



# Honor Thy Children

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

## CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Archdiocese of Louisville

MARCH 2024

Coming up in April, its Child Abuse Prevention Month. While the Archdiocese of Louisville continues to work tirelessly at keeping our

children safe, other organizations are also working hard. Organizations like "Prevent Child Abuse in Kentucky (PCAKY) works

year round at fighting child abuse and provides the following tips when helping to prevent Child Abuse in our state.

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

### Do I report or do I support?

#### Support Signs

- Caregivers are unsure of local resources.
- Children mention being hungry or not having enough to eat.
- Children don't have appropriate/clean clothes.
- You see a parent dealing with challenging child behavior.
- The family's home is cluttered and dirty.

#### Support Actions

- When you see an overwhelmed parent, offer their child a compliment or tell the parent they are doing a good job.
- Know your neighbors! Exchange phone numbers for emergencies or other needs.
- Meet with the family and share your concerns. Ask them if there is anything you may do to help.
- Offer to help parents research local resources. It can be intimidating to find what you need when you are in crisis.

#### Families with these supports are less likely to abuse or neglect their children:

- Ability to manage stress
- Positive relationships
- Supportive community and resources
- Knowledge of child development and caregiving strategies
- Having their basic needs met

Most child maltreatment can be prevented with the help of community members like you.

Child Protective Services is responsible for investigating child maltreatment. Child Protective Services is NOT designed to be a resource referral for families in need - this is the role of other organizations and caring people, such as schools, churches, nonprofits, and community members.

Reporting is not the only way to protect children - the first and best way to protect children is to support and strengthen their families so maltreatment does not occur in the first place.

If you're able to make a report about a child or family, you may be in a position to provide support. Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky believes in community supporters just as much as mandated reporters. Since we all have a role to play in preventing child abuse before it occurs, we should all consider ourselves community supporters.

How can you strengthen families in your community? It starts with viewing families through a lens of empathy, non-judgement, and respect. Consider yourself a parent ally. Look for a family's strengths and opportunities to support parents. Look for ways to build Protective Factors that reduce stress.

### Do I report or do I support?

#### Report Signs

- A child discloses physical or sexual abuse.
- You see unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts on a child.
- A child has a sudden change in behavior, such as being fearful or shying away from touch.
- A child has untreated illness or untreated physical injuries.

#### Report Actions

- Call the Kentucky Child Abuse Hotline at (877) 597-2331.
- Take a Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse training offered by PCAK.

#### Understanding Child Maltreatment

- Physical Abuse: any non-accidental physical injury to a child caused by a parent or caregiver that causes or could cause serious injury.
- Sexual Abuse: any physical contact with a child for the sexual gratification of the adult or older child.
- Emotional Injury: the failure to provide understanding and nurturing necessary for a child's healthy growth and development.
- Neglect: the failure to provide a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, education, or supervision.

**REMINDER: KRS 620.030 states: Any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is 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; the commonwealth's attorney or the county attorney; by telephone or otherwise...**

### 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!

When it comes to preventing Child Sexual Abuse, the Archdiocese of Louisville is proud to partner up with Kosair Charities and the Face It Movement.

Through the generosity of the Kosair Charities "FaceIt" grant, our schools have funds to support the "Speak Up Be Safe" curriculum in their schools. Additional resources are available like the "connect" initiative (see page 3 for helpful tips on "Connect")

# CONNECT

## To Build Family Resilience

- C** Call for Help
- O** Offer One-on-One Opportunities
- N** Navigate Your Networks
- N** Notice Triggers, Take Breaks, and Know When Things are Escalating
- E** Eat Together
- C** Care for Yourself
- T** Take Time to Talk



 **face it**  
A MOVEMENT TO END CHILD ABUSE

Founded By

 **Kosair  
for Kids**

### UPCOMING TRAININGS

**4.8.24**  
Flaget Center

**4.9.24**  
St. Agnes

Additionally trainings are being finalized for May, June and July and will be published at [www.archlou.org/safe](http://www.archlou.org/safe) once confirmed

**It is strongly advised that you not wait to attend a scheduled in person training if required to do so as trainings are subject to cancellation or postponement due to inclement weather.**

Be sure to bookmark [www.archlou.org/safe](http://www.archlou.org/safe) for the latest status or changes in any training

Should any training be postponed or cancelled at the last minute, notice will be sent to the parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator and posted on the website

**TAKE  
NOTE...**

Each school/parish has a designated Safe Environment Coordinator that can verify your compliance. Do you know who that is?

If not reach out to Scott Fitzgerald [sfitzgerald@archlou.org](mailto:sfitzgerald@archlou.org) to find out who it is.

Below are some helpful tips from our friends at the Face It Movement to help parents "connect" with their kids to help prevent child abuse



# CONNECT

*To Build Family Resilience*

C

**Call for Help.** Parenting is tough. We can all use a helping hand sometimes. Reach out for help when you or your family needs it

O

**Offer One-on-One Opportunities.** Schedule one-on-one time with each of your children – if only for 5-10 minutes each day where the focus is on that one child. During this time read a book together before bed, toss a ball in the yard, or do a favorite activity together. Make the time to play or exercise with each child. Normalize that it's ok to not be happy all the time. Help your child take note of the times that you and your family are happy by writing down a few things they're thankful for every day. *Navigate Your Networks*

N

**Navigate Your Networks.** Use community resources like schools, libraries, neighbors, and more to connect to people and places that can provide support to your family. Many are available through online platforms! Notice triggers, take breaks, and know when things are escalating.

N

**Notice triggers,** take breaks, and know when things are escalating. Learn which behaviors, actions, and words might help you identify your child's impending meltdown or tantrum. Remember, children and teens react (in part) based on what they see from the adults around them. When parents and caregivers are calm, they can provide the best support for their children in difficult or unfavorable situations.

E

**Eat Together.** Family meals naturally create opportunities for sharing about the day, catching up, and discussing highlights and struggles. Get your kids involved in preparing meals with you, not just eating the meals you prepare. Cooking together can bring a family together and create lasting memories.

C

**Care for Yourself.** Caregivers cannot pour from an empty cup, so it is important to take care of yourself, too. Practice self-care, which comes in a variety of forms and can take just five minutes a day. Listen to your favorite song, read, meditate, journal, practice breathing exercises, or enjoy a favorite activity. When we can take

T

**Take Time to Talk.** Go for a walk or take time after dinner to catch up with your family. Talk with your child about their friendships, what they enjoy doing, and what they want to do when they grow up. Instead of asking questions like "How was your day?" (which may get you a one-word response), try questions like: "What was your favorite part of today?", "What did you like least about today?", "What is a part of today you would like to do again?", "Would you like to have a do-over for any part of today?"

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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.

## UNDERSTANDING "GROOMING"

Adults who sexually abuse children seek out vulnerable children - children who are easier to manipulate relative to other children. This means targeting children to 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 adult abusers, 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.

**IMPORTANT  
TO  
REMEMBER  
WHEN  
WORKING  
TO  
UNDERSTAND  
GROOMING**

- Family members and caregivers of children also must be groomed as the child is being targeted. When the adult abuser resides outside the family, trust must be earned from the child's guardians in order to gain private access to the child.

- A child's shame and embarrassment at having "allowed" the abuse reinforces the secrecy. Soon after the onset of the abuse, children begin to feel complicit in their own abuse. They accept responsibility for causing it and feel as though they deserved it or that they should have stopped it

- Adult abusers often distort love and affection in order to increase children's vulnerability. Abusers often redefine their actions as "natural expressions of love," suggesting that they are doing these things "for the child's own good" including describing their actions as a form of "sex education." Such re-definitions reinforce the confusion that children feel and further cause them to doubt their own "uh-oh" feelings. Children are accustomed to the idea that something that pains them is good for them, i.e. getting a shot or a spanking. Adult abusers use these same arguments to justify and explain their behavior.