



# Honor Thy Children

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

## THE HOLIDAYS AND CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

*Prevention starts with understanding*

November, the month that kicks off the holiday season and the last thing on anyone's mind is child abuse and predators. Unfortunately we live in a day and age when (according to RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network)) 93% of abuse victims are either family members or acquaintances. Often these accounts involve abuse at the hands of relatives at family gatherings.

Gatherings this time of year are filled with food, laughter and family fun. Many times rooms are full of people, kids are running in and out and in some cases, the alcohol is flowing. This is often the last place anyone would suspect child abuse especially this time of year. But this can

be the perfect storm for an abuser.

Carla van Dam, Ph.D., licensed clinical psychologist and author of "The Socially Skilled Child Molester" believes that pedophiles and situational abusers target those who are too timid to talk when boundaries are crossed. Maybe there is a family member that makes someone a bit uncomfortable being a bit hands on or makes racy comments.

Some will do their best to avoid people like this, while at the same time they don't want to upset the family by saying something and calling them out. What if that person was abusing someone's child while no one was looking? We teach in our Safe Environment Trainings to "trust your gut" and re-

port ANY suspected abuse. The same goes for events where both kids and adults gather. If something doesn't feel right, say something. Below are some situations you should be mindful of all the time, not just this holiday season. It should be noted there is no need to be paranoid at gatherings like this, but do be prepared. Set personal boundaries and calmly remind everyone (to include family members) that you don't allow certain activity. You won't offend those who have good intentions who also care about your child. Remember protecting your children is far more important than offending a few adults.

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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](http://www.pcaky.org) [www.pcaain.org](http://www.pcaain.org)
- ☉ Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline 800.4.A.CHILD 800.422.4453 [www.childhelp.org](http://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.

### **SITUATIONS TO BE MINDFUL OF AT HOLIDAY GATHERINGS**

**ONE ON ONE SITUATIONS:** Perhaps the biggest risk to the safety of children. No matter how inconvenient, avoid situations where your child is alone with other adults.

**VOLUNTEERS TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR CHILD:** When someone rushes in to save the day or volunteers for any activity that will allow them to be alone with or physically touching your child.

**TICKLING OR OTHER PHYSICAL TOUCH:** This can be done in plain sight to test the victim, parents and everyone in plain sight seeing who will speak up. If no one does, it could be a sign to the predator it is ok to take things to the next level. Also do not force children to hug or touch relatives if they are resistant to do so.

# PREVENTING ABUSE: WHAT CAN I DO?

We talk a lot about what to do once child sexual abuse happens, but there are things you can do now to prevent abuse from happening.

Below are some helpful tips you can employ today to help prevent abuse (some) courtesy of Darkness To Light, a non-profit committed to ending child sexual abuse [www.d2l.org](http://www.d2l.org).

These are of course just a few. Remember you can never ask too many questions when it comes to child safety.



## **ELIMINATE OR REDUCE ONE-ON-ONE SITUATIONS**

*More than 80% of sexual abuse cases occur in isolated, one-on-one situations*

- Choose group situations when possible
- When older youth have access to younger children make sure that multiple adults are present
- Set an example by personally avoiding one-on-one situations with children other than your own.
- Understand that abusers often become friendly with potential victims and their families, enjoying family activities, earning trust, and gaining time alone with children.

## **ASK QUESTIONS**

*Are proper policies in place at your parish/school?*

- Do you know who your Safe Environment Coordinator is?
- Do those working with your child have a background check not older than five years? Have they attended a Safe Environment Training?
- Do they understand the policies for dealing with suspicious situations and reports of abuse?

## **PERSONAL ACTIONS**

*Time with trusted adults is valuable to any child. To protect children while nurturing these relationships you may:*

- Drop in unexpectedly on your child's activity
- Ask about the specifics of planned activities before the event. Notice their ability to be specific.
- Talk with your child after the activity. Notice the child's mood and whether they can tell you with confidence how the time was spent.
- As mentioned above, don't hesitate to ask your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator if those you leave your child with have a currently background check (not older than 5 years) and have attended the Archdiocese of Louisville's Safe Environment Training.

## **UPCOMING TRAININGS**

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

**12.4.18**  
**St. Gabriel**

**12.17.18**  
**St. Agnes**

**1.14.19**  
**Epiphany**

**1.30.19**  
**Holy Trinity-Louisville**

**2.11.19**  
**St. Andrew Academy**

**2.25.19**  
**St. Margaret Mary**

**3.11.19**  
**St. Albert the Great**

**3.25.19**  
**St. Athanasius**

**4.15.19**  
**St. Joseph (Bardstown)**

**4.29.19**  
**Holy Spirit (Louisville)**

*Keep checking  
[www.archlou.org/safe](http://www.archlou.org/safe) for updates as  
trainings cancelled due to inclement  
weather will be posted here*

**Don't know who your  
Safe Environment Coordinator is?  
Contact Scott Fitzgerald  
Coordinator of  
Safe Environment Services  
502.471.2132 or via  
email: [sfitzgerald@archlou.org](mailto:sfitzgerald@archlou.org)**

## REPORTING ABUSE: Q & A

In Kentucky you are required by law to report any suspected child abuse. Reports are made to a local law enforcement agency, the Department of Kentucky State Police, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services or its designated representative, the child abuse hotline (1-877-597-2331) (1-877-KYSAFE1), or the Commonwealth or county attorney.

Do you know the law? Below are some frequently asked questions. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to Martine Siegel, Archdiocese Victim Assistance Coordinator at (502) 636.1044 or via email [msiegel@archlou.org](mailto:msiegel@archlou.org).

### Q. Who is required to report?

A. Any person. That said, the following persons are required to submit written reports, if requested: physician, osteopathic physician; nurse, teacher, school personnel, social worker, coroner, medical examiner, child-caring personnel, resident, intern, chiropractor, dentist, optometrist, emergency medical technician, paramedic, health professional, mental health professional, peace officer and any organization or agency for any of the above.

### Q. When is a report required?

A. A report is required as soon as someone knows or suspects neglect or abuse, or that a child is a victim of human trafficking.

### Q. What timing and procedural requirements apply to reports?

A. An oral or written report must be made immediately. If a written report is requested, it must be made within 48 hours of the original oral report.

### Q. What information must a report include?

A. All written reports must contain the following:

- The names and addresses of the child and the child's parents or other persons exercising custodial control or supervision;
- The child's age;
- The nature and extent of child's alleged dependency, neglect, or abuse, including any previous charges of dependency, neglect or abuse to the child or his or her siblings;
- The name and address of person allegedly responsible for the abuse or neglect; and
- Any other information that the reporter believes might be helpful or relevant.

## MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

This time of year parishes and schools are buzzing with activity surrounding children.

Whether it's sports, religious education or even field trips, if you're a volunteer coordinator and a parent approached you asking if a coach/youth leader was Safe Environment compliant (background check and Safe Environment trained), how would you answer them?



Be sure to review your records on a regular basis and ensure everyone who has regular contact with children has a background check no older than five years and has attended an Archdiocese of Louisville Safe Environment Training (we do not accept trainings from outside the Archdiocese of Louisville)

Your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator can help. If you still need more information contact:

*Scott Fitzgerald*  
Coordinator of Safe Environment  
Services ([fitzgerald@archlou.org](mailto:fitzgerald@archlou.org))  
or phone (502) 471.2132

Archdiocese of Louisville  
Office of Safe Environment

Martine Bacci Siegel, MSN, RN, CNS  
Maloney Center  
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Louisville, KY 40220

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E-mail: msiegel@archlou.org

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](mailto: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.

## EVERYDAY ACTIONS TO KEEP KIDS SAFE

There are everyday actions we can take to keep our kids safe. Here are some examples from [stopit-now.org](http://stopit-now.org), that works to heal children and families affected by abuse.

Set and respect family boundaries. All members of the family have rights to privacy in dressing, bathing, sleeping and other personal activities. If anyone does not respect these rights, an adult should clearly enforce the family rules.

Demonstrate boundaries by showing in your own life how to say "no." Teach your children that their "no" will be respected, whether it's in

playing or tickling or hugging and kissing. For instance, if your child does not want to give Grandma a kiss, let the child shake hands instead. And make sure, too, that Grandma understands why a child's ability to say 'no' is important for the safety of the child.

Use the proper names of body parts. Just as you teach your children that a nose is a nose, they need to know what to call their genitals. This knowledge gives children the correct language for understanding their bodies, for asking

questions and for telling about any behavior that could lead to sexual abuse. Be clear with adults and



children about the difference between "okay touch" and inappropriate touch. For younger children, teach more concrete rules such as "talk with me if anyone - family, friend or anyone else - touches your private parts." Also teach kids that

it is unacceptable to use manipulation or control to touch someone else's body. Explain the difference between a secret and a surprise. Both the adults and children in your life need to know how secrets may make kids unsafe. Surprises are joyful and generate excitement in anticipation of being revealed after a short period of time. Secrets exclude others, often because the information will create upset or anger. When keeping secrets with just one person becomes routine, children are more vulnerable to abuse. find help.