



Honor Thy Children

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

TEACHING KIDS ABOUT ABUSE IN SCHOOL UPS REPORTING

Prevention starts with understanding

Credit: Kathleen Doyle (Reuters)

Children who learn about preventing sex abuse in school more often report abuse in their own lives than do kids who are not taught about it, according to a new research review. This reinforces the findings of previous reviews, said lead author Kerryann Walsh of Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia. "The programs increase children's knowledge of child sexual abuse concepts and their skills in reacting and responding to risky situations," Walsh told Reuters Health by email. But, "these programs are not an inoculation against child sexual abuse," she added.

The reviewers analyzed 24 trials of school-based prevention programs, including a total of almost 6,000 elementary and high school students in the U.S., Canada, China, Germany, Spain,

Taiwan and Turkey. The programs all varied in their methods, but many taught kids safety rules, body ownership, private parts of the body, distinguishing types of touches and types of secrets, and who to tell. Some used



films, plays, songs, puppets, books or games, and others included role-play and discussion.

The shortest programs consisted of a single 45-minute session, while others involved up to eight 20-minute sessions on consecutive days.

Based on questionnaires and vignettes used to test the

programs' effects, kids in the programs demonstrated greater knowledge of protective behaviors and knowledge of sex abuse prevention concepts. And those knowledge gains seemed to last at least six months after the school

program ended, according to four of the trials. About four in 1,000 kids who did not participate in the prevention programs reported some form of sexual abuse, compared to 14 of every 1,000 kids in the prevention programs, the authors report in the Coch-

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Archdiocese of Louisville

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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.pcainc.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.

HONOR THY CHILDREN TRAINING

Those employed or volunteering with youth must undergo a background check every 5 years as well as attend the "Honor Thy Children Training" that addresses child abuse, how to recognize it and how to report it. See your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator if you have not sat-

BACK (CONT.)

rane Library.

Anecdotally, the programs do seem to increase disclosures, Walsh said, but many of the studies included in the review did not collect this data.

"Of the small number of studies that did, the data was somewhat imprecise so we conclude that programs do increase disclosures, but with caution that further studies are needed to determine if this is a true effect," Walsh said.

The prevention programs did not seem to increase or decrease kids' levels of anxiety or fear.

The review supports the continued use of prevention programs in schools. They've been in use in the U. S. since the 1980's, and are now conducted in many developed countries and some developing countries, Walsh said.

"These types of programs are similar to the interactive school based prevention programs for smoking and drug use which have documented effectiveness," said Elizabeth L. Jeglic, who conducts sex offender research at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York, and was not part of the new review.

The new results suggest that prevention efforts should be continued and standardized, she told Reuters Health by email.

"While there is evidence that these programs can work, the content of what actually works is often not spelled out," said Georgia Babatsikos,

isfied either of these requirements. The "Honor Thy Children" training is a one time requirement and is normally completed within 30 days of beginning service. Each training session lasts 2 hours. The background check MUST be completed BEFORE any service/employment begins.

who researches child sexual abuse at Deakin University in Victoria, Australia. "Also the focus on children and the lack of evaluation of prevention programs targeting parents and caregivers is worrisome."

Parents should start talking to kids about sexual abuse at three to four years of age, using age-appropriate language and discussing safety in snippets, she told Reuters Health by email.

"These conversations need to occur regularly throughout childhood and teenagehood," she said.

In addition to student education, teachers must know how to recognize and respond to abuse disclosures, and have a protocol for mandatory reporting, Walsh said.

*The **Speak Up/Be Safe** Curriculum is required in all Archdiocese of Louisville Elementary Schools.*

For more information on this program visit

<https://www.childhelp.org/subs/childhelp-speak-up-be-safe/>



UPCOMING TRAININGS

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

8.28.17

Holy Spirit-Louisville

9.11.17

St. Mary Academy

9.14.17

St. Dominic (Springfield)

9.18.17

St. Paul

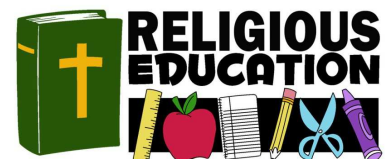
Always be sure to check archlou.org/safe for a complete list. Dates are subject to change and of course weather delays also effect training dates

FOR DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Safe Environment awareness doesn't stop with children in our schools. All children attending religious education classes (not enrolled in our Catholic Schools) must undergo Safe Environment training once a fiscal year.

We have grade specific Safe Environment Curriculums that are available for loan.

Please contact Scott Fitzgerald, Archdiocese of Louisville Coordinator of Safe Environment Services via email (fitzgerald@archlou.org) or via phone (502.471.2132) for more information or to check out materials.



WHO ARE THE PERPERTRATORS OF CHILD ABUSE?

Susanne Babbel Ph. D., M.F. T.

While a common misconception might be that child abuse victims come from "bad" or low-income families, the truth is that child abuse occurs across the spectrum of socioeconomic conditions and within all types of families.

One fact that is clear across the board: perpetrators of child abuse and neglect are most

often the child's own parents. According to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), a 2005 study showed that 79.4% of child abusers were the parents, and the next largest pool of abusers consisted of unmarried partners of the parents of child victims. A whopping 40% of child victims were abused by their mothers acting alone, and a disturbing 17.3% were abused by both parents.

What causes parents to abuse their children?

As with all forms of abuse, one of the primary reasons an abuser becomes abusive is because he or she was once abused. Adding to that, the stress and helplessness that can overcome a parent can contribute to abusive tendencies. A parent who is not getting enough time for adequate self-care,



or has not been taught how to appropriately and consistently discipline a child, is at added risk for developing abusive tendencies. Substance abuse and addictions can be the root cause or simply exacerbate the problem. Columbia University's National Center

on Addiction and Substance Abuse published a report in which substance abuse was cited as a factor in at least 70% of

all reported cases of child maltreatment (in 2005). This report also concluded that adults with substance abuse problems are 2.7 times more likely to report abusive behavior toward their own children. (Assuming that there are probably an even higher incidence of those who abuse their children without reporting it.) If you're currently in a situation where you feel you may be abusing your own children, do something about it and call any abuse prevention hotline such as The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4ACHILD. You can also reach out to Martine Siegel, Archdiocese of Louisville Victim Assistance Coordinator 502.636.1044 or via email (msiegel@archlou.org).

"TALKING" ABOUT ABUSE

When you empower your children to say "no" to unwanted touch and teach them that they can come to you with questions and concerns, you take critical steps to preventing child sexual abuse. Here are some tips for having that conversation

- Talk to your children about sexuality and sexual abuse in age-

appropriate terms. Talking openly and directly about sexuality teaches children that it is okay to talk to you when they have questions.

- Teach children the names of their body parts so that they have the language to ask questions and express concerns about those body parts while teaching them some parts of

MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

As we head into September and the bustle of back to school settles, now is the time to review your staff and (for those at schools) your coaches to be absolutely sure everyone is Safe Environment compliant.

A best practice is to meet with your athletic director and review teams and ensure all coaches have a background check and have attended a Safe Environment Training.

Are you compliant?

Should you have any questions or need verification, please reach out to Scott Fitzgerald, Coordinator of Safe Environment Services via email (fitzgerald@archlou.org) or 502.471.2132

their bodies are private.

- Let children know that other people should not be touching or looking at their private parts unless they need to touch them to provide care. If someone does need to touch them in those private areas, a parent or trusted caregiver should be there when it happens.

- Tell children that if someone tries to touch those private areas or wants to look at them OR if someone tries to show them his or her own private parts, they should tell a trusted adult as soon as possible.

- Remember, a child who then says he or she does not want to give a relative a hug or kiss can create tension. Do not force the child to give the relative a hug or a kiss, because it is sending the wrong message to the child and teaches the child to

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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.

"TALKING" (CONT...)

ignore his or her confusing or uncomfortable feelings to the point where he or she does it anyway. Work with your child to find ways to greet people that do not involve uncomfortable kinds of touch.

- Talk openly about sexuality and sexual abuse to teach your child that these topics do not need to be "secret." Abusers will sometimes tell a child that the abuse should be kept a secret. Let your child know that if someone is touching him or her or talking to him or her in ways that make him or her uncomfortable or scared, that it should not stay a secret. Abusers rely on the child's likelihood of not telling an adult.

- Assure your child that he or she will not get into trouble if he or she tells

you this kind of secret.

- Do not try to put all this information into one big "talk" about sex.

Talking about sexuality and sexual abuse should be routine conversations.

And finally be engaged in your child's activities. Ask your child about the people he or she goes to school with or plays with. If your child is involved in sports, go to games and practices. Get to know the other parents and coaches and if your child is involved in after-school activities or day care, ask him or her what he or she did during the day.

