. Parents, teachers, and members of the clergy must speak very openly about online child safety issues.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Make Your Parish or Community Safer for Children

You can help create a safer environment for children by leaving your parish or community environment safer each day than when you started. This could be as simple as training yourself to do a more effective job of keeping your eye on those around you when they interact with children. It sounds overly simple; but most of us don't really do it, and it can be an easy habit to develop. It just takes persistence and a way to measure your success. For example, in order to make yourself notice those who are interacting with children, you could try counting the number of children you see each day interacting with non-parental adults. Okay . . . so this would be a little unrealistic for a schoolteacher . . . but for the rest of us it could be a very big learning experience. To learn more about parish efforts to create safe environments for our children, please contact the parish office.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Compliments Can Support Abuse Prevention Efforts

You can help create a safer environment for children by identifying the strengths in those around you and providing each of your employees, co-workers, and peers with genuine compliments regarding their respective contribution to your community's abuse prevention efforts. Everyone appreciates a pat on the back every now and then. Notice those who genuinely inspire you, and give them a genuine and well-deserved pat on the back. For more information about your parish's programs to educate and train adults in child abuse prevention, please call the parish office.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

Inspire Others to Participate in Abuse Prevention

You can help create a safer environment for children by inspiring others to participate in your community's abuse prevention efforts. This could be as simple as identifying one person each week who hasn't participated in your parish's awareness sessions or other abuse prevention activities, and offering them information about how they can help. If you focus on the baby steps—in this case, identifying and inviting one person per week to get involved in preventing abuse—during the next 12 months you could realistically recruit more than four dozen people to your community's abuse prevention efforts. Wow! That could have some real impact. But remember . . . baby steps. Otherwise, the long-term goal may become too overwhelming to keep you inspired. For more information, call *insert the appropriate contact person*.

For particular help you may call: *Insert diocesan contact*.

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Did You Know?

Learning Something New About an Abuse-Related Issue

You can help create a safer environment for children by learning something new each week about an abuse-related issue. It doesn't have to be something major or time-consuming to be a benefit. It could be as simple as keeping your eye open for news items or statistics that broaden your understanding about different types of abuse, characteristics of abusers, warning signs that a child is a victim, and other such information. The sources are all around you . . . TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, co-workers, peer groups . . . it's up to you to create a specific action plan that defines how much effort you'll invest each week and how much you intend to learn, and then to identify specific sources for information.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Did You Know?

Dangers of Cell Phone Cameras

Cell phones with photographic capability are a mixed blessing. Forget your camera? Whip out the cell phone, and your toddler's first step, friend's goofy mishap, or fender-bender is captured for posterity. But cell phones are also being used in a sinister way—to silently take pictures of unsuspecting children, adolescents, and adults in compromising positions and without their consent. Plus, unlike conventional photographs, digital photos can be placed on the Internet very quickly—within minutes of taking the photo—and distributed around the world. In fact, some Web sites have been created for the sole purpose of posting photos taken surreptitiously with camera phones. Have a healthy suspicion of anyone using a cell phone in an awkward way, such as not holding it up to his or her ear or facing his or her mouth in a walkie-talkie style. Be especially cognizant of any suspicious cell phone use in areas where people could be in various states of undress or where children are gathered. If you see someone using a cell phone in a way that appears suspicious, don't be afraid to ask what he or she is doing or to alert someone in a position of authority about your concerns.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: Donna Albertone, "Taking a Closer Look at Cell Phone Video Voyeurism," featured March 7, 2005, at www.virtusonline.org/virtus.

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Did You Know?

Is Child Sexual Abuse Still a Crisis Today?

Is child sexual abuse still a crisis today? Regardless of the answer, we are faced with both good and bad news. Instead of scandalous headlines and emotionally charged confrontations, child sexual abuse has become a very sad reality in our daily lives. Child sexual abuse has been, is, and will continue to be a societal evil that must be battled each and every day for as long as there are children to protect. But if we are willing to face this daily challenge, to tackle this unfortunate and tragic problem, to treat child safety and security as a ministry, then it truly can be said that we are a part of the solution.

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Did You Know?

Keeping God's Children Protected and Safe

To know that we are children of God is to live in complete love, with deep abiding security and the ability to dream, to sing, to create, to laugh, and to play without worry. As we grow older, we face a new reality—we cannot approach all God's creation with the same trust and confidence. We learn, through sometimes hurtful and damaging experiences, that some people reject the ability that God gave them to love and respect others—they ignore God's call. The (arch)diocese's program to safeguard children helps remind us of these very facts. With the help of this program, the faithful are guided and educated about the responsibility of how to keep God's children protected and safe. To learn more about the program, please call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

An Autumn Message About Child Protection

Autumn means back to school for children and back to work for those who have been on vacation. Amidst the hustle and bustle of this season, let us all keep sight of the importance of keeping our children and young people safe from danger. Committees to safeguard children have been established in parishes throughout the (arch)diocese. These committees help ensure that all children and youth experience safe environments in all parish activities and events. For more information, call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

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Did You Know?

(Arch)Diocesan Audit Results

Did you know that an independent audit released in **[insert date]** found the **(arch)diocese** to be in full compliance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*? The audit found that the diocese “has not transferred any priest or deacon who has had a credible allegation of sexual abuse made against him to another ministerial assignment. . . .”

For particular help you may call: ***Insert diocesan contact.***

Source: ***[Use source of diocesan data]***