Honor Thy Children

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

SPOTLIGHT: SCHOOL-BASED ABUSE PREVENTION

Prevention starts with understanding

School is out for the summer but it won’t be long before everyone is back in session. In addition to other subjects such as math, science and social studies, identifying and knowing what to do when abuse happens are also discussed with students through the “Speak Up/Be Safe” program. Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe is a child-focused, school-based curriculum designed to build safety skills within the child while addressing today’s societal risks, such as bullying and Internet safety. The program focuses on enhancing the child’s overall sense of confidence regarding safety and promotes respect for self and peers that can be applied to general as well as potentially harmful situations. The overarching goal with this curriculum is always to provide children with the skills to identify and be able to approach a safe adult should they ever be in a situation in which they are unsure if they are safe. The program is divided into three groups:

PreK-2nd Grade
A primary focus at the earliest age groups is to shift the responsibility for child abuse and neglect prevention away from children and onto the adults in their lives. Children learn basic concepts around personal safety and how to identify safe adults.

3rd-5th Grade
Lessons emphasize that adults are responsible for child safety, but by learning and using a few key safety rules, children can help those adults keep them safe. Children learn how to recognize potentially unsafe situations, how to identify safe adults, and how to talk about feeling unsafe.

6th-8th Grade
While adults continue to be responsible for child safety, lessons acknowledge the growing responsibilities and privileges of children in this age group and the new opportunities for potentially unsafe situations. Children learn how to recognize potential risks as well as resistance strategies that can be used until they can talk to a safe adult.

Children participate in interactive, engaging lessons with trained school staff facilitators. Lessons promote broad student participation and critical reflection by engaging students in visual, auditory, and physical learning.

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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.prevent.org www.pcaid.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.
I'M JUST NOT SURE, SHOULD I SAY SOMETHING?

Your gut is telling you something isn’t right, but you don’t have any proof. “Should I say something?”
It’s a dilemma many adults face every day.
The short answer is yes. The website stopitnow.org points out if you see warning signs or risky behaviors, raising your concerns with other adults can be the first step to protecting a child. Staying silent, because you don’t have proof, may leave a child exposed to danger. Finding allies - other trusted adults or professionals - can help you figure out what is needed to address the situation and prevent harm.
Remember, Kentucky is a mandatory reporting state.
KRS 620.030 states: (1) Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is dependent, neglected or abused shall immediately cause an oral or written report to be made to a local law enforcement agency or the Kentucky State Police; the Cabinet or its designated representative; the commonwealth’s attorney or the county attorney; by telephone or otherwise. Should you find yourself in this situation here are a few helpful tips:

TRUST YOUR GUT
A gut feeling is your body’s way of reacting to something you’ve seen or heard. Talking about sex is never easy, especially when it’s someone close to us. Too often people regret never saying anything after feeling something wasn’t right. Whether there was any wrong doing or not, by raising questions, you’ve already created a safer environment.

EDUCATE YOURSELF
By educating yourself on the signs of possible abuse and the red flags you should look for in possible perpetrators you can be confident when you report suspected abuse. Remember the more you educate yourself the more you can help prevent abuse thus again creating a safer environment.

COMMON REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING
I don’t want to interfere in someone else’s family. Child abuse and neglect is NOT merely a family matter, and the consequences of staying silent can be devastating for the child.

What if I break up someone’s home? A child abuse report does not mean a child is automatically removed from the home—unless they’re clearly in danger. Parents may be first offered support, such as parenting classes or anger management counseling.

They will know it was me who called. Reporting is anonymous. In most places, you do not have to give your name when you report child abuse.

What I have to say won’t make a difference. If you have a gut feeling that something is wrong, it’s better to be safe than sorry. Even if you can’t see the whole picture, others may have noticed signs as well, and a pattern can help identify child abuse that might have otherwise been overlooked.

If you believe a child is being abused, neglected or is dependent, please call the Child Protection Hotline
1-877-KYSAFE1 or 1-877-597-2331 (Toll-Free)

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

6.3.19
St. Michael-Louisville

6.26.19
St. Albert the Great

7.8.19
St. Gabriel

7.25.19
St. Agnes

8.12.19
St. Gregory

8.26.19
St. Dominic

9.9.19
St. Nicholas Academy

9.16.19
St. Andrew Academy

9.19.19
St. Augustine (Lebanon)

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

Are you working at multiple parishes/schools?
If you already have a background check from an Archdiocese of Louisville parish or school NOT older than five years you do NOT have to complete a new one.

Contact your parish/school Safe Environment rep to have your information transferred.

Honor Thy Children
SUMMER BREAK AWARENESS

The last thing on anyone’s mind during the summer is talking about abuse. But it’s one of the best times to talk to your child given it’s a time when they tend to have a bit more freedom and are around other adults in situations they normally aren’t during the school year. A good place to start with the younger kids is explain to them anything covered by a bathing suit is a private area. If your child is heading to a summer camp, screen the camp. Camps should do criminal background checks (including the sex offender’s registry) on all personnel, including counselors, lifeguards, drivers, etc. Ask if staff members understand what constitutes child sexual abuse and how to respond if such is suspected. Campers should know who to talk to if they feel unsafe and know that he or she will take proper actions. Additionally, the camp should have a policy that staff members may NEVER be alone with a camper.

The best way to prevent abuse of course is to open the lines of communication with your child talk to them about abuse in an age appropriate manner. For example, when talking with younger kids it is also a good way to introduce a simple rule: anything covered by a bathing suit is considered a private part. Always use anatomically correct language and give examples of appropriate and inappropriate touch. For example, changing a baby’s diaper or a doctor giving a checkup would be considered an appropriate touch, while someone touching their private part against their will would be an inappropriate touch.

Give them a strategy of what to do if anything makes them uncomfortable, such as telling a parent or other trusted adult. Emphasize that there are no secrets from parents or the trusted adult. Secrets are often used by predators to manipulate kids. Let your child know that if someone wants them to keep a secret from a parent or trusted adult, that they should not keep that secret. Validate their feelings. Make sure that your children know that they can trust their instincts, and that you will respect how they are feeling. That will make them feel comfortable coming to you if they are being abused.

Make sure that your kids know that it’s OK to say “no” to touches that are unwelcome (other than touches that are necessary for health or safety reasons), and that you will support them in their decision. For example, if an aunt or uncle wants a kiss or a hug, don’t force your child if he or she is unwilling to give a kiss or a hug. Empower your child to say no and support them in that choice.

“IT TOOK A SAFE TRAINING CLASS IN MY FORMER DIOCESE. IS THAT ACCEPTED IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE?”

Anyone coming into the Archdiocese of Louisville must attend an Archdiocese of Louisville Safe Environment Training as our Diocesan specific code of conduct is reviewed.
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 Pastoral Center 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.

**80%**

of sexual abuse survivors who report excessive drug and alcohol use

**1 in 10 children will be abused by their 18th birthday**

**80%**

of all reported sexual assaults (including assaults on adults) occur to children 17 and under

**39%**

of girls aged 7-12 with a history of child sexual abuse have academic difficulties.

**60%**

The percentage of children who are abused by someone the family trusts.

**8**

Of children who are abused 20% are abused before the age of 8

**What are you doing to help prevent child sexual abuse?**