



# Honor Thy Children

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

## STAYING HOME ALONE THIS SUMMER?

Archdiocese of  
Louisville

March  
2023

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)

As we make the final turn toward the end of the school year, many families will be facing the question, are my kids old enough to stay at home alone. While the American Academy of Pediatrics points out child experts typically agree that 11 or 12 years old is an appropriate age to stay home alone for a few hours, there are several factors to consider. The most important being the right time will vary by family, so trust your instincts. With some advance planning and preparation, this milestone can be a great way to build your child's independence and confidence. Below are some factors to consider,

but before allowing your child to spend after school time or time while you run errands alone at home, they should (according to our partners at the FACE IT movement) have access to and know how to use a phone as well as who to answer/not answer for. They should also know what to do and who to call if there is a fire, a medical crisis, a suspicious stranger at the door, as well as where to find the first-aid supplies. Do they know how to contact you? While these seem simple, they can often be taken for granted or easily overlooked. Parents should always write down rules and

responsibilities for the hours your child is home without supervision and hang them somewhere prominent. These should include are friends allowed over? Under what circumstances, if at all, should they answer the door? Which activities are off-limits, for example, are there channels that are off-limits to watching? Parents should take time to review these with their children periodically. To see if your children are ready to stay home alone, see below to gauge where they are at.

**Age** - Do you think your child is old and mature enough to take care of themselves? Keep in mind that each child's maturity and parents' comfort level may be different. Most children will not be mature enough to manage being alone on a regular basis until they are about 10 or 11 years old. However, some parents may be OK leaving a more mature 8- or 9-year-old home alone for a half hour or so occasionally.

**Safety** - Would your child be able to remember and follow important safety rules? For example, can they tell you how they would respond to a fire, gas leak or other emergency? Can they follow other rules such as not opening the door, not telling telephone callers that they are alone, and not posting on social media that they are alone?

**Common sense** - Would your child be able to make good judgements on their own. Do they have common sense? For example, if the milk smells sour or curdles when it's poured, would your child drink it?

**Caution** - Does your child think before they act? This is especially important for young teens, who may be tempted to experiment with illegal activities such as sneaking a few sips of liquor from the liquor cabinet. How does your adolescent respond to peer pressure?

# KEEPING SAFE WHEN YOUR CHILD IS AWAY

Whether it be an extended trip or an overnight summer visit to a friend or relative's house, how can we keep our kids safe when it comes to overnight stays? It starts by being available. Even if you've dropped your child off hours ago and you think everything is going well, you should still be prepared to get the call that they want to come home. It is important that kids feel safe asking for help. Tell them repeatedly that they can

call you anytime if they want to come home. They don't need to feel embarrassed or feel pressured to stay. Trusting people with our children is hard, even at school or on a sports team. Trusting other adults to care for your child during a sleepover or playdate can be especially tough. Whether school-aged or in high school, there are some things children need to know for their own safety.



## BE AVAILABLE

- Come up with a code word or phrase your child can say on the phone when they want to be picked up, like "let's go shopping" or asking about their pet.
- If your child has a cell phone, ask if they'd like you to check in on them, and remind them that they can call or text you anytime.
- If you're going to be away from home while your child is gone, make sure someone else is available. Coordinate with another caretaker, family member, or close friend who can pick them up if necessary.
- If you're hosting the sleepover, place night lights in important places like near the steps, in the bathroom, and dark hallways. Make sure the kids know how to get to your room and that they can wake you up if there's an emergency or if they need anything.

### COMMUNICATE WITH CAREGIVERS

Sharing information about your child—and asking for information about the home they will be visiting—will help keep your child safe and (hopefully) help ease your mind.

### ASK QUESTIONS!

### 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.*

4.17.23

St. Aloysius-Peewee Valley

4.18.23

Incarnation

4.24.23

St. Margaret Mary

4.25.23

St. Patrick

5.15.23

St. Joseph (E-Town)

6.13.23

St. Andrew Academy

An updated list can always found 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.*



*Do 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.*

*Think you're compliant but aren't sure? You can always check in with your school/parish safe environment coordinator to see if your dates are current.*

# REPORTING ABUSE: IT'S THE LAW

All 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.

In reporting abuse of children and adults, keep in mind It is better to err on the side of over-reporting than under-reporting. Also remember the Protection Acts provide that privileged relationships are not grounds for excluding evidence except in two situations. Neither psychiatrist-patient privilege nor the husband-wife privilege shall be grounds for excluding evidence

regarding abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Only lawyer- client privilege and clergy-penitent privilege are excluded [KRS 209.060, KRS 620.050(2)].

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)]. As always, the source of a report of abuse, neglect or exploitation is kept confidential unless it is ordered released by a court order [KRS 209.140].



**CHFS**

KENTUCKY  
Cabinet for Health and  
Family Services

**TO  
CONFIDENTIALLY  
REPORT ABUSE  
CALL**

**1-877-KY-SAFE1**



**OR REACH OUT  
TO LOCAL LAW  
ENFORCEMENT**

**ANY SUSPECTED  
ABUSE MUST  
BE REPORTED**

## 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.

# REPORTING IS MANDATORY

**FOR ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING REPORTING PLEASE CONTACT  
THE ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE'S VICTIM ASSISTANCE  
COORDINATOR MARTINE SIEGEL AT 502.636.1044 OR  
MSIEGEL@ARCHLOU.ORG**

## MONTHLY SAFE ENVIRONMENT TIP

There are two (what we like to call) "busy seasons" when it comes to Safe Environment, one is the fall just before school starts, the other is the spring surrounding the Easter holiday.

This year our office received several calls from individuals who waited until the last minute to attend a Safe Environment Training prior to serving in their parish/school. Some of whom were not able to serve as they had just missed a scheduled training.

Even if you're not currently serving your parish or school it's always a good idea to attend an in-person training and have a completed background check if you think there's a chance you will be called upon to serve (whether it's a field trip, coaching, mentor, etc.).

If you are working with children you **MUST** have completed and **IN PERSON** Safe Environment Training and have an Archdiocese of Louisville issued background check not older than five years.

A five year Safe Environment refresher can be satisfied online or by attending another in person session.

If you prefer the online option please see your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator for more information.

If you don't know who that is contact Scott Fitzgerald, Coordinator of Safe Environment Services [sfitzgerald@archlou.org](mailto:sfitzgerald@archlou.org) or 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

Phone: 502.636.1044  
Fax: 502.634.3381  
E-mail: [msiegel@archlou.org](mailto:msiegel@archlou.org)

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.

# BE LOOKING OUT

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:



**TRUST YOUR GUT!  
REPORT ANY SUSPICIOUS  
ACTIVITY IMMEDIATELY!**

- 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.