



Honor Thy Children

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

STAYING SAFE

Spring break serves as a reminder that summer is just around the corner, bringing more free time for young people to spend with friends and peers. Our partners at the Face It Movement offer valuable guidance on keeping children safe, and now is the perfect time to start planning for their well-being.

Be 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.

Tips to Be Prepared

- ▶ 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 for 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.



LET'S FACE IT, 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 and to help them set body boundaries.

Educate and Empower Your Child

Only you and your child can know when they are ready for a sleepover. Here are some tips for a safe and fun experience.

What Kids Need to Know for Their Safety

- ▶ Their parents or caregivers' full names and phone numbers.
- ▶ How to dial 911 and when it's appropriate to do so.
- ▶ The difference between adults and teenagers. Young children may assume that everyone who is "bigger" is a safe adult, but they may actually be an older child.
- ▶ Any allergies they have or medication they take regularly and how to administer it.



Empower Kids with Safe Body Boundaries

- ▶ Make sure your child uses the correct names for body parts, including their genitals, and knows the difference between "okay" and "not okay" touches. No one should ask to see or touch their private parts or show them pictures of private parts. Teach them if those things occur, tell a trusted adult.
- ▶ Teach children that it's okay for them to say "no" if they don't want to hug or kiss someone, including the family where they will be staying, and always respect the child's decision.
- ▶ Educate children about the difference between good secrets and bad secrets. A surprise party is a good secret because it isn't kept for long. A secret that they are told to keep forever is not okay.
- ▶ Make sure your child knows how to bathe themselves and change their own clothes. Teach them that it is OK to change their clothes alone in the bathroom or bedroom with the door closed, and they do not have to share a bed with their friends if it makes them uncomfortable.



The Archdiocese of Louisville is a proud partner of the Face It Movement and Kosair for Kids in our shared commitment to keeping children safe. We are grateful for their continued support in these vital efforts.

Thank you!

Archdiocese of Louisville

March/April
(spring break edition)
2025

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

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!

PREVENTING ABUSE 101

Listen to and honor children by giving them a voice. Teach them personal boundaries and respect for their bodies. Discuss with children what is appropriate and inappropriate touch. Explain to them that other people do not have the right to touch them in ways that make them uncomfortable. Help younger children identify "private parts," and "bathing suit zones" with appropriate terminology for all parts of their body. Communicate to children that there is nothing

wrong with understanding their bodies and talking about their bodies. All bodies are beautiful,



sacred, and holy. Adults often give children mixed messages about their rights to have a say in who touches them and how they are touched. It

is not uncommon, for example, for adults to pressure children into kissing or hugging aunts or uncles whom they may be hesitant to approach. Give children the right to decide who touches them, including family members. As an adult, listen to and trust your intuition and instincts. If you sense something is not right or seems odd, it may well be. Do not leave children in the care of someone you do not have a good feeling about.



BE OBSERVANT

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:

- 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.

UPCOMING SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAININGS

Spring trainings are underway! 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 6:30p and **children under 16 will not be admitted given the content discussion.**

4.22.25
Flaget Center

4.28.25
St. Martha

May and June trainings are being scheduled and will be posted once confirmed at...
www.archlou.org/safe

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

With inclement weather season upon us, best practice is to attend a training as soon as you can as sessions are subject to postponement on short notice

HELP IS AVAILABLE LOCALLY

Archdiocese of Louisville Counseling Referral Services (502) 636.1044
Provides services and assistance through the Victim Assistance Coordinator to those who report that they have been abused by a Church employee (victimassistance@archlou.org); provides counseling referrals to individuals, couples, and families; and coordinates safe environment programming for the Archdiocese (safe@archlou.org).

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

NAMI - The National Alliance on Mental Illness (502) 588.2008
Offers support to individuals suffering with mental illness and their families. This may include abuse, PTSD, anxiety and depression. Services include support groups for the community as well as education. www.namilouisville.org

Silverleaf Sexual Trauma Recovery Services (270) 234.9236
Provides services to victims of sexual abuse and rape, as well as to non-offending caregivers and families. Serving Breckinridge, Grayson, Hardin, Larue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, and Washington counties. www.sliverleafky.org

The Couch Immediate Health Center (502) 414.4557
Complete mental health services by walk in in our appointment and offering counseling and/or medication when appropriate. www.thecouchimmediatementalhealthcare.com

There are additional local resources available. If you find yourself stuck and needing help, please don't hesitate to reach out to the Archdiocese of Louisville's Victim Assistance Coordinator



MARTINE SIEGEL
502.636.1044 or
via email (msiegel@archlou.org)

FACTS

There are many myths surrounding child sexual abuse that are worth clarifying. Such as:

Myth: Strangers are responsible for most child abuse.

Fact: Most child abuse, including sexual abuse, is perpetrated by someone known to the child.

Myth: Most sexual abusers are homosexuals.

Fact: Most sexual abusers are male, and the vast majority are heterosexual.

Myth: Children usually lie about sexual abuse.

Fact: The rate of false reporting, or lying, about sexual abuse is the same as the incidence of false reporting of any other type of crime.

Myth: Child sexual abuse is more widespread among Catholic clergy than other professions or religious communities.

Fact: There is no evidence that child sexual abuse is more or less common in any particular denomination or religion. All evidence suggests that the occurrence of sexual abuse remains the same across religious affiliations, socioeconomic status, or

FACT ✓

✗ **MYTH**

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

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

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 RISKS OF DISCLOSURE

There are genuine risks to the child when she or he discloses, including the lack of protection for the child if he or she is not believed, or when the removal of a child from an abusive situation does not take place in a timely fashion. Moreover, when children are protected and removed from the home, they feel punished, which serves to reinforce the shame and misplaced responsibility that the child feels for causing the abuse. To a child, being removed and placed with strangers (even with relatives) seems like punishment, further reinforcing the ideas that "I am bad," "I am to blame", and/or "I should have kept quiet." Furthermore, when children are removed from their home, they are taken from their community. They no longer participate in any youth activities,

club outings, sporting competitions, and other extracurricular activities. This is experienced as additional punishment



for their disclosure. These feelings are compounded when adults are angry, and children are silenced from talking about the very matter that caused them to be pulled from their community. Another risk for the child is the probable loss of the relationship to the abuser. Children who are abused usually have mixed feelings about their abuser. The child hates the offending

actions but still cares for the person who is abusing him or her. There are cases where the abuser is the primary financial supporter of the family and disclosing may result in the family losing economic support. In such cases,

the abused child often internalizes blame believing that "if I didn't tell, we wouldn't be in such a mess." Know that in general, a child who is being abused feels a desire to protect others in the home, including other siblings and non-abusing parents. If the abusive parent gets removed, the child may internalize the responsibility for the pain that the non-abusing parent feels. Family members vary

in their responses to a child's disclosure. They have varying degrees of believing and supporting the child for many reasons, including the fact that the abuser is most often a relative or family friend. Coming to terms with the idea that someone we know, and respect could sexually abuse a child is difficult for people. To the child, this ambivalence feels like he or she is not being believed. It is not uncommon for some family members to reject the child's story and side with the abuser. This is particularly devastating to a child when a parent/guardian refuses to believe that the abuse happened.