



Honor Thy Children

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

PROTECTING KENTUCKY CHILDREN FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT

It is everyone's job when it comes to neglect

Children need to feel safe and supported in order to thrive during childhood and later in life. Child abuse and neglect can have negative impacts on not only children's short-term emotional health, but also their long-term mental and physical health outcomes, and in severe cases, it results in death. Even when children are taught ways to keep themselves safe from abuse, there is no sub-

stitute for adult responsibility. With most children spending the majority of their days in school, it is imperative that school personnel receive training to know how to prevent, recognize, and report child abuse and neglect. Did you know that 1 and 8 children nationally are confirmed to have experienced abuse or neglect before their 18th birth-

day. In 2012 in Kentucky, approximately 1,800 children were victims of substantiated physical abuse while over 800 children were victims of substantiated sexual abuse and

in 2012. Children's safety is a job for adults. It is estimated that only 1 in 10 sexual abused children disclose their abuse. Perpetrators of child sexual

abuse often form relationships with potential victims and their families prior to the abuse, referred to as "grooming". Ninety-five percent of Kentucky's



nearly 15,000 were substantiated victims of neglect. More than half of Kentucky's confirmed victims of child maltreatment are school-aged (5-17 years old). In Jefferson county alone, 319 children were victims of substantiated sexual abuse and more than 2,300 were substantiated victims of neglect

child maltreatment perpetrators in 2012 were parents, relatives, or the partners of unmarried parents. Short and long-term impacts of child abuse and be extremely harmful. The physical health consequences of child abuse and neglect include and increased risk of impaired

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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.pcain.org
- © Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline
800.4.A.CHILD
800.422.4453
www.childhelp.org

By The Numbers



On average 45 Kentucky children were maltreated each day in 2012.

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PROTECTING KENTUCKY CHILDREN FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT (cont.)

brain development with the consequences for cognitive, language, and academic abilities; adolescent obesity; and chronic diseases in adulthood.

Psychologically, child maltreatment is a risk factor for a variety of mental health disorders, severe developmental and cognitive problems, and anti-social traits.

Research shows that people who are sexually abused as children are far more likely to experience psycho-

logical problems often lasting into adulthood, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, substance abuse, relationship problems and suicide. Unrecognized abuse can exacerbate the effects of abuse in children.

These consequences of abuse can severely affect children's ability to learn and function appropriately in the classroom, with child victims of maltreatment at greater risk of repeating grades.

Victimized children are also at greater risk of substance abuse, delinquency, truancy and pregnancy during adolescence.

The solution? Ensure all school personnel in Kentucky receive appropriate training for the prevention, recognition, and reporting of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

SEXUAL ABUSE: THE SIGNS AND WHAT TO DO

Child sexual abuse has been reported up to 80,000 times a year, but the number of unreported instances is far greater, because the children are afraid to tell anyone what has happened, and the legal process of reporting can be difficult. The problem should be identified, the abuse stopped, and the child should receive professional help. The long-term emotional damage of sexual abuse can be devastating to the child.

Often there are no obvious external signs of child sexual abuse.

Some signs can only be detected on physical exam by a physician. Sexual abuse can also include noncontact abuse, such as exposure, voyeurism, and child pornography.

Sexually abused children may also develop the following:

- unusual interest in or avoidance of all things of a sexual nature
- sleep problems or nightmares
- depression or withdrawal from friends or family
- seductiveness
- statements that their bodies are dirty or damaged, or fear that there is something wrong with them in the genital area
- refusal to go to school
- delinquency/conduct problems
- secretiveness
- aspects of sexual molestation in drawings, games, fantasies
- unusual aggressiveness, or
- suicidal behavior

Child sexual abusers can make the

child very worried about telling, and only when a special effort has helped the child to feel safe, can the child talk freely. If a child says that he or she has been molested, parents should try to remain calm and reassure the child that what happened was not their fault. Parents should seek a medical examination and psychiatric consultation. Sexually abused children and their families need immediate professional evaluation and treatment. Such treatment can help reduce the risk that the child will develop serious problems as an adult.

For any questions regarding child abuse or referrals for treatment contact Martine Siegel, Director of Counseling at (502) 636.1044.

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

(All begin at 6:30 p.m.)

2.16.15 - Immaculate Heart of Mary

2.19.15 - St. John The Apostle

2..23.15 - St. Joseph (B-Town)

3.9.15 - Holy Trinity (Louisville)

A current listing is always available at www.archlou.org/safe

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 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.

COMPUTERS AND THE RISKS OF ABUSE

Computers have traditionally been trusted by both children and adults as reliable and accurate sources of information. The rapid growth of online services and internet access has added a new dimension to modern computing. Through the internet children now have access to an almost endless supply of information and opportunity for interaction. However, there can be real risks and dangers for an unsupervised child.

Parents cannot assume that their child will be protected by the supervision or regulation provided by the online services. Most "chat rooms" and social media sites are

completely unsupervised. Because of the anonymous nature of the "screen name," children who communicate with others in these areas will not know if they are "talking" with another child or a child predator pretending to be a child or teen. Unlike the mail and visitors that a parent sees a child receive at home, e-mail or "chat room" activity is not seen by parents. Unfortunately, there can be serious consequences to children who have been persuaded to give personal information, (e.g. name, passwords, phone number, email or home address) or have agreed to meet someone in person. Parents can do the following to

minimize the risk to children.

- limit the amount of time a child spends online and "surfing the web"
- teach a child that talking to "screen names" in a "chat room" is the same as talking with strangers
- make use of the parental control features offered with your online service, or obtaining commercially available software programs, to restrict access to "chat lines," news groups, and inappropriate websites
- insist that a child follow the same guidelines at other computers that they might have access to, such as those at school, libraries, or friends' homes