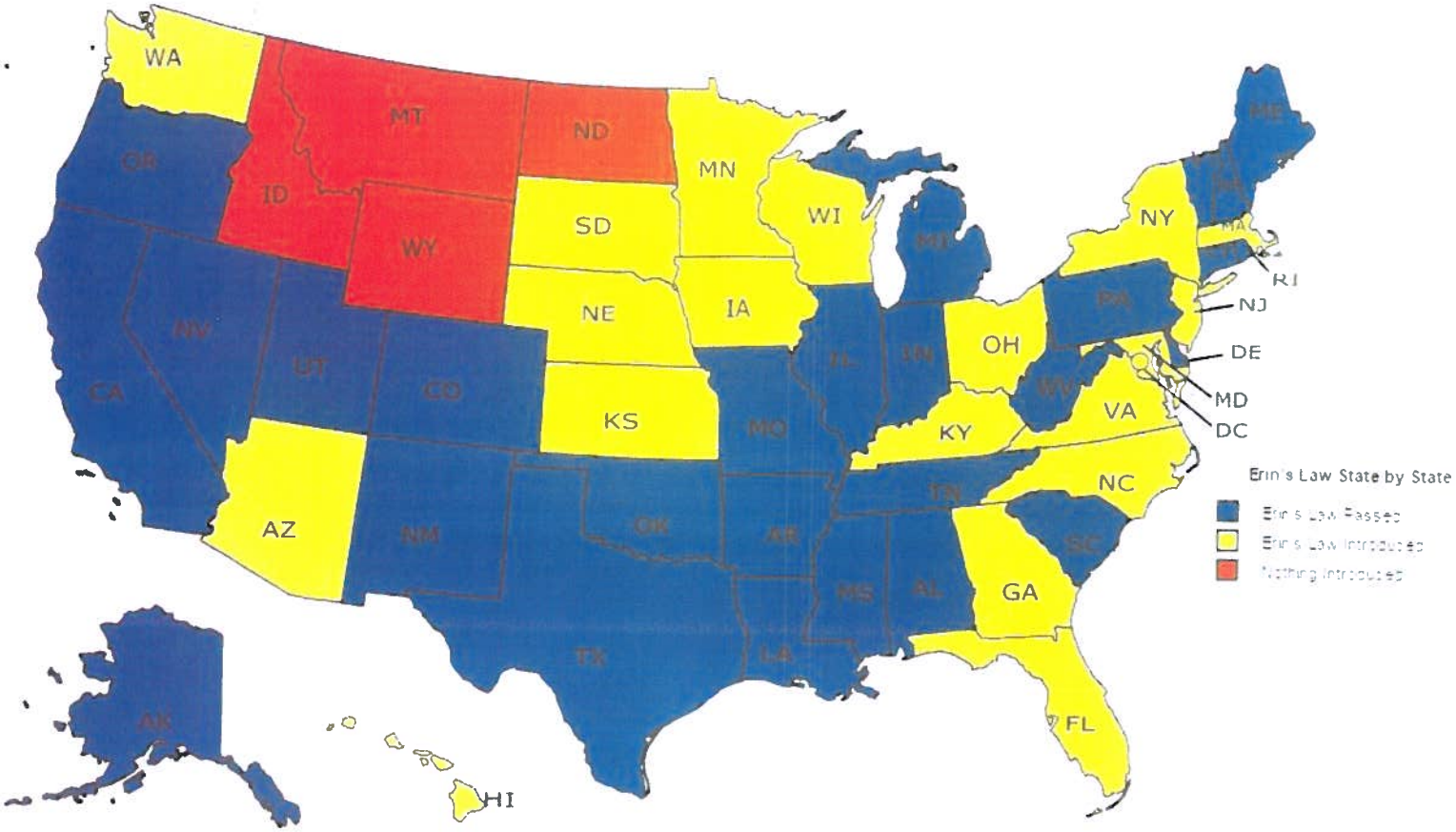

About Erin's Law

In December 2015, the ***Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Awareness Act*** was signed by President Obama. This law provides funding to each state for sexual abuse prevention and education programs in schools.

Prevention curriculum includes techniques to teach children to recognize child sexual abuse, equip them with skills to reduce their vulnerability and encourage them to report the abuse.

Programs include a professional training component for administrators, teachers and other school personnel on talking to students about child sexual abuse prevention, effects of child sexual abuse on children, handling disclosures, and mandated reporting.

Recognizing that parents play a key role in protecting children from abuse, programs include a component to encourage parental involvement within the sexual abuse prevention program.

References:
http://www.erinslawillinois.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/The-Key-Components-of-Erin%E2%80%99s-Law.pdf

Childhood Sexual Abuse Facts:

- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will become victims of sexual abuse before the age of eighteen.
- Children who are sexually abused are at significantly greater risk for later posttraumatic stress and other anxiety symptoms, depression, and suicide attempts.
- Studies indicate that sexual abuse exposure among children and adolescents is associated with high school absentee rates, increased need for special education services and difficulty with school adaptation.
- Children who are sexually abused are 2 to 3 times more likely to have an alcohol use/dependence problem than non-victims.
- Only about a third of child sexual abuse incidents/cases are identified, and even fewer are reported.
- Child sexual abuse is also associated with physical health problems in adulthood. This is a consequence of the substance abuse, mental health issues and other consequences that survivors of child sexual abuse face.
- This year, there will be about 400,000 babies born in the U.S. that will become victims of child sexual abuse unless something is done to stop it.

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References:
https://dojmt.gov/enforcement/childrensjustice/for-parents-and-caregivers/
http://www.d2l.org/atf/cf/%7B64AF78C4-5EB8-45AA-BC28-F7EE2B581919%7D/all_statistics_20150619.pdf

Child Lures® Prevention
Think First & Stay Safe!™

Child Personal Safety Unit

Scope and Sequence: Kindergarten

	Key Concepts	Behavioral Objectives - Kindergarten Students will be able to:
LESSON 1 Using My Built-In Computer: Staying Healthy and Safe	There are things we do every day to keep our bodies healthy and safe, like wash hands & wear helmets. Our brain is the most powerful computer in the world. We can program our brain to *Think First & Stay Safe.*	• Identify everyday things kids do to stay healthy and safe. • Plan a healthy snack. • Program their brain about healthy/unhealthy behaviors, safe/unsafe situations and whom to ask for help.
LESSON 2 People are Like the Weather: Being Kind and Respectful	Most adults help keep children healthy and safe. Like the weather, most people are sunny and safe. Like the weather, people's behavior can change from sunny to stormy. We can take steps to stay safe from unsafe weather and stormy behaviors.	• Demonstrate being kind and respectful to others in words and actions, and expect the same in return. • Ask permission to touch others' belongings or person. • Refuse unwanted and unsafe touches assertively. • Understand that most people are sunny & safe, but people's behavior can change from sunny & safe to stormy & unsafe.
LESSON 3 Child Luring: Treat It Like A Fire Drill	Learning about Child Luring is like having a fire drill...it probably won't happen to us, but we need to know what to do, just in case. Telling a grown-up about Stormy Behaviors is not tattling; it is asking for help with a safety issue. Trusted Adults can help with any luring or safety issue.	• Apply the concept of a fishing lure to child luring. • Recognize that Child Lures can be used by grown-ups or kids, with or without technology. • Identify grown-ups (1 inside the home/1 outside the home) as Trusted Adults to ask for help with a luring or safety issue. • Apply assertiveness skills in response to Child Luring scenarios.
LESSON 4 Laws Help Protect Me: Kids Have Rights Too	Rules and laws help protect us. It is against the law to bully or cyberbully another person. It is against the law for anyone to look at, touch or take pictures of a child's private parts (Bathing Suit Zone) or ask/tell a child to touch another person's private parts. Always be truthful when telling about bullying and abuse.	• Recognize that rules and laws help protect children. • Identify what constitutes bullying, cyberbullying and abuse. • Apply assertiveness skills to tell a Trusted Adult in response to bullying, cyberbullying and abuse. • Identify body parts, including private parts; "Bathing Suit Zone." • Refuse unwanted touching assertively by applying the My Body Belongs to Me rule. • Apply Always Tell the Truth rule when reporting bullying/abuse.
LESSON 5 Listening to Our Instincts: All Secrets Can Be Told	Instincts are our inner sirens that tell us to slow down and be careful; we can use them to help us stay safe. If something gives us a funny feeling in our belly, we can tell a grown-up. Some secrets we keep to surprise people, but All Secrets Can Be Told. It's never too late to tell a secret, even secrets we've kept for a long time.	• Demonstrate how their special inner siren can help them stay safe. • Apply the Funny Feeling in Our Belly rule in response to bullying and abuse scenarios. • Identify and apply the All Secrets Can Be Told rule, even if they have been keeping a secret for a long time or are scared to tell. • Identify their two Trusted Adults by name.
LESSON 6 The Kindness of Strangers: Choosing Safe Strangers	Most strangers are kind and caring. Children who are lured into unsafe situations are usually lured by someone they already know and trust, not by a stranger. If kids need help, safe strangers include a parent with kids of their own, a store employee or a police officer.	• Identify that most strangers are kind, caring and protective of children. • Apply the Stormy Behaviors rule to all people. • Identify Safe Strangers who can help when they are lost or hurt. • Demonstrate an understanding that Child Lures are usually used by someone they already know and trust, not by a stranger.
LESSON 7 My Dignity: Safe and Healthy Boundaries	Like a snowflake, each of us is unique and special. Each child is worthy of being treated with respect. Abusing someone is not treating them with respect. Bullying/Abuse are not the fault of the person they happen to. Bullying and abuse can not take away our dignity (self worth). A Trusted Adult can help children who have thoughts of bullying or abusing others.	• Apply the concept that they are special and one-of-a kind, like a snowflake, and as such, are worthy of being treated with kindness and respect. • Ask for help if having thoughts of bullying or abusing other children. • Program their built-in computers with *Think First & Stay Safe* Rules: 1. My Body Belongs to Me 2. Abuse is Never My Fault 3. I Can Ask for Help 4. All Secrets Can Be Told

Formative assessments are incorporated throughout each Lesson Plan. A formal Summative Program Assessment is provided for Pre/Post evaluation. The *Think First & Stay Safe* curriculum aligns with National Health Education Standards, as well as recommendations set forth by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's guidelines for personal safety programs. Visit: childluresprevention.com/gradesk-2/k-2_program.asp

Example of Erin's Law
Passed and Enacted in Oregon in 2015

78th OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY--2015 Regular Session

Enrolled
Senate Bill 856

Sponsored by Senator KNOPP; Representative MCLANE

CHAPTER .....

AN ACT

Relating to a child sexual abuse prevention instructional program in public schools; and declaring an emergency.

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:

SECTION 1. (1) Each school district board shall adopt a child sexual abuse prevention instructional program for students in kindergarten through grade 12.

(2) School districts must include in the program:

(a) Developmentally appropriate, culturally sensitive and evidence-based instruction for each grade level;

(b) A minimum of four instructional sessions per school year, with each year's instruction building on the previous year's instruction;

(c) Age-appropriate curriculum including role-playing, discussion, activities and books to educate students regarding child sexual abuse prevention;

(d) Instruction providing students with the knowledge and tools to communicate incidents of sexual abuse;

(e) Instruction regarding "safe touch," "unsafe touch," "safe secrets," "unsafe secrets," and how to escape and report a sexual abuse situation;

(f) Techniques to recognize child sexual abuse, skills to reduce vulnerability and encouragement to report child sexual abuse;

(g) An evaluation component with measurable outcomes;

(h) A professional training component for administrators, teachers and other school personnel regarding communicating child sexual abuse prevention techniques to students, effects of child sexual abuse on children, receiving child sexual abuse reports and disclosures and mandated reporting; and

(i) A parental involvement component to inform parents about child sexual abuse topics, including characteristics of offenders, "grooming" behaviors and how to discuss child sexual abuse prevention with children.

(3) Program instruction may be delivered by instructors including teachers, school counselors and outside agency prevention educators, provided the instructors have knowledge of and training in child sexual abuse prevention.

SECTION 2. This 2015 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2015 Act takes effect on its passage.

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U.S. GOVERNMENT INFORMATION GPO

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1665

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to authorize local educational agencies and schools to carry out child sexual abuse awareness and prevention programs or activities.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 24, 2015

Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. HELLER, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

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A BILL

To amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to authorize local educational agencies and schools to carry out child sexual abuse awareness and prevention programs or activities.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Child Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention Act".

SEC. 2. CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION.

Section 5571 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7275) is amended—

(1) in the section heading by inserting "**CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND**" after "**COMBAT**";

(2) in subsection (b)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (C), by striking "and" after the semicolon;

(B) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; and"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following;

"(E) to carry out child sexual abuse awareness and prevention programs or activities.";

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by redesignating paragraph (6) as paragraph (8); and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (5) the following:

"(6) To provide age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate instruction for early childhood, elementary school, and secondary school students in child sexual abuse awareness and prevention, including how to recognize child sexual abuse and how to safely report child sexual abuse.

"(7) To provide information to parents and guardians of early childhood, elementary school, and secondary school students about child sexual abuse awareness and prevention, including how to recognize child sexual abuse and how to discuss child sexual abuse with a child.";

(4) in subsection (e), by adding at the end the following:

"(5) A description of how the local educational agency will ensure that a program or activity developed or carried out using funds provided under the grant is consistent with the principles of effectiveness described in subsection (f)."; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

"(f) PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVENESS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—For a program or activity developed or carried out under this section to meet the principles of effectiveness, such program or activity shall—

"(A) be based upon an assessment of objective data regarding the need for programs and activities in the elementary school or secondary school to be served to—

"(i) improve school safety and promote students' physical and mental health and well-being; and

"(ii) strengthen parent and community engagement to ensure a healthy, safe, and supportive school environment;

"(B) be based upon established State requirements and evidence-based criteria aimed at ensuring a healthy, safe, and supportive school environment for students in the elementary school or secondary school that will be served by the program; and

"(C) include meaningful and ongoing consultation with and input from teachers, principals, school leaders, and parents in the development of the application and administration of the program or activity.

"(2) PERIODIC EVALUATION.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The program or activity shall undergo a periodic independent, third party evaluation to assess the extent to which the program or activity has helped the local educational agency or school provide students with a healthy, safe, and supportive school environment that promotes school safety and stu-

dents' physical and mental health and well-being.

"(B) USE OF RESULTS.—The local educational agency shall ensure that the results of the periodic evaluations described under subparagraph (A) are—

"(i) used to refine, improve, and strengthen the program or activity, and to refine locally determined criteria described under paragraph (1)(B); and

"(ii) made available to the public and the State.

"(3) PROHIBITION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize the Secretary or any other officer or employee of the Federal Government to mandate, direct, or control, the principles of effectiveness developed or utilized by a local educational agency under this subsection.".

○

Sex abuse survivor pushes for prevention programs in Montana's schools

By MARGA LINCOLN For the Helena Independent Record
March 9, 2016
THOM BRIDGE/For the Gazette

Tara Walker Lyons, a sexual abuse survivor, has been testifying at the Capitol in favor of sexual abuse prevention education programs in public schools.

When Tara Walker Lyons was 12 years old, she ran through a dark alley of Augusta one night to knock on the door of a Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Office deputy.

She had fled her home after suffering six years of sexual abuse by a relative, she said during testimony at a January hearing at the state Capitol.

Now 27 years old, Lyons is speaking out to protect other children from sexual abuse.

Lyons wants Montana to follow in the footsteps of 26 other states that have passed a law supporting Erin's Law, the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Awareness Act. It provides federal funding to each state for sexual abuse prevention and education in the schools.

However, Lyons' efforts face some steep challenges in Montana because local school boards decide curriculum in Montana's 413 school districts.

Lyons has been crisscrossing the state and traveling from her home in Hamilton to Helena to testify about the need to get sexual assault prevention education into schools.

Unfortunately, Lyons' story is far too common in Montana and the United States.

In 2008-2009, the Montana Child and Family Services Division received 1,406 reports of child sexual abuse, according to the Montana Attorney General's office website. In 2009, 347 rapes were reported and over half of the rape victims (188) were children between the ages of 3 and 17, it reports.

Nationally, one in four girls will be sexually assaulted by the age of 18 and one in every six boys will be sexually assaulted by the age of 18.

The U.S. Department of Justice reports that 71 percent of these children were assaulted by someone they were acquainted with or knew by sight and 10 percent were assaulted by a family member.

Speaking out

"I just started coming out with my story this past year," Lyons said after testifying before the Education and Local Government Interim Committee.

So far, she is finding no one else in Montana "advocating for sex abuse prevention" education in the schools, she said.

When the abuse started, Lyons went from being a good student to doing poorly, she said. She suffered from anxiety and was constantly biting her nails.

As an adult, she turned to alcohol for solace, she said. Two years ago she was charged with a DUI and went for inpatient treatment at the Montana Chemical Dependency Center.

"That was the first time I got professional treatment," she said. "I had felt so much shame" about what had happened.

When the abuse started, Lyons went from being a good student to doing poorly, she said. She suffered from anxiety and was constantly biting her nails.

As an adult, she turned to alcohol for solace, she said. Two years ago she was charged with a DUI and went for inpatient treatment at the Montana Chemical Dependency Center.

"That was the first time I got professional treatment," she said. "I had felt so much shame" about what had happened.

Like other victims, she blamed herself, she said.

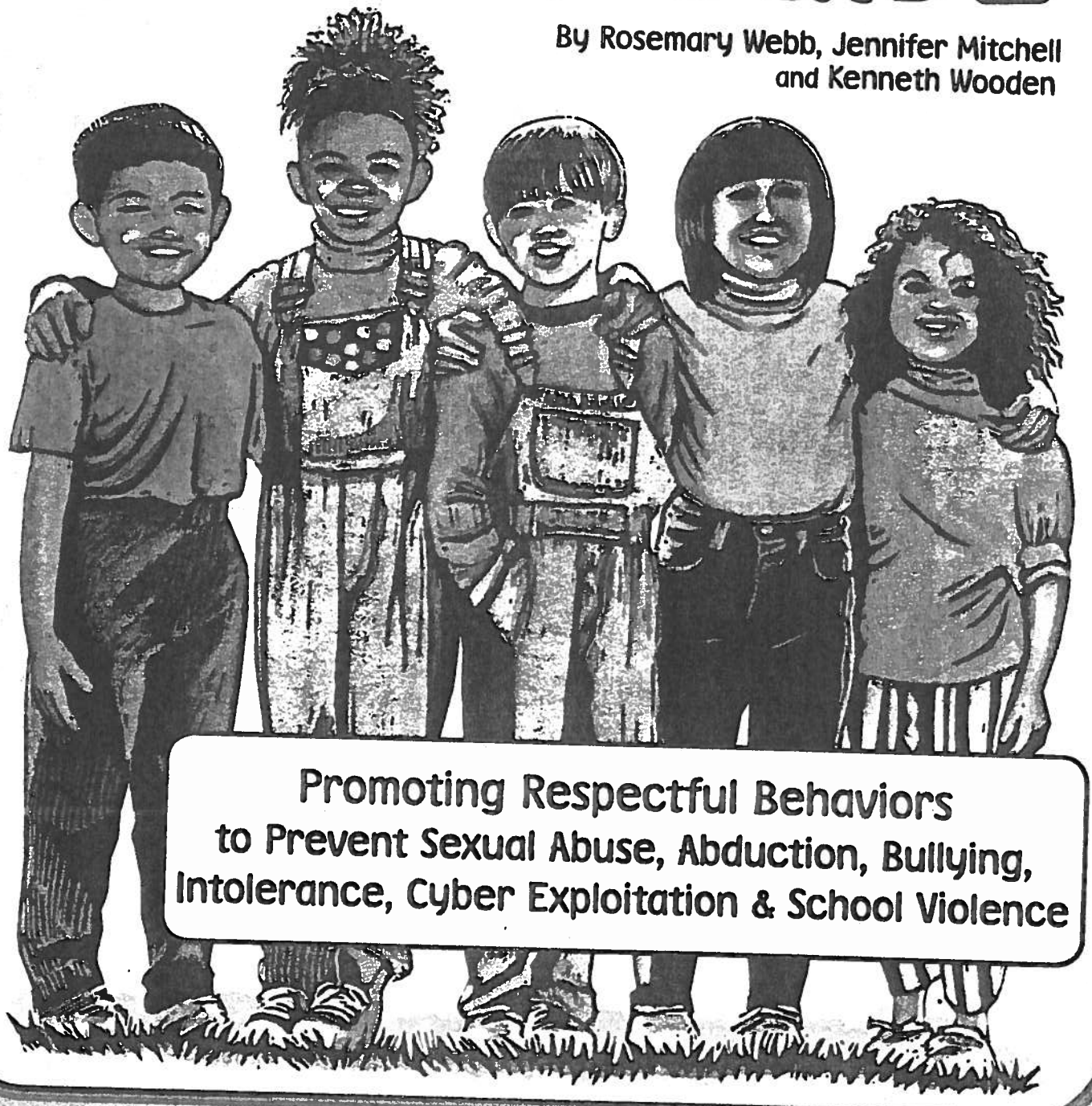
After therapy and treatment, she began speaking out publicly as part of the Department of Corrections' Victim Impact Panel, telling her story at various prison boot camps and prerelease centers.

Child Lures® Prevention
Think First & Stay Safe!™

Take-home Guide to the *Think First & Stay Safe School Program* for Grades PreK-2, 3-4 and 5-6.

Think First & Stay Safe™ PARENT GUIDE

By Rosemary Webb, Jennifer Mitchell and Kenneth Wooden



Promoting Respectful Behaviors to Prevent Sexual Abuse, Abduction, Bullying, Intolerance, Cyber Exploitation & School Violence

Dear Concerned Parents and Caregivers,

Children are our most precious national treasure, and we all want to do our part to help ensure they grow up healthy, happy and safe. This Parent Guide will assist you in discussing personal safety with your child.

While it's primarily the responsibility of adults to protect children, the reality is we simply can't be with them every minute of every day. We can, however, educate ourselves and share with our children the knowledge and skills to help them recognize and speak up about inappropriate and unsafe behaviors, ideally *before abuse happens.*

The most prevalent crimes facing youngsters today are bullying, cyberbullying and sexual abuse. More than 30% of students bully or are bullied - verbally, electronically, physically and mentally (ignoring, excluding, rumors, gestures). And while statistics vary, far too many girls and boys experience sexual abuse before the age of 18. Over 90% of these crimes are committed by someone known to, and often trusted by, the child (such as a family friend, relative or peer.)

Secrecy and silence surrounding sexual abuse and bullying gives offenders an advantage they don't deserve. Stress to children that all secrets can be told - especially secrets they are threatened to keep, or have been keeping for a long time. It's never too late to tell a trusted adult about anything that makes them feel uneasy, worried or unsafe.

Fortunately, most forms of childhood victimization are preventable. This Guide contains the information needed to take action. Familiarize yourself with the Signs of Abuse, Grooming Behaviors and Child Lures. Maintain open lines of communication with your child, question inappropriate behaviors, and report suspected abuse to your local police or Child Protective Services. (Questions? Call ChildHelp USA's Nat'l Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-422-4453.)

Years ago, the National Weather Service reported that tornado-related deaths had declined by 2/3rds in one year. The reason? Increased public awareness and preparedness. Using this same effective combination, we can and will help children stay healthy, happy and safe.

Rosemary Wooden Webb & Jennifer Wooden Mitchell
Co-Presidents and "Team of Sisters"
Child Lures Prevention/Teen Lures Prevention

Getting Started Using this Parent Guide

1. First, read this Guide through to familiarize yourself with its contents.
2. Sit down with your child and review it together – ideally one concept at a time.
3. Children learn best through repetition, so read and discuss this Guide regularly.
4. Look for small ways to reinforce these concepts during the course of everyday life.
5. Recognize and praise your child for making respectful and safe choices.

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Personal Safety Basics

1. Make personal safety an ongoing conversation with your child. This will keep safety strategies fresh and parent-child communication open.
2. Ensure even very young children know their complete name, address and phone number. Teach your child how to dial 911 and ask for help.
3. Instill a strong sense of body ownership and personal boundaries. Use anatomically correct terms for private parts, beginning at birth.
4. Help your child identify their trusted adults.
5. Be vigilant supervising children, especially during multi-family gatherings with multi-age youngsters.
6. If you choose to allow sleepovers, ask about supervision, and give your child permission to contact you any time of the day or night.
7. Regularly reinforce: All Secrets Can Be Told. Let your child know they can tell you anything.

Respecting Self and Others

By nurturing their self-esteem, we instill in youngsters a belief that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. Research shows that 95% of everything children learn, they learn from what is modeled for them. By modeling kind and caring relationships, we teach children to think, feel and behave respectfully. **Share with your child:**

- Each of us is unique, special and worthy of respect.
- Treat others as you'd like to be treated.
- Respect, admire and celebrate one another's differences.

Healthy Social Relationships

When children understand what healthy social relationships look like, it is easier for them to recognize inappropriate and abusive behaviors. **Explain to your child:**

- Healthy social relationships include mutual respect, anger management, problem solving, negotiation/compromise & assertiveness (not aggression).
- Abusing or harassing someone is the opposite of treating them with respect.
- Being victimized is never a child's fault. Nothing about the way a child looks, what he/she says, wears or does gives anyone the right to mistreat them.
- Victims of mistreatment have nothing to be ashamed of; they are not the wrongdoers.
- Reassure your child that being victimized does not define a person, nor take away their dignity.

Praise children for acts of kindness, treating others with respect and having the courage to stand up for themselves and others.

Teaching Children the Concept of Law

Youngsters who understand the concept of law – and the concept of *breaking the law* – are better able to assert themselves and speak up. The following two questions are extremely effective in helping children understand the basics of law, crime and punishment.

Q: Are there rules you must follow in your home, school or house of worship?
A: Yes.
Q: What happens when you break those rules?
A: You are punished.

Explain that everyone has rules they must follow. These rules are called "laws" and were made to protect all people, including children. Those who break the law are punished. It is a **crime** to harass another person or to plan, threaten or commit an aggressive act.

It is **against the law** for anyone to touch a child's private parts *(see page 5 for exceptions, such as during a medical exam)* or to force a child to touch their private parts. If a crime happens, children can speak up and tell a trusted adult. Also, explain to children the **seriousness of accusing someone of a crime they didn't commit**. Falsely accusing a person of a crime is also against the law. It is always best to tell the truth.

The Truth About Strangers

Child Safety advocates have worked long and hard to dispel the myth of the scary stranger who preys upon children. The fact is, over 90% of sexual abuse is **committed by someone known to, and often trusted by, the youngster and his/her family** – a family friend, mother's boyfriend, peer, relative, coach or babysitter, for example.

Furthermore, strangers who do prey on children behave and look quite ordinary. Children usually don't perceive them as a threat. In the eyes of a child, even a complete stranger who strikes up a friendly conversation quickly becomes someone that child "knows."

Advising children, "Don't talk to strangers" may actually put them at greater risk for abuse. Instead, youngsters should be taught that they can't tell just by looking at, talking to, texting or chatting with someone if he or she might be unsafe. Youngsters should be on the lookout for inappropriate and abusive *behaviors,* including those of people they already know.

Remind youngsters that most people are safe and kind, and that there may be times we need to rely on the very kindness of strangers. Safe choices include a mom or dad with children of their own, a uniformed police officer in a marked police car or a store employee working behind a counter.

Signs of Child Sexual Abuse

Physical signs of sexual abuse are usually not observable (especially to adults other than parents, guardians and health professionals), but may include pain, injury, bleeding, discharge or disease.

Behavioral and emotional signs are typically more evident in both male and female victims, and can include (but are not limited to):

- Changes in behavior; may appear scared, anxious, withdrawn, more aggressive.
- Disinterest or sudden inability to concentrate.
- Reverting to earlier behaviors; thumb-sucking, bed-wetting, fear of darkness.
- Sudden change in eating habits; drastic weight loss or gain.
- Marked fear or reluctance to be at a certain place or alone with a specific person.
- Repeated health complaints, i.e. stomach aches, headaches.
- Unusual depression, lethargy and weepiness.
- Noticeable change in dress; may include baggy, dark clothing and lack of hygiene.
- Interest in, or knowledge of, sexual matters beyond the boy's or girl's years.
- Using sexual language or acting out sexually.
- Touching other kids sexually.

Please note: any one sign does not mean that a boy or girl has been sexually abused, but the presence of several signs gives reason for parents or guardians to begin asking questions and consider seeking professional help. Reporting Abuse: Suspected abuse is reason enough to contact authorities. *(See page 18.)*

Child Lures™ While numerically and creatively infinite, the Child Lures used to groom, intimidate, and exploit youngsters generally fall into the following categories:

1. Affection
2. Assistance
3. Pet
4. Authority
5. Bribery
6. Ego/Fame
7. Emergency
8. Games
9. Hero
10. Job
11. Name
12. Friendship
13. Pornography
14. Threats & Weapons
15. e-Lure
16. Drug
17. Intolerance & School Violence (Bullying, Harassment and Weapons)

These lures are used both individually and in various combinations. For example, an abuser might groom a boy & his family over a period of six months (Affection Lure), seduce him with x-rated videos (Pornography Lure) and then threaten to hurt the boy if he reports the abuse (Threats & Weapons Lure).

1 Affection Lure

Most children are groomed for abuse by someone they already know. Access to the child creates opportunity. Showering the child with attention and affection helps secure their trust. Youngsters who are starved for attention, lack adequate supervision or face issues at home like divorce, substance abuse or neglect are at increased risk.

Offenders are expert at taking advantage of a child's innocence and natural curiosity about sexual development. Exploitation usually begins with innocent behavior that escalates into abuse over hours, days, weeks, months or years. Youngsters (and their parents) don't realize they are gradually being groomed for abuse.

Prevention

Establish a basic understanding of private parts: the parts of the body covered by a bathing suit. NOTE: It is best to use anatomically correct terms when identifying private parts, beginning at birth.

Instill a strong sense of body ownership and privacy. Explain that it is against the law for anyone (i.e., family member, scout leader, teacher, peer, clergy) to touch a child's private parts or force the child to touch theirs. Assure children that they have the right to stop anyone who tries. *Exceptions:* Doctor's visit with a parent or guardian present, injury to the private parts, bath time for young children.

Differentiate between Real Love (being tucked into bed at night by Mom) and Fake Love *(*touching a child's private parts.) It is important to use the terms "Real Love" and "Fake Love" rather than "good touch" and "bad touch," since a bad touch may feel good.

Parents, especially single Moms: Question the motives of individuals who take extreme interest in your child. Rely heavily on your parental instincts.

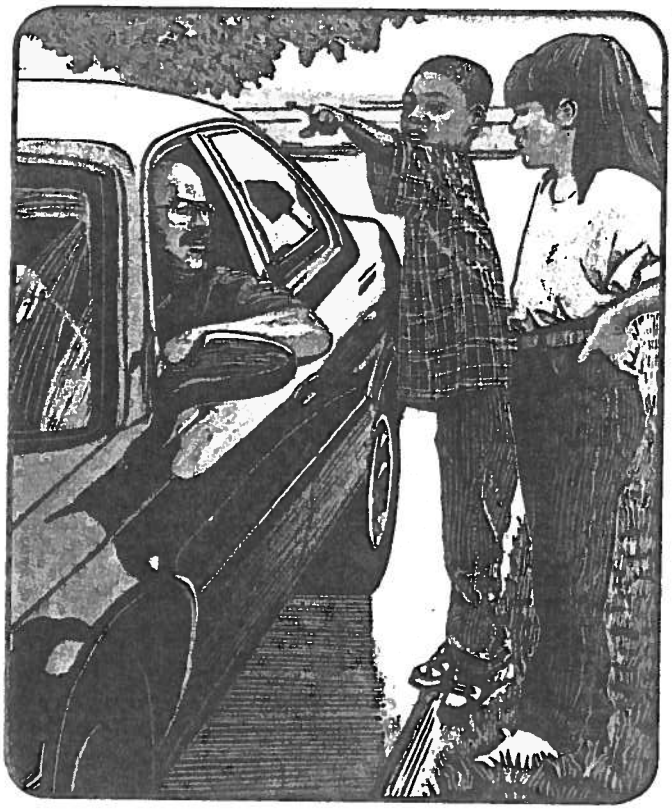
Monitor and participate in after-school, youth group, summer camp, sport and church activities - especially those involving overnight stays or sleepovers.

Let your child know they can tell you anything – and you will believe them. Stress that secrets should never be kept from you, even seemingly innocent ones. Secrecy often plays a significant role in the grooming process (see box on right.) ❐

Let your child know they can tell you anything - and that you wil believe them and support them.

GROOMING BEHAVIORS:
How Offenders Build Familiarity & Tru

- Spends time befriending the child and doing things busy parents may not be able to do.
- Slowly gains trust of the child and his/her fami
- Gives gifts, money, trips, and/or performs special favors for youngster.
- Encourages harmless secrets, laying the foundation for future sexual secrets.
- Tells dirty jokes or uses inappropriate languag when alone with the child.
- Often plays body contact games/sports with children; tickling, backrubs or wrestling.
- Takes pictures and video of the child.
- Makes alcohol/drugs available for the kids to "choose" to use.
- Introduces pornography to initiate sexual interest.
- Crosses the line from affection to abuse.



2 Assistance Lure

This lure appeals to the helpful nature of children. Youngsters may be asked for help carrying packages to a neighbor's house or vehicle. They may be asked for directions to a nearby landmark. Some criminals pretend to be disabled and in need of a helping hand. They may even wear a brace, sling or fake cast.

Offenders may also *offer* assistance (i.e use of a cell phone or a ride) and *insist on providing it.*

Prevention

As a general rule, adults should ask other adults, not children, for help. Youngsters should always check with parents or caregivers before lending or accepting a helping hand. Give your child permission to ignore requests for assistance or offers of uninvited help. It's always safer for a child to choose who will help them, than for someone to choose the child.

If approached by a driver, youngsters should stay three giant steps back and be ready to run like the wind in the *opposite direction.* ❐

3 Pet Lure

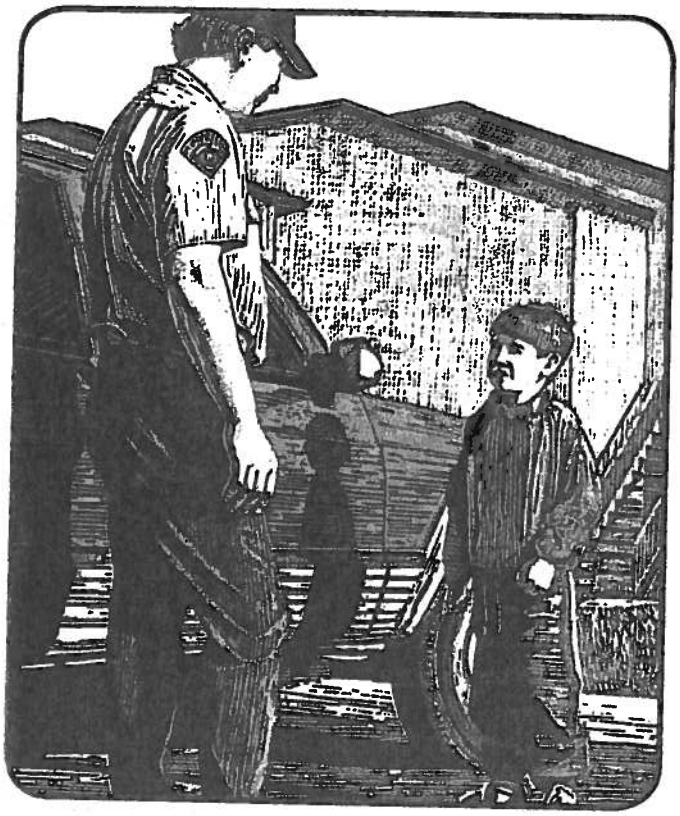
Children love animals and are easily caught off guard by lures involving them. Cute, cuddly pets such as puppies and kittens hold an especially powerful attraction. Children may be offered the chance to see a new litter of kittens – or perhaps something more exotic, like a ferret or snake.

In some cases, youngsters are asked to help look for a "lost" or "sick" puppy or other pet. Online postings for pet sitting/walking may appeal to older kids.

Prevention

Explain that animals have been used to lure children into abusive and dangerous situations. Children should not *ever* enter a home, vehicle or other secluded place – or leave a public area – to see or care for an animal, unless accompanied by a trusted adult.

If asked to look for a lost pet, your child needs to ignore the request, get to safety quickly and immediately report the incident to a trusted adult. The Pet Lure has been used in too many terrible crimes. Remember, *"There is no lost puppy!"* ❐



4 Authority Lure

Children are taught to respect and obey adults and authority – and rightly so. However, authority figures may exploit positions as coach, clergy, scout leader, mother's boyfriend, babysitter or older child to coerce youngsters into submission and abuse.

Some offenders go so far as to pose as police officers or store detectives. To appear real, they may use badges and uniforms or attach flashing lights to their vehicle. Older kids are easily intimidated when accused of doing something wrong, such as vandalism, shoplifting, smoking or skipping school.

Prevention

Give your child permission to disobey anyone who tries to force them into inappropriate, unsafe or illegal situations. Stress that it is against the law for ANY person to touch a child's private parts or force the child to touch theirs. *(Exceptions on pg 4, Concept of Law.)*

If confronted by someone claiming to be with law enforcement, children have a legal right to request a uniformed police officer in a marked police car. Youngsters should call a trusted adult immediately if accused of a crime, whether innocent or not. ❐

5 Bribery Lure

The age-old lure of bribery still works. Kids are offered candy, toys, electronics, sports equipment, alcohol, drugs or - most effective of all - money. Bribes are used as part of the grooming process as a means to help ensure abuse is kept secret. Kids can also be bribed to undress for inappropriate, semi-nude or nude images, by peers or adults.

Prevention

Teach children that while most gifts are sincere and heartfelt, what seems like a gift could actually be a bribe. A sincere gift has no strings attached and is not kept secret.

A safe secret is one that is eventually told (surprise party); an unsafe secret makes a child feel upset or afraid to tell (bullying or abuse). Stress to children: All secrets can be told to parents or other trusted adults.

Parents, be alert to unexplained gifts. Find out who gave these items: when, where and why? Remind children that no gift or amount of money is worth risking one's personal safety. ❐

6 Ego/Fame Lure

Sincere compliments make kids feel good about themselves. However, flattery can also be used to lure youngsters into exploitation. Complimentary remarks and other appeals to the ego are a significant part of the grooming process. This can happen in person or when using technology.

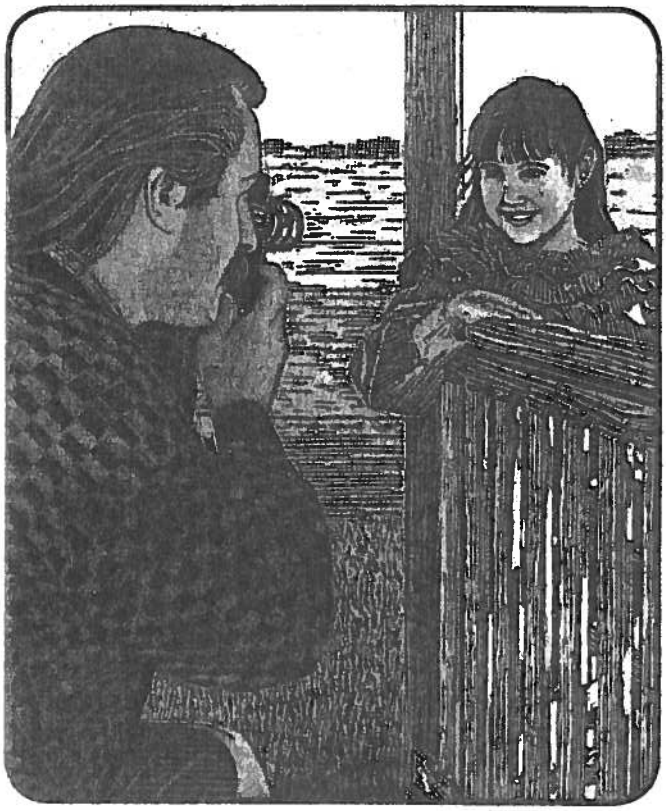
Some children are offered chances to model, act, appear on tv or other exciting opportunities. They may be urged to keep these offers secret from parents or guardians.

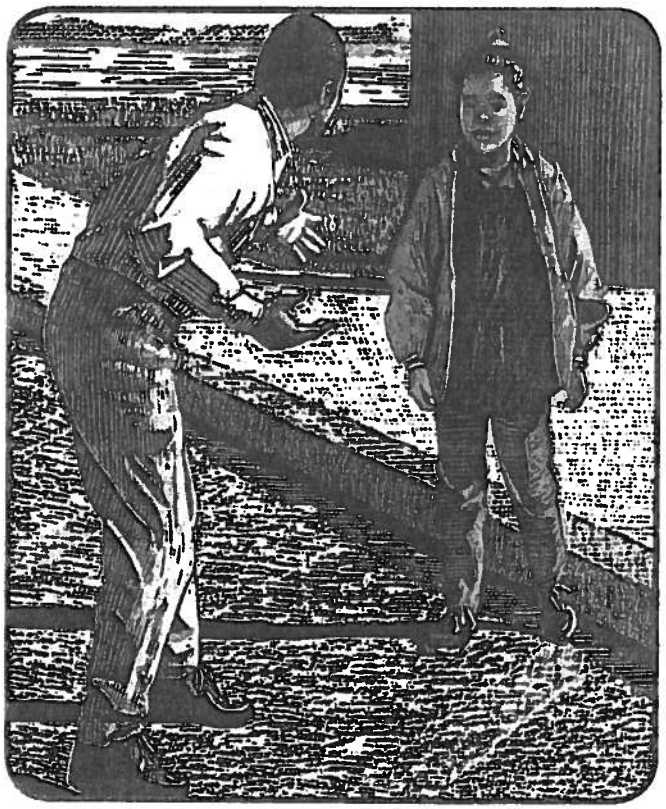
Photo-taking by peers or adults may escalate into exploitation, sexual abuse or child pornography.

Prevention

Warn youngsters that not all compliments are sincere; abusers use flattery to groom their victims. Parents, chaperone all talent pursuits and verify credentials of those involved. By law, a parent or legal guardian must co-sign any contract for children under 18.

Youngsters should not remove clothing for photos or video. Regularly monitor your child's electronic devices for inappropriate messages and images. ❐





7 Emergency Lure

Emergencies are a fact of life. They often require quick decisions and immediate action, which can short-circuit basic self-protection instincts.

When a crisis is faked, youngsters can easily be tricked into believing, and even going with, someone. Children may be told that a loved one has been hurt or is in danger in an effort to confuse them and rush them into making a split-second decision.

Prevention

Explain that emergencies can and will happen. However, children must not go with **anyone** until an emergency has been verified. It's safest to stay put, try to keep calm and seek help from a relative, neighbor or other trusted adult.

Pre-arrange a specific *Family Emergency Plan.* (Free download at childluresprevention.com/pdf/Family-Emergency-Plan.pdf) Who will contact your child if there really is an emergency? Where can they go? Whom should they call? ❐

8 Games Lure

Kids love to play games and sports. Most of the time, these activities are perfectly safe and healthy.

However, body contact games like wrestling, tickling, or "Hide the Quarter" may be used to grope or fondle youngsters. Since physical contact is normal during many of these activities, kids can initially be unaware that anything out of the ordinary is happening. Games that include the use of restraints prevent children from protecting themselves or escaping.

Interactive gaming and social networks have their own risks, including cyberbullying, harassment, hackers and meet ups.

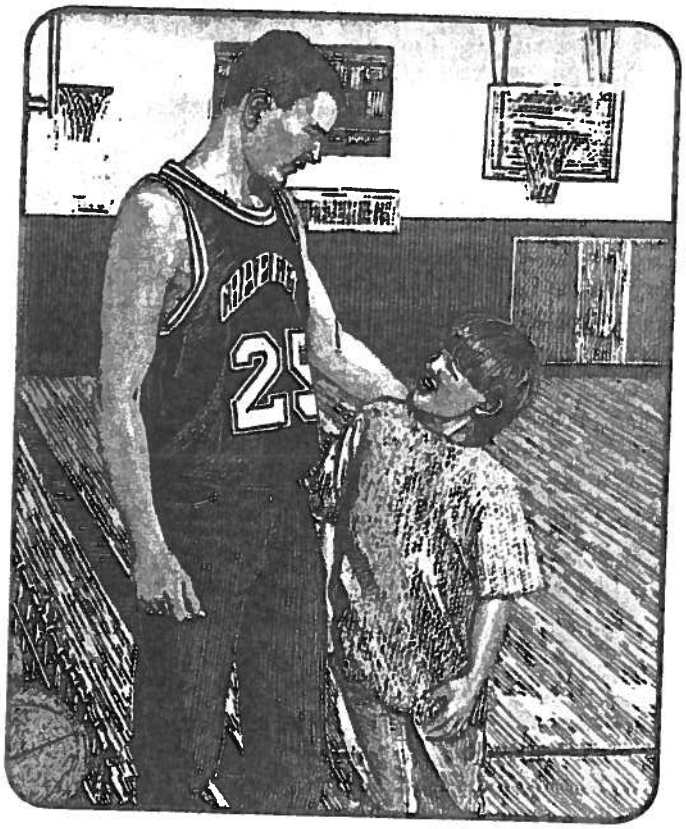
Prevention

If inappropriate touching (even by a peer) occurs during a game or sport, a youngster can quit and tell a trusted adult. Such behavior is against the law.

Children should not let anyone handcuff, tie up or place them in any type of isolation – including during a supposed game, stunt or magic trick. This makes it impossible to protect one's self or escape.

Encourage kids to be Responsible Digital Citizens -

and keep passwords private - even from friends. Remind your child to report harassers, hackers and other offenders to you and gaming administrators.



9 Hero Lure

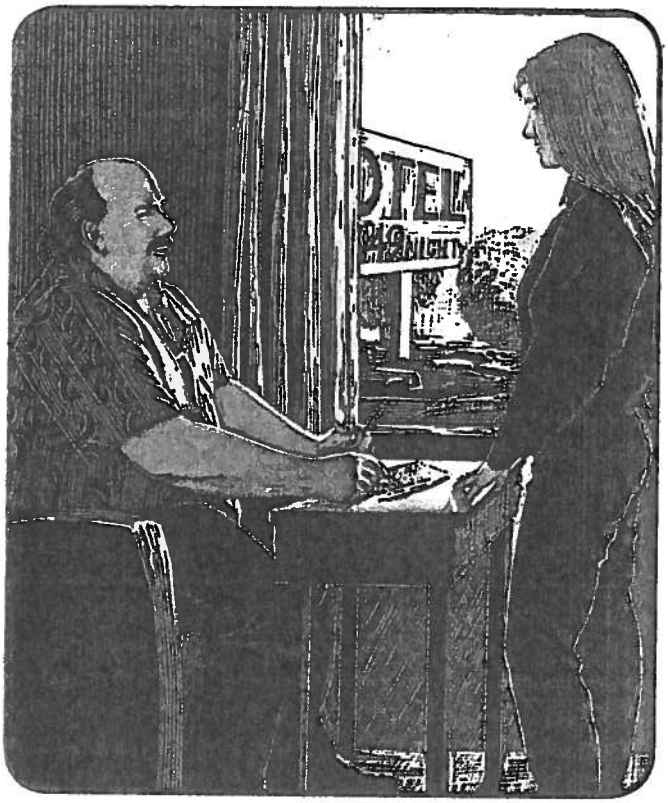
All youngsters seek and cherish the attention of people they admire. Heroes might include favorite teachers, coaches, parents, peers and athletes. Heroes encourage children to be the best they can be!

Unfortunately, there are some people who exploit their hero status to bully or abuse kids.

When a real-life hero turns abusive, children have been known to endure repeated abuse - in order to maintain the friendship, avoid disappointing their hero, or keep their hero out of trouble.

Prevention

People who victimize others are not deserving of hero status. Reinforce that *no one* has the right to bully or abuse a child. Encourage children to tell a trusted adult about any bullying, harassment, sexual abuse or attempted abuse. Kids don't have to tolerate it! ❐



10 Job Lure

All kids like to earn money, and it's good for them to do so. Yet, the offer of a chore, errand or small job may actually be a lure. Children may be attracted by the chance to earn quick money or the opportunity to perform especially fun or interesting tasks.

Job offers are usually made verbally by someone the child knows. They may also be posted on a store, school or electronic bulletin board.

Prevention

Require permission before your child agrees to perform any chore, errand or job, including pet care, yard work, or help with packages/groceries.

Find out everything about your youngster's "job," including what, who, where and when. Potential babysitting clients should provide references. Use them, and check in with your child periodically.

Extra caution should be taken if fundraising or collecting door-to-door. Youngsters should not enter someone's home, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. ❐

11 Name Lure

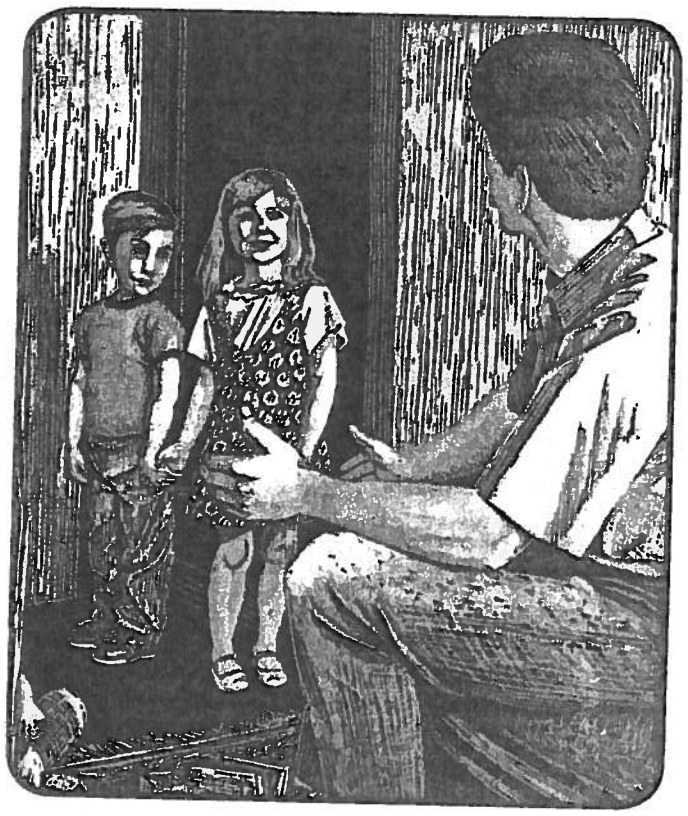
We all like to see and hear our name, but for safety purposes, a child's full name should not be shared with just anyone. Many well-meaning parents visibly label their child's belongings. Names can also be easily overheard or inquired about, enabling someone to call a child by name. This can create a false sense of familiarity and trust, as youngsters are naturally more trusting when spoken to by name.

The same false sense of familiarity can also be quickly created when kids are using technology.

Prevention

Remind youngsters that they should not trust or go with someone simply because the individual knows their name.

If your child's belongings must be labeled, place the name in a hidden area or use initials or symbols instead. Remind youngsters not to share their full name or other personal information when using technology, especially when tagging images. ❐



12 Friendship Lure

Friendships are an important part of growing up, and children make new friends all the time. Keep in mind, however, that up to 40% of child sexual offenders are juveniles themselves. Most juvenile offenders abuse children younger than themselves.

Sometimes, children innocently bring friends into abusive situations. Youngsters can be lured with special privileges or access to cool gear like dirt bikes, go-carts and newly-released video games. In these "anything goes" zones, the offender targets and grooms children for abuse.

Prevention

Get to know your youngster's friends and their families. If your child spends significant time at one location, find out why. Visit unannounced. If you feel at all uneasy, declare that person and place off-limits. A child's sudden strong dislike of a favorite person or place may indicate ongoing grooming or abuse.

Seek professional help for juveniles who have thoughts of abusing others or who have acted upon those impulses. They themselves may be victims of abuse. ❐

13 Pornography Lure

Children of all ages are curious about "the birds and the bees," and sexual offenders know this. Pornography, including internet pornography, is frequently used as part of the grooming process.

Innocent youngsters are exposed to graphic materials, usually by someone they know and should be able to trust. Children as young as three have been known to innocently imitate behavior they have seen in pornographic images.

Prevention

Pornography is harmful to the integrity of human beings. Offenders routinely use it to normalize and desensitize children to sexual behaviors.

Reinforce that if an adult or peer shows your child such materials or tells your child to participate in similar acts, the child should refuse, get to safety and tell a trusted adult. It's against the law!

Remind your child: do not remove clothing for photos or videos. ❐

14 Threats & Weapons Lure

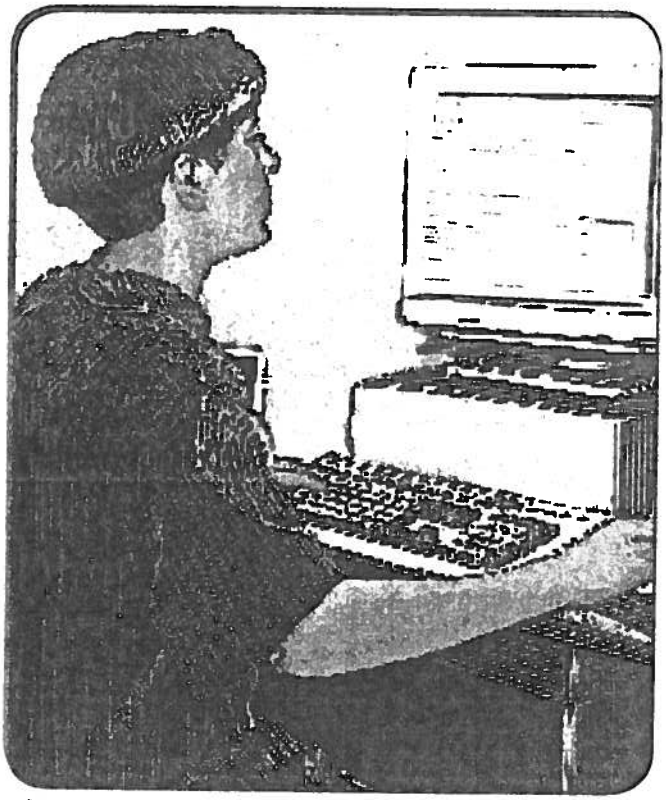
Verbal threats are routinely used by both peer and adult offenders to effectively intimidate children into cooperation or silence. Threats may also be physical or technology-enabled.

Youngsters can also be intimidated into compliance by an offender's age, size or position of authority. Being threatened with a weapon is relatively rare, but is by far the most frightening scenario for children.

Prevention

Teach your child that all threats are against the law and can be reported to a parent or other trusted adult. Submitting to threats may only make matters worse. Reassure children that verbal threats (including blackmail) are rarely carried out, and weapons are rarely used against children.

If confronted with a weapon, children can make a commotion and get to safety. Most criminals will flee if faced with a loud, attention-getting youngster. It is unsafe for youngsters to follow anyone into an isolated area, building or vehicle. Tell your child to try to resist becoming paralyzed by fear, and to tell an adult about any threats or weapons. ❐



15 e-Lure

Today's youth stay connected throughout the day on a variety of electronic devices including cell phones and tablets, as well as game sites & networks. They regularly and safely interact with people they don't know.

Common e-threats to youngsters include cyberbullying, sexual harassment and sexting (sharing of nude, semi-nude or sexually suggestive images by electronic means.)

Youngsters can be exposed to internet pornography via browsers, texting and video chatting. Cyber predators (adults and peers) may convince a youngster to share intimate images of themselves or others.

Youngsters put themselves most at risk by sharing such images electronically, having inappropriate conversations with people, or agreeing to a face-to-face (F2F) meeting.

While sexual predators can easily distort their online identity, studies show only 5% of them do so.* Most adolescents go willingly to meet online acquaintances

*Youth Internet Safety Survey by David Finkelhor, Kimberly Mitchell and Janis Wolak Crimes Against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire

e-Lure (cont.)

in person and are expecting a sexual encounter. Over 75% of the time, there is more than one meeting.* Lonely, neglected, trusting and risk-taking adolescents are most vulnerable.

Online luring can and does happen. A cyber predator becomes a serious threat if he or she:

(1) succeeds in learning a youngster's full name, phone number or other personal information,
(2) convinces a youngster to send inappropriate images (including video) or
(3) manages to arrange a private, in-person meeting with the youngster.

Youth who have shared too much information or agreed to in-person meetings without adult supervision have been robbed, assaulted and sexually abused.

Prevention

The best high-tech safety policy between parents and youngsters is surprisingly low-tech: education, communication, supervision and trust.

Regularly discuss the importance of being polite, respectful and honest when using technology. Share with your son or daughter your expectation that he/she will be a Responsible Digital Citizen.

Parents and caregivers have a duty to be familiar with all technology their kids are using. Supervise and interact with your child electronically. Acknowledge if your child is more tech savvy than you, and ask for their assistance with apps, messaging, social networking, video-chat and gaming networks. It will boost your child's self-esteem.

Promote child-parent communication. Encourage your child to discuss questionable content or activities they encounter, *without reproach or retaliation.* Use local and national news stories concerning e-crimes as teachable moments.

Know your child's passwords. Let your youngster know that, for their own safety, you will be monitoring their electronic devices from time to time. Then do so. Become familiar with text and chat acronyms (see box on right.)

Praise good behavior. The majority of youngsters are using technology in positive and educational ways. However, if your youngster abuses any form of technology (and like most individuals, they will probably make a few mistakes along the way), consider taking the privilege away for a period of time. Together, work out a plan for your child to regain their privileges. Consider using the e-Safety Pact on the following page. ❐

Internet Facts

- The majority of youngsters are using technology in positive and educational ways.
- 1 in 17 ten to seventeen-year-olds has been threatened or harassed online.*
- 1 in 5 ten to seventeen-year-olds receive unwanted sexual solicitations online; **but most are from other youngsters.***

* Source: Online Predators and Their Victims, by Janis Wolak; Crimes Against Children Research Center, University of New Hampshire

Text & Chat Acronyms

NAZ	=	Name, address & zip code
RU/18	=	Asking if you are over 18
LMIRL	=	Let's Meet in Real Life
420	=	Marijuana
Zerg	=	To gang up on someone
TDTM	=	Talk Dirty To Me
1174	=	U r invited to a Wild Party
Pron	=	Porn

For additional acronyms, visit:
teenlurespreven tion.com/pdfs/Texting-Lingo_Parents.pdf

The best e-safety policy is surprisingly low-tech: education, communication, supervision and trust.

Sexting Facts

Once a nude or semi-nude image is sent, can the recipient send it to other people? Yes.

Can those people forward it to others? Yes.

Will that image be out there for everyone to see, forever? Yes.

If the recipient is over 18 years old, can they be arrested for possessing child pornography? Yes.

Should youngsters be sending nude or semi-nude images of themselves? No.

For minors, is sexting a crime in some states? Yes.

e-Safety Pact

1. I WILL be a Responsible Digital Citizen when using technology.
2. I WILL think twice (or more times) before posting anything online.
3. I WILL send or post only kind and respectful messages.
4. I WILL always use my true identity, and discourage and report use of false profiles.
5. I WILL send or post only appropriate images to people I know.
6. I WILL ask permission before posting or tagging images of friends.
7. I WILL respect a person's decision to not have their picture or video posted or shared.
8. I WILL NOT friend people I don't personally know, or share images with them.
9. I WILL NOT give out personal information about myself or others.
10. I WILL keep my passwords private, even from my friends.
11. I WILL NOT discuss private family matters online; I'll talk to a friend or trusted adult instead.
12. I WILL NOT respond to inappropriate/threatening messages. I WILL report them to an adult.
13. I WILL get permission from my parents before registering on a website, entering a contest or using a gift card online.
14. I WILL NOT meet an online friend in-person unless I:
    a. Get permission from my parents or guardian(s),
    b. Bring my parent(s) or another trusted adult AND
    c. Meet the person in a public place.
15. I WILL follow this e-Safety Pact to help me be a safe and Responsible Digital Citizen.

_____ _____

Child's Signature Parent's Signature

_____ _____

Date Date

Report unlawful online behavior to cybertipline.com
The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's CyberTipline.

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16 Drug Lure

The majority of kids do not use drugs and alcohol. However, drugs – especially alcohol – are used to incapacitate, manipulate and lure youngsters into abuse. Young children are usually tricked into intoxication; older children may willingly experiment. (Average onset of alcohol/marijuana experimentation is now age 12.)

Children under the influence of drugs or alcohol are at greater risk of sexual assault and other forms of mistreatment, at the hands of an adult or one of their peers. Personal safety is another strong incentive for youngsters to avoid drugs/alcohol altogether.

Prevention

Explain that some offenders trick or encourage youngsters to drink alcohol and take drugs to lessen their inhibitions or leave them unable to defend themselves. Stress how keeping a clear head at all times is critical to personal safety.

Use everyday opportunities to discuss with your child:

- Personal Safety & Drugs/Alcohol
- Real friends vs. destructive peers
- Natural highs vs. artificial highs
- How drugs rob people of health, careers, lives

Actively listen and discuss. Share your expectation that your child will never use drugs.

Praise your child daily. Give acclaim for kind deeds, good grades, helping out around the house, good sportsmanship or standing up to peer pressure (i.e. to bully others, smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol or use drugs.)

Trust your instincts. If you think your child has been given (or has taken) drugs/alcohol, seek medical attention immediately. [Especially after a period of time away from home - i.e. sleepover, overnight field trip or camping.] Contact local police if necessary.

"Sexually victimized children appear to be at a three-fold risk for substance abuse."

Childhood Sexual Abuse: Impact on a Community's Mental Health Status, K.D. Scott

Be a good role model. If you drink, do so in moderation. Help your child practice standing up to peer pressure. Urge your child to come to you if and when the pressure becomes too much. Work together to find solutions.

Nurture your child's natural talents and encourage involvement in activities such as sports, art, music, dance, religion and community volunteer work. ❐

RED FLAGS OF CONCERN That May Indicate Drug Use or Abuse

- Marked changes in personality, appearance, appetite or sleeping habits
- Friends with strong family and moral values drift away
- Sudden disinterest in once-important interests, activities and people
- Decline in academic performance
- Sudden explicit knowledge of drugs and/or defensive attitude toward drug culture
- Unusual feelings of distrust or hostility toward parents or guardians
- Disappearance of cash, family valuables, or personal possessions

If You Suspect Your Child is being Bullied or Abused...

1. First and foremost, **trust and follow your instincts** about people and behaviors. Our gut instincts are usually right.

2. **Take immediate steps to protect your child** if you have suspicions. Don't assume your child will tell you if something happens. (Only 10% of kids tell about peer mistreatment and sexual abuse.)

3. **If something feels wrong, look into it further.** Check and question Policies & Procedures surrounding supervision and safe environments at child-serving institutions and organizations *(school, childcare, sports, after-school activities, camps, volunteer-run activities, house of worship.)* Be certain the "Two-Deep" Rule for Instruction is being used. *(See rule below.)*

4. Once you are familiar with the policies, **report any violations or discrepancies** you are aware of to those in charge. Document your complaints.

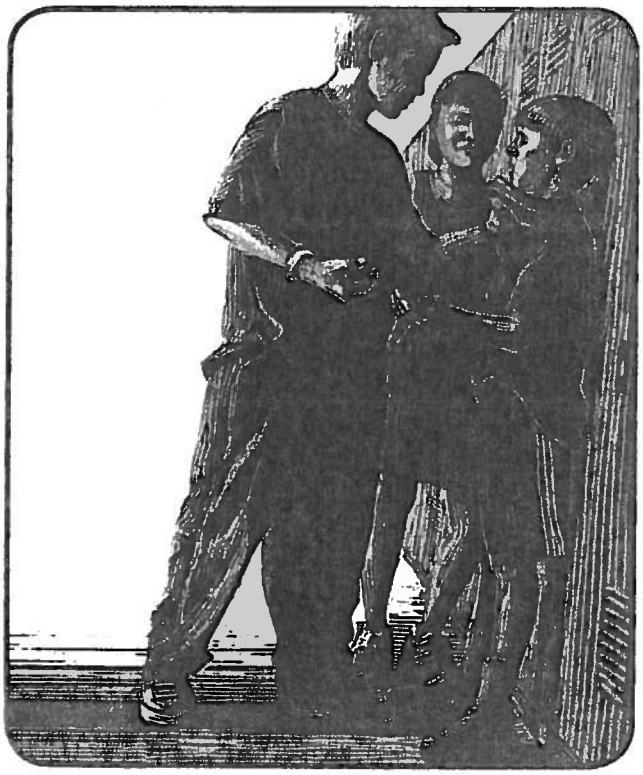
5. **Share your concerns** with other parents and caregivers about individuals exhibiting questionable or inappropriate behavior to determine if they have had similar experiences.

6. **Encourage these parents or caregivers to report similar concerns** to those in charge.

The "Two-Deep" Rule for Instruction

At least two adults should be present with children at all times. The idea of "two-deep" instruction is designed to protect children from any inappropriate behavior and to protect instructor(s) from false accusations.

Any necessary one-on-one time with a child should occur in an observable space, within hearing distance of others.



17 Intolerance & School Violence
(Bullying, Harassment and Weapons)

Intolerance & school violence threaten the safety and well-being of young people. This lure can be tempting to impressionable youngsters, particularly those with anger issues, a sense of powerlessness, low self-esteem or feelings that they don't belong. Youngsters caught up in its negative appeal often become troubled individuals who mistreat peers with verbal, physical and psychological abuse – in school, out of school and via technology.

Bullying and harassment can have serious effects on youngsters. Peer mistreatment can cause such fear and shame that youngsters skip school or flatly refuse to go. When carried out using technology, it is amplified and intensified, because other kids can see and participate. Children are effectively stalked 24/7, even in the safety of their own homes.

Intolerance & School Violence

In some school shootings, young gunmen have blamed ongoing mistreatment by fellow students as the main motivation for their violent actions.

The hostility seen in some young people feeds on prejudice against different races, cultures, religions, gender or social standings. Oftentimes, it is learned at home and can be fueled by peer pressure, hopelessness, drugs, neglect and abuse.

Prevention:

Teach your child to respect, admire and embrace the differences in people. Urge her/him to be understanding of those who are different and to have empathy for those less fortunate.

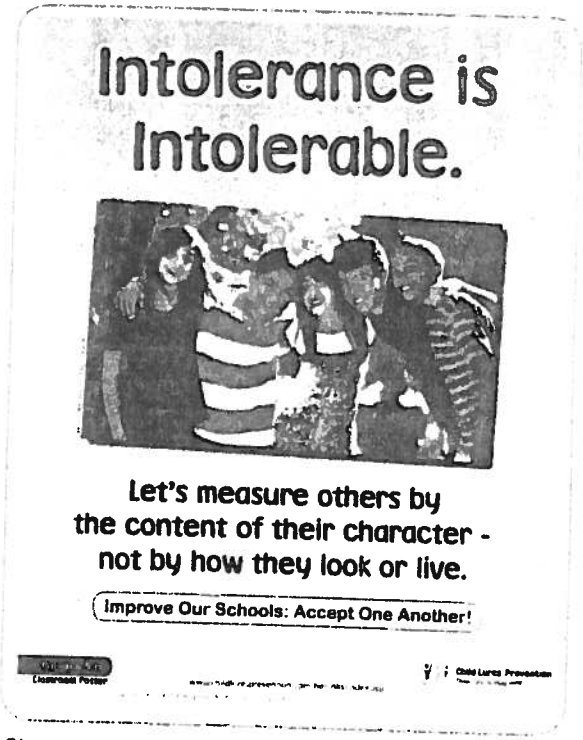
Explain to your child the importance of reporting peer mistreatment and harassment. Bullying, threats of violence and weapons possession by schoolmates can be reported anonymously, but parents and school officials need to be told.

If your child is mistreating others, contact school officials to find out how you can work together to fix the problem. Seek professional help for troubling & aggressive behaviors, or if your child suffers from prolonged depression or withdrawal.

Limit how much violence your child is exposed to via television, gaming, movies, literature and music. Point out the physical and emotional pain violence causes victims and their families. Create and practice anger resolution techniques as a family. If you own guns, it is safest to lock up firearms and ammunition separately.

Supervise your children. Know their interests and what they do in their free time. If your child has a social media page, website or blog, what is the content? If your child displays symbols of intolerance online or on clothing, jewelry or other belongings, find out why. Keep your eyes & ears open. What are your kids and their friends texting and talking about?

Foster self-esteem. Children who feel good about themselves generally treat others with kindness and respect. Reach out to kids who don't have positive role models. A few well-placed words of praise can work wonders on a youngster's self-image. Kids learn by example, so be a positive role model. ❐



Classroom Poster: Think First & Stay Safe™ Curriculum

RED FLAGS OF CONCERN That May Indicate A Need For Professional Help

- Prolonged depression or withdrawal from family and peers
- Talk of hurting/killing self or others
- Mistreatment of animals or other children
- Lack of friends or inability to make friends
- Hateful comments and/or threats to peers
- Reports that your youngster is mistreating others
- Fixation with guns, bombs and other weaponry
- Obsession with violent movies or video games
- Posts or messaging containing violent material or messages
- Clothing, tattoos or belongings bearing swastikas or other universal symbols of intolerance

What to Do if Sexual Abuse Occurs

If Your Child Discloses Sexual Abuse

During a Disclosure:

- Find a private place to talk with your child.
- Do not express panic or shock.
- Reassure your child that you believe her/him.
- Do not pressure your child to tell you more than s/he is comfortable telling you.
- Ask limited questions.
- Listen.
- Reassure your child that it is good to tell and that you are proud of him.
- Reassure your child that it is not her fault and she is not bad or in trouble.
- Promise your child that you will protect and support him.
- If your child sees you are upset, explain that you are upset with the *abuser*...not the child.

Report abuse immediately to local police or Child Protective Services. (Questions? Call ChildHelp USA Nat'l Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-422-4453.)

After a Disclosure:

After your child has revealed abuse, you may be shocked, confused and/or angry. Regardless of what you are feeling or thinking, it is important to respond to your child appropriately.

- Remember that your child is a *child*, and treat her as such. Don't expect your child to respond like an adult.
- Be supportive of your child, but do not treat him differently.
- Keep to your regular routine as much as possible.
- Do not expect your child to appear "changed."
- Do not question your child about the abuse; by doing so, you may jeopardize the police investigation. If your child wishes to discuss the abuse with you, just listen and be supportive.
- Do not advise your child on what to do or say in a police interview beyond encouraging them to tell the truth.
- Explain in simple, age-appropriate terms what is happening throughout the police investigation (or as your child has questions).
- Acknowledge any feelings of anger, guilt, frustration, sadness, etc. that your child may experience. Let your child know it is okay to feel anything. Teach him appropriate ways to express his feelings.
- Sexually abused children may be susceptible to feelings of low self esteem. Help your child nurture a positive sense of identity with positive messages.
- Be prepared for depression or "let-down" weeks or months after the disclosure. Your child may become withdrawn or act out repeatedly over time.
- Be aware of your own reactions and get support and help as you work through your own feelings.
- Don't discuss the abuse with others in your child's presence.

Children often feel a sense of relief after disclosing abuse. Support from the parent or caregiver is one of the most important factors in your child's healing process. By offering support, you play an important role in your child's mental and emotional health. ❐

☎ Important Local Phone Numbers

Police: _____ School Counselor: _____

Emergency: **911** Child Protective Services: _____

Medical Doctor: _____ Victim's Advocate: _____

What to Do if Your Child is Missing

Child Lures Prevention Early Response System

While statistically rare, abduction puts a child's life in extreme danger. It is essential to determine as quickly as possible if a child has been criminally abducted, as 74% of abducted children who are murdered are killed within three hours. Since most missing kids are runaways who return home within three days, police often assume that even very young missing children have run away voluntarily. Sometimes it is up to parents to convince the authorities otherwise.

If Your Child is Missing:

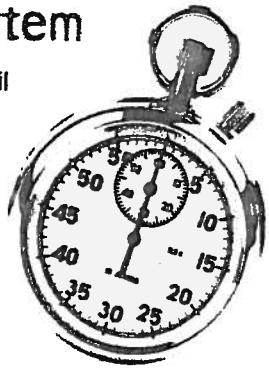
1. Try not to panic, but act swiftly.
2. Search your home (under beds, in closets, etc.) thoroughly, as well as your child's favorite hangouts.
3. Review his/her recent online & electronic activity.
4. Call, text, post or email neighbors, relatives, your child's friends – anyone who may have seen him/her or have an idea where s/he may be.
5. Ask yourself the following questions:

Y / N	Has the child ever run away from home or threatened to do so?
Y / N	Are any of the child's clothes missing?
Y / N	Is money missing? (yours or the child's)
Y / N	Are any of the child's favorite possessions (cell phone, journal, iPod, backpack) missing?
Y / N	Is the child older than age 10?
Y / N	Has the child been recently depressed, withdrawn, or moody?
Y / N	Are there unhappy circumstances at home? (Pending/recent divorce, domestic violence, alcoholism, death in the family etc.)
Y / N	Has the child lost enthusiasm for activities once considered important?
Y / N	Have the child's grades dropped recently?
Y / N	Has the child suddenly withdrawn from favorite family members or friends?
Y / N	Has the child acquired new friends, including online, of whom you disapprove?
Y / N	Does the child have a history of substance use/abuse?

If the answer to most of these questions is NO, a runaway situation is *highly unlikely*, and you should CALL THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.

Be prepared to give the police:

- Recent photograph
- Physical description: height, weight, identifying items (glasses, braces), clothing last seen worn
- Child's dental records, DNA and/or fingerprints
- Where child was last seen/going/coming from
- Access/passwords to all child's technology



6. Limit access to your home until law enforcement arrives.
7. Be completely honest with law enforcement - including any problems at home.
8. Explain why you feel your child is not a runaway by reviewing the questions in #5.
9. Request police activate AMBER Alert for your child.
10. Ask for a copy of the police report and name of investigating officer; check back frequently to obtain updates on the case.
11. Notify the media.
    - Television (Assignment Editor/Producer)
    - Radio Stations (Station Manager)
    - Newspaper (City Desk Editor)
12. Be sure your child's name and identifiers are immediately entered into the National Crime Information Center missing person file. If the local agency will not enter your child, contact the nearest FBI office, who must enter the child according to the Federal Missing Children Act (Public Law 97-292).
13. Call the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST.
14. Mobilize relatives, neighbors, your child's friends and their families, clergy, etc.
    - Ask everyone to reach out to their VIP community contacts (i.e. police chief, principal, district attorney, district representative, mayor).
    - Go door-to-door. There is nearly always somebody who has seen something.
15. Assign someone to oversee all communications.
    - Continue to call, text, post and email contacts.
    - Monitor online & electronic messages.
    - Update messaging with incoming information.
16. **Stress the 3-hour life expectancy of a criminally abducted child.**
    - Urge police and media cooperation.
    - Share new information immediately with police.

Consider sharing this Guide with your local Police Dept. Ask if they have a similar **Early Response System**.

NOTE: The plan above is designed for emergency situations.

Helpful Hotlines

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:
1-800-843-5678

National Runaway Switchboard:
1-800-786-2929