



HONOR THY CHILDREN

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

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH (UNDERSTANDING)

Prevention starts with understanding

When children are nurtured, they can grow up to be happy and healthy adults. But when they lack an attachment to a caring adult, receive inconsistent nurturing, or experience harsh discipline, the consequences can affect

their life-long health, well-being, and relationships with others. What is child abuse?

Child abuse or neglect often takes place in the home at the hands of a person the child knows well—a parent, relative, babysitter, or friend of the family. There are four major types of child maltreatment. Although any of the forms may be found separately, they often occur together. Each State is responsible for establishing its own definitions of child abuse

and neglect that meet Federal minimum standards. Most include the following:

Neglect is failure to provide for a child's basic needs.

Physical abuse is physical injury as a result of hit-



ting, kicking, shaking, burning, or otherwise harming a child.

Sexual abuse is any situation where a child is used for sexual gratification. This may include indecent exposure, fondling, rape, or commercial exploitation through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

Emotional abuse is any pattern of behavior that impairs a child's emotional

development or sense of self-worth, including constant criticism, threats and rejection.

Why Does Child Abuse Occur? Child abuse and neglect affect children of every age, race, and income level. However, research has identified many factors relating to the child, family, community, and society that are associated with an increased risk of child abuse and neglect. Studies also have shown that when multiple risk factors are present, the risk is greater. Some of the most common risk factors include the following

Immaturity. Young parents may lack experience with children or be unprepared for the responsibility of raising a child. Unrealistic expectations. A lack of knowledge about normal child development or behavior may result in frustration and, ulti-

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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

Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Unexplained pain, itching, redness or bleeding in the genital area
- Increased nightmares or bedwetting
- Withdrawn behavior
- Angry outbursts/mood swings
- Loss of appetite or difficulty swallowing
- Sudden/unexplained avoidance of certain people or places
- Sexual knowledge, language or behavior that is unusual for the child's age.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH (UNDERSTANDING) (cont)

mately, abusive discipline

Stress Families struggling with poverty, unstable housing, divorce, or unemployment may be at greater risk.

Substance abuse The effects of substance use, as well as time, energy, and money spent obtaining drugs or alcohol, significantly impair parents' abilities to care for their children.

Intergenerational patterns of abuse Parents' own experiences of childhood trauma impact their relationships with their children.

Isolation Effective parenting is more difficult when parents lack a supportive partner, family, or community. These circumstances, combined with the inherent challenges of raising children, can result in otherwise well-intentioned parents causing their children harm or neglecting their needs. On the other hand, evidence shows that the great majority of families who experience these circumstances will not abuse or neglect their children. Protective factors, act as buffers to help many families who are under stress parent effectively.

What Are the Consequences?

Child maltreatment is a traumatic experience, and the impact on survivors can be profound. Traumatic

events, whether isolated (e.g., a single incident of sexual abuse) or ongoing (e.g., chronic emotional abuse or neglect), overwhelm children's ability to cope and elicit powerful physical and emotional responses. These responses continue even when the danger has passed, often until treatment is received. Traumatic events may impair a child's ability to trust others, sense of personal safety, and effectiveness in navigating life changes. Research shows that child maltreatment, like other trauma, is associated with adverse health and mental health outcomes in children and families, and those negative effects can last a lifetime.

The trauma of child abuse or neglect has been associated with increased risk of, depression and suicide attempts, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, learning problems, social problems with other children and with adults, teen pregnancy, lack of success in school, domestic violence, chronic illnesses, including heart disease, cancer, and lung disease, among others.

In addition to the impact on the child and family, child abuse and neglect affects the community as a whole—including medical and mental health, law enforcement, judicial, public social services, and nonprofit agencies—as they respond to incidents and support victims.

One analysis of the immediate and long-term economic impact of child abuse and neglect suggests that child maltreatment costs the nation approximately \$220 million every day, or \$80 billion per year.

Anyone can and should report suspected child abuse or neglect. If you think a child is being mistreated, take immediate action. Most States have a toll-free number for reporting. In Kentucky the number is 1-877-KYSAFE1 or 1-877-597-2331.

You also can call the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline at 1.800.4.A.CHILD (1.800.422.4453). When you call to make a report, you will be asked for specific information, such as: the child's name and location the name and relationship (if known) of the person you believe is abusing the child. What you have seen or heard regarding the abuse or neglect, the names of any other people who might know about the abuse, etc.



HONOR THY CHILDREN TRAINING

Those employed or volunteering with youth must undergo a background check every 5 years as well as attend the "Honor Thy Children Training" that addresses child abuse, how to recognize it and how to report it. See your parish/school Safe Environment Coordinator if you have not sat-

isfied either of these requirements.

The "Honor Thy Children" training is a one time requirement and is normally completed within 30 days of beginning service. The background check MUST be completed BEFORE any service/employment begins.

UPCOMING TRAININGS

A current list of trainings is always available at www.archlou.org/safe

Be sure to check back often as training dates are subject to change and of course weather delays also subject to change

DO THIS, NOT THAT

All volunteers and employees of the Archdiocese of Louisville are expected to follow all Safe Environment

and Archdiocesan guidelines when it comes to contact with children. These tips might be helpful when un-

derstanding what is appropriate and inappropriate.

| <u>DO</u> | <u>DON'T</u> |
|--|---|
| Maintain appropriate personal space | Invade personal space, physical proximity that is too close |
| Maintain reasonable eye contact | Maintain intense eye contact |
| Appropriate comments regarding program environment and social activities | Comments that are personal or physical in nature (i.e. "you have great legs", "you should wear that sweater more often", or any comments that may of sexual overtones |
| Helpers assigned duties appropriate to the program environment. | Helpers assigned duties to meet personal needs of staff members |
| Youth staff communication appropriate and understood by the general population | Youth-staff communication has implied messages and inside understanding not commonly understood by the general population; hidden communication |
| Conversations with youth support learning and growth; youth's perspective is focus of conversation | Conversations with youth disclose personal and confidential information so that youth becomes the confidant of the adult; staff revealing personal information that could make youth uncomfortable; adult becomes focus of conversation |
| Appropriate use of conferences in a manner consistent with program purpose | Pattern of spending time along with youth in conferences beyond program expectations |
| Youth-staff relationship centered on academics, program events and activities | Youth-staff relationship maintained outside program events, manifested by gift giving, outside social activities, or receiving or writing personal notes |
| Maintain fair and equal treatment of all youth with occasional exceptions | Pattern of covering for or providing excuses for particular youth |
| Leaders of program activities maintain clear standards around gender issues and harassment | Leaders of program activities encourage atmosphere of loose and inappropriate boundaries around gender and harassment issues. |
| A pat on the back, shoulder or arm | Shoulder massage, lingering touches, squeezes, requesting affection; hugs, kisses or invitations to "give me a hug", "give me a kiss" |
| Exercising good judgment on whether to touch youth and/or under what circumstances; sensitive to individual preferences and cultural norms | Touching youth who may misinterpret the touch due to the individual circumstances, cultural standards or developmental stage |
| Referring serious youth problems to the appropriately trained professional | Staff members acting as helpers for serious problems where higher level training in effective counseling is warranted |
| Parent approves of the interaction | Parent questions the appropriateness of the interaction |
| | |

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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 Chancery 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.

PREVENTING STRESS PREVENTS ABUSE

Everyone has stress, whether it's a bad day at work, car trouble, or simply too many things to do. However, too much stress can make it hard to parent effectively and can lead to abuse. If you are stressed, try these simple techniques to help manage your stress.

Identify what's making you stressed

Everyone's stressors are different. Yours might be related to money, work, your surroundings (traffic, crime), your partner, your children's behavior, or health issues.

Accept what you cannot change Ask yourself, "Can I do anything about it?" If the answer is no, try to focus on something else. If there is something you can do break it into smaller

steps so it doesn't feel overwhelming.

Have faith Look back at previous times when you have overcome challenges. Think, "This too shall pass." Consider that people who attend church, pray regularly, or practice other forms of spirituality tend to have less stress.

Relax Try deep breathing, meditation, yoga, or listening to music. Take 30 minutes to play a board game and laugh with your kids.

Take care of your health Getting enough sleep can make a big difference in your stress level. So can eating healthy foods and getting some exercise.

Take time for yourself Take a bath, read a book, or pick up a hobby. When

you can, hire a babysitter (or trade time with a friend or neighbor) and get out for a few hours.

Develop a support network Don't be afraid to ask for help. Older children can set the table. Your spouse or partner could take over bedtime a few nights a week. Friends might pick up the kids from school to give you a break.

