



Honor Thy Children

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

KENTUCKY AGAIN THE LEADER IN CHILD ABUSE

The Commonwealth continues to lead the nation when it comes to child abuse. The disappointing news can be found in the Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel's 2020 report released this month based on data from FY 2019. The report found 20.1 cases of child abuse or neglect per 100,000 kids, followed by West Virginia, with 18.7 cases per 100,000 children. Dr. Melissa Currie, a forensic pediatrician in Louisville and panel member tells the Louisville Courier Journal the state's higher rates could mean the state is doing a better job at identifying abuse and neglect but acknowledges factors like substance abuse, domestic violence and one of the highest parental incarceration rates in the country are also contributing factors.

The panel continues to make recommendations they hope will reverse this trend. One of those are reestablishing family drug courts that provide assistance to families dealing with addiction. These courts closed 11 years ago due to state budget cuts. One has since reopened in Jefferson County through private funding. There continues to be growing concern that many cases are going underreported during the pandemic as kids remain out of school. Often teachers and caregivers are the first to notice abuse. Currie, who works with child abuse victims at Norton Children's Hospital remains concerned how the abuse numbers will shake out during the pandemic. She goes on to tell the Courier Journal she continues to see cases of

extreme violence toward children and admits she doesn't know exactly why other than she "chalks it up to the stress families are under right now." The Courier Journal said in 2019 that officials were increasingly concerned about cases of abuse and violence toward children, some so extreme the panel classified it as torture. Social worker staffing continues to be a concern in 2021 according to the report saying "It is not uncommon to read cases with multiple worker changes over the case of a single investigation," The report mentions that state officials are attempting to address the staffing issues through funding for additional social workers. Below are some tips for identifying child abuse during the pandemic if you're in a position to connect via video call.

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.pcaain.org
- ☺ Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline 800.4.A.CHILD 800.422.4453 www.childhelp.org

Are You Safe Environment Compliant?

Are you working regularly with children?

If so you must have attended an Archdiocese of Louisville Safe Environment Training.

You must also have a satisfactory background check not older than 5 years.

See your Safe Environment Coordinator today to verify your compliance!

- **On a video call, observe how the house appears:** While it's typical to see homes with children in disarray during quarantine, look for ongoing signs that go beyond messiness. Is perishable food sitting out after multiple calls? Is there an absence of food or do family members appear to be losing weight? Are there signs of pests or rodents? Do children appear significantly unkempt or not bathed?
- **Look for signs of increased frustration:** This is a time of great stress for parents, ask questions to see how well a parent is coping. Ask questions like, "How are things going with the kids?" or "What are you getting to do during the day?" to shine a light on the realities of what's going on in the home.
- **Speak with the children:** Ask for time to speak with the children, and observe their reactions to who and what is around them, what is their level of focus and do they seem particularly stressed or emotional or is their behavior atypical?

FACEBOOK REPORTED MORE THAN 20 MILLION CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IMAGES IN 2020, MORE THAN ANY OTHER COMPANY

**CREDIT BUSINESS INSIDER
TOM PORTER (2.26.21)**

Facebook reported more than 20 million child sexual abuse images on its platform in 2020, according to a new report by the National Council for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

According to the report released Wednesday, Facebook recorded 20,307,216 instances for child sexual exploitation on its platforms in 2020. The figures cover Instagram as well as the main Facebook site.

Insider first reported the figures in January, when Facebook confirmed the number. The full report has figures for other companies and shows that Facebook made more than 35 times as many reports as the next company on the list, Google.

Facebook's platforms contain the vast majority of all child sexual content flagged to the NCMEC, which represent a 31% increase on the 16 million images reported to them by the platform in 2019.

Facebook highlighted its proactive policies and use of technology to detect and remove child exploitation material in response to the increase.

"Using industry-leading technology, over 99% of child exploitation content we remove from Facebook and Instagram is found and taken down before it's reported to us," said a spokesperson to Insider in January.

Other sites remove material after it is found or flagged to them, but don't have proactive policies to find it.

Facebook said in a blog post ahead of the release of the NCMEC report that it was building new tools to track down child sexual abuse material, and that most of the material it identified was old material being shared or re-sent.

"We found that more than 90 percent of this content was the

same as or visually similar to previously reported content," said the post.

"And copies of just six videos were responsible for more than half of the child exploitative content we reported in that time period. While this data indicates that the number of pieces of content does not equal the number of victims, and that the same content, potentially slightly altered, is being shared repeatedly, one victim of this horrible crime is one too many." The NCMEC told Insider in January that COVID-19 lockdowns were likely among the factors behind the overall increase in the amount of material reported to them in 2020.

Vulnerable children were less able to get help, and there was a new trend of abuse being livestreamed on demand, said the NCMEC at the time.

The 160 companies signed up to the NCMEC's child sexual abuse reporting mechanism voluntarily share the information, which is then used by law enforcement to investigate people committing the crimes.

There are no laws in the US compelling platforms to proactively search out child sexual abuse material.

Following Facebook, the platforms with the most reports were:

Google with 546,704
Snapchat with 144,095
Microsoft with 96,776
Twitter with 65,062
TikTok with 22,692

UPCOMING TRAININGS

In accordance with local, state and federal guidance amid the Covid-19 outbreak, all Safe Environment Trainings continued to be limited to **50** people. If this changes we will get word out to all parish/school Safe Environment Coordinators as well as post to www.archlou.org/safe

Attendance is on a first come/ first served basis.

No one under 16 will be admitted to the training. This includes infants.

Masks are required and must be worn properly (over the nose and mouth) during the duration of the training

(We do have some extras, but participants are encouraged to bring their own)

3.1.21
St. Gabriel

3.2.21
St. Albert

3.8.21
St. Gabriel

3.18.21
Incarnation

3.23.21
St. Albert

3.28.21 - (2:15 PM)
(SPANISH SPEAKING ONLY)
St. Edward

More trainings are being scheduled into April and May and capacity could be increased once local authorities say it is safe to do so.

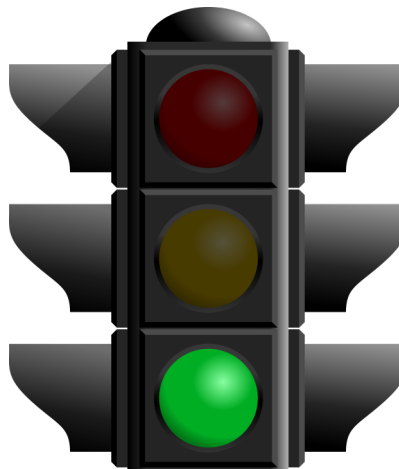
Keep checking
www.archlou.org/safe for updates



BE SURE YOU HAVE THE GREEN LIGHT TO SERVE YOUR PARISH/SCHOOL

The Sexual Abuse Policies of the Archdiocese of Louisville states:

"Every five years, all Church personnel (clergy, staff, and volunteers) who work with vulnerable persons are required to undergo a criminal background check, from the state of Kentucky or the state in which they live presently. Church personnel from other states must undergo a national criminal records check. The employment or volunteer service of personnel whose criminal check reveals records of sex crimes against vulnerable persons will be terminated immediately."



If you're currently working with children is your background check up to date? Are you planning on working with children? You must have a current background check and have attended an Archdiocese of Louisville Safe Environment Training.

If you are unsure of your status be sure to check with your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator and ensure you are compliant. All compliance is subject to audit.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding compliance feel free to reach out to Scott Fitzgerald, Coordinator of Safe Environment Services via email (sfitzgerald@archlou.org) or 502.471.2132)

MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

As schools begin to discuss heading back to in person classes and we continue to work at returning to some sort of life as we knew it pre pandemic, the need for volunteers and staffers will be going up.

If you need to attend an Honor Thy Children Safe Environment Course now is the time to do it.

After months of limited capacity trainings, the rush will undoubtedly be on as we get closer to fall.

As the saying goes, there's no better time like the present. Remember, if you are serving with children you must have attended a Safe Environment course as well as have a satisfactory background check not older than five years.

There's nothing more rewarding than volunteering your time to work with youth in our parishes and schools.

With that comes with the responsibility of keeping them safe. That starts with understanding the importance of your compliance.

If you haven't, make plans to attend an upcoming training!

Should you have any questions on compliance or safe environment in general feel free to contact:

Scott Fitzgerald
Archdiocese of Louisville
Coordinator of
Safe Environment Services
sfitzgerald@archlou.org
502.471.2132



KENTUCKY CHILD ABUSE BY THE NUMBERS

1,484

Kids experienced child abuse

921

Kids experienced sexual abuse

22,922

Kids were neglected

67

Kids died or nearly died due to physical abuse or neglect

Keeping our kids safe is up to all of us!

2018 Data courtesy of Kosair Charities Face It Movement

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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 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.

IT'S THE LAW

KENTUCKY REVISED STATUTE 620.030

"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 to the Department of Kentucky State Police, the cabinet or its designated representative, the Commonwealth's attorney, or the county attorney by telephone or otherwise"

In Kentucky adults who have any reason to suspect child abuse are legally required to contact Child Protective Services (CPS) and make a report. This is a mandatory reporting law that obligates all adults to make a report within 24 hours of learning about possible abuse.

Persons acting upon reasonable cause in the reporting of known or suspected adult/child abuse, neglect, or exploitation are immune from civil and criminal liability. This immunity exists with respect to the reporting, the investigation, and any judicial proceedings resulting from the report
[KRS 209.050, KRS 620.050(1)].

The report to CPS should include the following information, if known:

- Name and address of the child, or of any person responsible for the child's care.
- Nature and extent of the suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation, including any evidence of previous abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Identity of the perpetrator.
- Name and address of the reporter (optional).
- Where the child can be found and any information you have about the location of the suspected abuser.



KENTUCKY
Cabinet for Health and
Family Services

1-877KYSAFE-1