



# Honor Thy Children

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

## SUPPORT FOR FAMILY AND CAREGIVERS

Archdiocese of Louisville

February 2025

While our focus remains on the children who are abused, what about the family and caregivers of those abused?



The caregiver is probably hearing these allegations for the first time and will likely be very distressed.

Caregivers will feel great guilt, anger, confusion, pain, and betrayal. Inform them as to what you know and have done. Listen to

their fears and concerns and assist them by providing the names of community resources.

If one of the caregivers is the one alleged to have abused the child, he or she will be defensive and angry. Do not confront the alleged caregiver about the abuse. Allow law enforcement personnel and

investigators to handle this. Your responsibility is to ensure the safety of the child.

### 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)

## HELP IS AVAILABLE

### **Center for Women and Families (844) 237-2331 Toll-Free Crisis Line**

Provides services to victims of sexual abuse and violence in the Kentucky counties of Bullitt, Henry, Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, and Trimble. [www.TheCenterOnline.org](http://www.TheCenterOnline.org)

### **Seven Counties Services (502) 589-1100 or the crisis line at (800) 221-0446**

Treatment and counseling for victims and offenders. [www.sevencounties.org](http://www.sevencounties.org)

This of course is just a sample of many local available resources. For ANY questions concerning abuse or the support of caregivers, please fee free to reach out to Archdiocese of Louisville Victim Assistance Coordinator, Martine Siegel ([msiegel@archlou.org](mailto:msiegel@archlou.org)) or (502) 636.1044. She can point you to the necessary resources that can help.

**DON'T HESITATE TO ASK FOR HELP. THERE ARE MULTIPLE RESOURCES AVAILABLE.**

### Are You Safe Environment Compliant?

Are you working regularly with children?

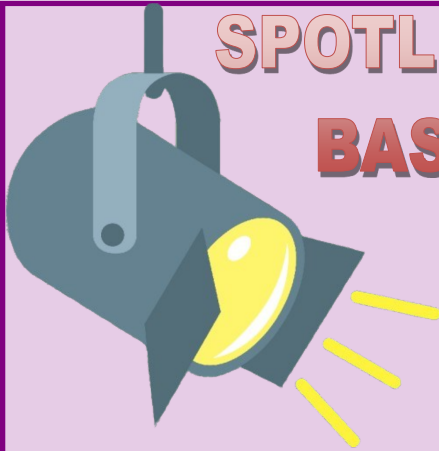
If so you must have attended an Archdiocese of Louisville Safe Environment Training.

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!

# SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMS



The Archdiocese of Louisville is dedicated to maintaining a safe environment for children in our schools through initiatives such as Childhelp's Speak Up Be Safe program.



FOUNDED IN 1959 BY SARA O'MEARA + YVONNE FEDDERSON  
PREVENTION + TREATMENT OF CHILD ABUSE

## GRADES 1–2

A primary focus for the earliest age groups is emphasizing that adults are responsible to keep children safe. Students learn basic concepts of personal safety and how to identify safe adults in their lives.

## GRADES 3–5

Lessons underscore adult responsibility for child safety. Children, equipped with key safety rules, actively contribute to their own safety. They identify safe adults, recognize potential risks, and practice safety rules.

## GRADES 6–8

Adults remain responsible for child safety, yet lessons recognize students' increasing responsibilities and privileges. Students learn to recognize potential risks and practice resistance strategies until they can talk to a safe adult.

This program is available to Archdiocese of Louisville schools thanks to generous support from the Face It Movement and Kosair for Kids. The Archdiocese is deeply grateful for their support in keeping our children safe.



**Kosair  
for Kids**



## UPCOMING SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAININGS

The initial round of spring Safe Environment Training sessions are set. These important training sessions are designed to promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all—this training, along with an Archdiocese of Louisville-issued background check, is mandatory for anyone working with children. Even if you think you will be working with children in the future, but are unsure, you're strongly encouraged to take advantage of these upcoming sessions.

All trainings begin promptly at 630p and **children under 16 will not be admitted given the content discussion.**

3.4.25  
St. Bernard

3.18.25  
St. James  
(Elizabethtown)

4.7.25  
St. Margaret Mary  
**(this will be in the church)**

4.22.25  
Flaget Center

4.28.25  
St. Martha

Trainings are subject to postponement due to weather, etc. It's best not to wait if you think you will be serving in your parish or school.

Complete updates can always be found at [www.archlou.org/safe](http://www.archlou.org/safe)

# REPORTING ABUSE

## IN KENTUCKY

As stated in KRS 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 the Kentucky state police, the cabinet or its designated representative, or the Commonwealth's attorney by telephone or otherwise."

This reporting requirement includes all clergy, employees, and volunteers. When the accusation involves Church personnel, such a report also must be forwarded to the Chancellor of the Archdiocese.

### Persons making a report should provide the below information if it's available

- The names and addresses of the child and his or her parents or other persons who have custodial responsibility for the child.
- The child's age.
- The nature and extent of the child's suspected neglect, or abuse, including any previous charges of dependency, neglect, or abuse, if known.
- The name and address of the person who is allegedly responsible for the abuse or neglect, and
- Any other information that will be helpful to the child abuse investigator.

No internal investigation shall be initiated before this report is made to the authorities and to the Chancellor. Failure to report suspected child abuse to the civil authorities is a Class B misdemeanor punishable by law and is grounds for the termination of employment and/or the termination of a volunteer relationship with a diocesan entity. The only exceptions to this requirement involve information learned within the Sacrament of Reconciliation or an attorney-client relationship. [KRS 620.050(3)]

### REPORT ABUSE BY CALLING

# 1.877.KYSAFE.1



By law in Kentucky, you are required to report ANY suspected abuse

## RESPONDING

*What would you do if a child disclosed to you they had been (or are being) abused?*

Children who disclose often begin by testing you. They share parts of their story without giving all the details. It is not your job to investigate or substantiate what happened. Rather, your responsibility is to make a report to those who are trained to decide whether to investigate. Praise the child's courage for telling you and explain that you will do your best to protect him or her. Do not, however, make promises that you cannot keep.

Be open and invite the child's disclosure through active listening. This is made difficult by the atrocity of what the child is claiming. Know that children who have been sexually abused often assume that they will be blamed for the abuse. Children who have been abused are skilled at watching others assess danger. This ability to "read" others protects them amidst the dynamics of abuse. These skills are readily employed in threatening situations where the child may be vulnerable. If you respond with horror or anger to what is being said, you are unwittingly causing the child to feel ashamed and fearful. Children respond to this type of reaction by self-censoring.

**Archdiocese of Louisville  
Office of Safe Environment**

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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.

## HOW CHILDREN ARE AFFECTED BY SEXUAL ABUSE

Children are individuals, and each is affected differently by abuse. Several people could have the trauma of sexual abuse occur in their lives. Still, everyone will respond and react in varying ways according to his or her personality, family of origin, support systems, gender, age at the time of the abuse, and many other variables too numerous to list. Other factors that impact the magnitude of

the damage include duration of abuse, level of intrusiveness/violation of the abuse, type, and severity of threats used to maintain secrecy, relationship to the abuser, the number of perpetrators, and age at the time of disclosure as well as reactions to disclosure. It is never appropriate to try to predict how a child may be affected by sexual abuse. What someone may deem

"mild" sexual abuse may traumatize a child for the rest of his or her life. Another child who suffered from what others may describe as "severe" abuse, may, with proper care, heal and live a healthy and productive life. The effects of abuse are unpredictable, and all individuals need support and compassion as they find their unique paths to healing.



## KEEP IN MIND

- The younger the age of the child at the onset and the longer the duration of the sexual abuse, the more severe the effects of sexual abuse.
- The closer the relationship of the child to the abuser, the larger the impact on the child.
- Negative and non-supportive reactions from persons to whom children disclose (disbelief, denial, making excuses) cause negative effects on how the children respond as well as on their healing process.