



# Honor Thy Children

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

## HOLIDAY GATHERINGS

*As discussed in the mandatory in person Safe Environment Training, many times abuse is brought on by someone the child knows. As the holidays approach, shopping, preparing meals, planning to gather with family and friends fill our agendas at such an exciting time. While not wanting to put a damper on that excitement, now is the perfect time to spend a few minutes and ensure that the holiday season is a happy (and safe) one for our children.*

*A house full of family and friends should be the ideal place for a child and in many cases it is. Unfortunately, for some it can create an opportunity for abuse. Below are some helpful tips to review before the rush of the holiday.*

Prior to any gatherings, when the time is right, have a chat with your children about personal safety. Don't be afraid to ask if someone makes them uncomfortable for any reason. Re-assure children they can come to you for any reason.

- Create a code word(s). Many times, it's hard for kids to say something amid a crowd of people, especially family.

- Don't force hugs. The holidays often bring in friends or family kids don't often see and some may feel anxiety over embracing unfamiliar family members. High fives or fist bumps are acceptable alternatives.

- Eliminate scenarios where kids play behind closed doors, this includes playing with older kids. Be sure to check in often. It not only stops any sexual abuse, but will go a long way in preventing other activities such as bullying, etc.

- Make a mental note of behaviors around children such as a family member who touches, tickles or wrestles when a child looks uncomfortable. Is there a teen who likes to spend more time than usual with younger children?

- After the festivities wind down and everyone is gone, it doesn't hurt to check in with your child to see how they felt things went. Are they eager to tell you how much fun they had or are they quiet and stand offish? This applies to older children as well.

### Archdiocese of Louisville

November 2022

#### 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)

#### Are You Safe Environment Compliant?

Are you working regularly with children?

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

Has it been 5 years since your initial in person training? You must complete your 5 year refresher training

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

See your Safe Environment Coordinator today to verify your compliance!

# UNDERSTANDING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse generally involves a trusted adult (neighbors, parents, step-parents, aunts, uncles, teachers, priests, deacons, and coaches) who is in a relationship of power to the child and uses that position to manipulate children in order to satisfy the adult's own sexual needs. Abusers manipulate situations in order to create an atmosphere where sexualized contact can occur, such as opportunities to be alone with the child. They then work to gradually reduce the child's inhibitions to sexualized touch, while simultaneously working to strengthen the child's trust. As the sexualized

interaction between the adult and child becomes increasingly normalized, the abuser pushes for more and more sexually gratifying interaction. The child is confused about the sexual violations because the adult abuser is someone that is in a position of trust, and others tend to hold him or her in high regard. Furthermore, children are often told not to disobey or disrespect adults, especially those who are in positions of care. The evolving sexually abusive relationship is maintained due to the power that the adult has in the relationship with the child. That power is

utilized in making threats that ensure the child's secrecy. Secrecy, then, is the key to keeping sexual abuse private. The child is afraid to talk about what is going on to others, in part for fear that the threats will be carried out. Adults who sexually abuse children seek out vulnerable children - children that are easier to manipulate relative to other children. This means targeting children with whom they have ready access, as well as those who are left alone by adult caregivers and/or possess low self-esteem.

## Abusers gain a child's cooperation through manipulation, threats, and bribery

The initial stages of abuse involve subtle, seemingly innocent actions that prey upon a child's lack of knowledge and maturity to violate normal boundaries. This process of manipulating children to become increasingly comfortable with the violations of their boundaries is termed "grooming." Grooming begins with indirect violations that are difficult to identify as preludes to sexual abuse. Such things as tickling a child, hugging a child, or patting the child's backside may not be abusive but could serve as the beginning of the grooming process. For the adult abuser, these interactions are sexually charged. Children, having no experience with the notion of "sexually charged" experiences, are unable to put words to what is happening. They only know that something is a "little weird." This awkward experience is called an "uh-oh" feeling and is often described in safe-touch programs for children. The "uh-oh" feeling is confusing, because of the trust that the child feels for the adult. Children also tend to discount their own "uh-oh" feelings because the abuser uses minimization to justify his or her violations. As the grooming process evolves, sexually violating behaviors become seemingly normal so that each progressive, intrusive step is experienced as only a slight violation of the previously established boundary.

## UPCOMING TRAININGS

All trainings start at 630p unless otherwise indicated.

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

*If you think you will be working 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.*

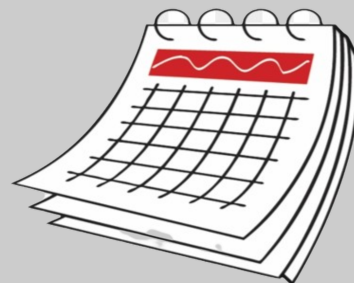
*We are finalizing trainings for January, February and March and should be set prior to mid-December.*

*Once finalized all dates will be posted at*

*[www.archlou.org/safe](http://www.archlou.org/safe)*

*Be sure to bookmark this site for updates and/or cancellations as we enter inclement weather season and the website is the primary avenue for communicating changes to the training schedule.*

*It's important to not delay attendance (even if you're unsure when you'll need the training) as we enter inclement weather season, trainings could be postponed or cancelled due to bad weather.*



# SAFETY & AWARENESS FOR EVERY"BODY"

## Ages 2 to 7

- Do not force children to hug others or have unwanted physical contact.
- Continually encourage kindness toward peers so they learn how to behave towards others.
- As children grow and learn, have this conversation several times a year:
- No one should ever look at or touch your private parts.
- There may be times when a doctor needs to look at your privates when at the Dr's office. A parent should always be in the room if this occurs.
- If something or someone makes you uncomfortable, you should tell an adult. If you do not feel comfortable telling me, who is another trusted adult you could tell?

*Please note, you may have to define what a trusted adult is, one way to do this is to ask who they think would keep them safe no matter what.*

- Should something like this ever happen to you, know you did nothing wrong. Telling is a brave thing.
- Acceptable touching includes giving a high-five or a fist bump. These types of touches are ok if you are comfortable with it. For example, if you do not want to hug someone you do not have to.

## Age 8

- By age 8, most children have heard about sex. It is best for guardians and parents to have this conversation before kids learn about sex from peers or other influences.
- Keep the conversation simple
- Talk about family values, consent, and boundaries. Children need to know they can say "no" when it comes to their body. Likewise, children need to learn to respect the boundaries of others and should not touch others without receiving permission.

*Courtesy of "Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky". For more information and resources please visit [www.pcaky.org](http://www.pcaky.org)*

*For tips on older ages (9-13) please see the next page*



## MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

As we wind down the calendar year, it's become clear that Safe Environment is in full force throughout the Archdiocese of Louisville as we've seen record numbers at the fall trainings.



A friendly reminder that all persons working with children must complete an initial in person training at any of the Archdiocese of Louisville trainings. After that, a person is required to complete a five-year refresher training either online or at any of the in-person trainings.

If you've completed the in-person training and would like to pursue the online option for your refresher, please see your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator so they can confirm your initial in person attendance and give you instructions for completing the online refresher.

If you don't know who that is or have questions in general regarding compliance, please contact Scott Fitzgerald, Archdiocese of Louisville, Coordinator of Safe Environment Services

502.471.2132  
or via email  
[sfitzgerald@archlou.org](mailto:sfitzgerald@archlou.org)

**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](mailto:victimassistance@archlou.org)

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.

## **SAFETY & AWARENESS FOR EVERY"BODY"**

### **Ages 9-12**

- Continue to discuss consent, boundaries, and family values.
- Set family expectations and rules regarding dating or "hanging out," as well as alcohol and drug use.
- Role play how to get out of risky situations and make sure to include drug and alcohol use.
- Talk to your kids about dangers with social media, phones, gaming devices and the internet. For additional guidance on internet safety and cyber bullying, download the Internet Safety Tool Kit at [tinyurl.com/PCAKtoolkit](http://tinyurl.com/PCAKtoolkit).
- Monitor children's use of the internet, phone usage, gaming devices and social media.

### **Ages 13 and up**

- Continue the guidance outlined above.
- Discuss dating violence. Make sure they understand no one should physically or mentally harm them in friendships or dating relationships. Provide examples and encourage youth to speak out if someone treats them (or others) in this manner.

**HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT CHILD ABUSE OR SAFE ENVIRONMENT?**  
Please feel free to contact the Archdiocese of Louisville's Victim Assistance Coordinator

**MARTINE SIEGEL**  
**502.636.1044**  
**[msiegel@archlou.org](mailto:msiegel@archlou.org)**

