



Honor Thy Children

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

RISKS KIDS TAKE WHEN DISCLOSING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

There are genuine risks to the child when she or he discloses, including the lack of protection for the child if he or she is not believed, or when removal of a child from an abusive situation does not take place in a timely fashion. Moreover, when children are protected and removed from the home, they feel punished, which serves to reinforce the shame and misplaced responsibility that the child feels for causing the abuse. To a child, being removed and placed with strangers (even with relatives) seems like punishment, further reinforcing the ideas that "I am bad," "I am to blame", and/or "I should have kept quiet." Furthermore, when children are removed from their home, they are taken from their community. They no longer participate in any youth activities, club outings, sporting competitions, and other extracurricular activities. This is experienced as additional punishment for their disclosure. These feelings are compounded when adults are angry and

children are silenced from talking about the very matter that caused them to be pulled from their community. Another risk for the child is the probable loss of the relationship to the abuser. Children who are abused usually have mixed feelings about their abuser. The



child hates the offending actions but still cares for the person who is abusing him or her. There are cases where the abuser is the primary financial supporter of the family and disclosing may result in the family losing economic support. In such cases, the abused child often internalizes blame believing that "if I didn't tell, we wouldn't be in such a mess." Know that in general, a child who is being abused feels a desire to protect others in the home—including other

siblings and the non-abusing parent. If the abusing parent gets removed, the child may internalize the responsibility for the pain that the non-abusing parent feels. Family members vary in their responses to a child's disclosure. They have varying degrees of believing and supporting the child for many reasons, including the fact that the abuser is most often a relative or family friend. Coming to terms with the idea that someone we know and respect could sexually abuse a child is difficult for people.

To the child, this ambivalence feels like he or she is not being believed. It is not uncommon for some family members to reject the child's story and side with the abuser. This is particularly devastating to a child when a parent/guardian refuses to believe that the abuse actually happened.

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!

In Kentucky you are mandated by law to report suspected abuse by calling 1-877-KYSAFE1

If you have questions regarding abuse or reporting, Martine Siegel, Archdiocese of Louisville, Victim Assistance Coordinator is available at 502.636.1044 or via email (msiegel@archlou.org)

CHILD ABUSE Q & A

Questions and answers about child abuse from the
Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Q. Who should report suspected abuse or neglect of a child?

A. KRS 620.030(1) - Anyone with a reasonable suspicion that a child is abused or neglected is required to make a report to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

Q. What information does the intake worker need from the reporter?

A. The following basic information is requested:

- The child's name, sex and approximate age
- The name of the person believed to have been responsible for the abuse or neglect
- A description of the injury, neglect or threatened harm to the child
- The current location of the child such as day care, school or home address
- Any immediate risk to the child or a worker going out to ensure the child's safety (i.e., guns)
- The reporter's name and identifying information if the caller wishes to give that information. Anonymous reports are accepted and investigated.

Q. Is there legal protection for those reporting abuse?

A. Anyone acting upon reasonable cause in the making of a report or acting under KRS 620.030 to 620.050 in good faith shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. Any such participant shall have the same immunity with respect to participation in any judicial proceeding resulting from such report or action. However, any person who knowingly makes a false report and does so with malice shall be guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

Q. Can a social worker just take a child out of the home?

No. Only the police have that authority if they feel that a child is in imminent danger. A judge can issue an emergency custody order (ECO) for a child to be picked up and held for 72 hours before a hearing. KRS 620.040(3)(b) allows a hospital administrator or a physician treating a child to hold that child without a court order but they must request an ECO within 72 hours.

Q. What happens to children who are being abused if it is reported?

Reports are investigated by DCBS. Based on information obtained during the investigation, services may be offered to maintain the family. Children are removed only if the home is unsafe.

Q. I suspect my neighbor is harming their children - what should I do?

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, immediately contact the statewide Child Abuse Hotline toll free at (877) 597-2331 to make a report. You also may go online to the Child Reporting System (<https://prd.webapps.chfs.ky.gov/reportabuse/home.aspx>) Monday-Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Eastern time to make a report.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

We are now back to pre-covid protocols meaning no mask (for those two weeks out from their 2nd covid vaccination) and no capacity limits on trainings.

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

If you think you will be working regularly with children please make plans to attend a training at your earliest opportunity.

You don't want to miss out on an opportunity to serve because you haven't completed the Safe Environment Training Course.

7.12.21
St. Gabriel

7.26.21
Incarnation

8.2.21
St. Gabriel

8.3.21
St. Albert

8.17.21
St. James (Elizabethtown)

8.26.21
St. Augustine (Lebanon)

9.13.21
St. Dominic

9.21.21
Incarnation

9.28.21
St. Albert

10.4.21
St. Gabriel

10.14.21
Incarnation

Be sure to bookmark
www.archlou.org/safe for updates
and/or cancellations



SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSERS

When it comes to signs of abuse, we often look for behavioral changes in our kids. What about adults? Have you ever seen an adult interacting with a child in such a way that made you feel uncomfortable with what you observed? It is human nature to minimize or doubt these suspicious

feelings and opt to believe that you are overreacting. These are "uh-oh" feelings and they should not be ignored. The checklist below offers warning signs that encourage further inquiry when you witness an adult who:

- ◆ Refuses to let a child set any of his or her own limits.
- ◆ Insists on hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling with, or holding a child even when the child does not want this affection.
- ◆ Is overly interested in the sexuality of a particular child or teen (e.g., talks repeatedly about the child's developing body or interferes with normal teen dating).
- ◆ Manages to get time alone or insists on time alone with a child with no interruptions.
- ◆ Spends most of his/her spare time with children and has little interest in spending time with someone his or her own age.
- ◆ Regularly offers to baby-sit many different children for free or takes children on overnight outings alone.
- ◆ Buys a child expensive gifts or gives money for no apparent reason.
- ◆ Frequently walks in on children/teens in the bathroom.
- ◆ Allows children or teens to consistently get away with inappropriate behaviors.

CALL FOR HELP

We've all been there, but many times we don't know where to turn? Below is a list of resources courtesy of the Face It Movement



- Kentucky Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 877-597-2331
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741741
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (7233)
- YouthLine, a peer to peer support line: text "teen2teen" to 839863



MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

As we begin to emerge from COVID 19 shutdowns and things begin to open up, so will opportunities to work with children. If that's you, are you Safe Environment Compliant?

If not, make plans now to attend an upcoming Safe Environment Training course so you aren't left on the outside looking in when called upon to serve.

Anyone working regularly with children must complete the Archdiocese of Louisville's Safe Environment Training and have a satisfactory background check not older than five years.

Again, we are at pre-covid protocols meaning masks aren't required for those who are two weeks clear of their 2nd vaccination shot. Additionally there are no attendance limits.

We do not accept another diocese's training as we review our Archdiocese of Louisville specific Code of Conduct in our trainings.

If you are an athletic director or volunteer coordinator now is the time to start looking at your needs ensuring your personnel are Safe Environment Compliant.

Each parish/school is required to maintain a database of those who have completed their training and have a background check not older than 5 years.

If you have questions regarding compliance, please reach out to your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator.

If you don't know who that is or have 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

**Archdiocese of Louisville
Office of Safe Environment**

Martine Bacci Siegel, MSN, RN, CNS
Maloney Center
1200 South Shelby Street
Louisville, KY 40220

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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.

HUGS OR HIGH FIVES? HEALTHY TOUCH AND BODY BOUNDRIES POST-PANDEMIC

CREDIT DARKNESS TO LIGHT (D2L.ORG)

Summer is here again - and hugs can be too! Help your child feel safe, secure, and supported as social distancing ends by championing healthy touch and body boundaries.

After a year spent social distancing, many of us may feel nervous about returning to "normal." Isolation undoubtedly causes stress and anxiety; however, it can also bring about a sense of relief for those of us who cringe at the thought of holiday get-togethers and birthday celebrations filled with hugs and kisses. While children are often expected to greet their loved ones with a hug or a kiss on the cheek, it's important that your child knows that it is their decision. Discussing body autonomy, healthy touch, and personal boundaries as a family can help your child feel safe, secure, and

supported as you reunite with family and friends this summer.

As adults, it's important for us to let kids have a choice about their bodies and how they use them - this teaches them from a



young age about consent and can be protective against sexual abuse. It teaches children that they have the choice and can say no to anyone who makes them feel uncomfortable. Ultimately, it shows them that their personal boundaries matter and they will be respected. But how do you do this? You might be feeling a little nervous thinking

about talking to your children about healthy touch and body boundaries. That's natural - it can feel uncomfortable or even impolite. It helps to remember that establishing boundaries is the best way to maintain healthy relationships, and by having this conversation now, you are setting your kids up for success in the future.

There are two parts to this conversation. First, have open discussions in your immediate family about what acceptable touching is. Involve your kids and ask them for their opinion! It may help to create a Family Code of Conduct together so that everyone is on the same page, the rules can be easily referenced, and everyone's opinion feels heard.

Secondly, it's important that you champion your children's body boundaries in public. This can feel tricky, especially if your child doesn't want to touch someone who loves them. So, if you hear things this summer like, "Come give Aunt Debbie a hug," or "I

haven't seen you in so long, come give your favorite Grandpa a kiss," and your kid is uncomfortable, show your kid you support them. As the safe adult, you can intervene and politely let your family and friends know that your children decide how they like to show affection. A healthy response might be, "Actually Dad, the kids prefer high-fives." The truth is most people don't want to hurt or offend anyone and will respect a body boundary if you tell them about it. However, if they don't respect your boundaries, consider that a red flag. At the end of the day, what matters most is that your child feels safe and knows that you will always stand up for them.