

Bulletin Inserts from the Office for the Protection of Children/Youth Diocese of Erie ~ 2018

Please run this in one of your January, 2018 bulletins

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Human Trafficking and Protecting our Youth: Trafficking of youth is a form of modern slavery. It includes both sex trafficking and forced labor. Any child under age 18 engaged in commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking, even if the youth's participation is not forced or coerced. Be aware of recruiting tactics. Traffickers target victims through social media sites, telephone chat lines, afterschool programs, at shopping malls, bus depots, clubs/bars or through friends and acquaintances. To help protect your child, ask questions about your child's friends, monitor their computer use and know where he/she hangs out. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out

<http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in one of your February 2018 bulletins

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Teen Dating Violence and Protecting our Youth: Teen dating violence is a serious problem in the US. A national survey found that 10% of teens had been victims of physical dating violence within the past year and approximately 29% reported being verbally or psychologically abused in the previous year. Teen dating violence can be physical, emotional or sexual. Teen dating violence can be prevented through empowering teens to lead healthy lives and establish healthy relationships. Healthy relationships consist of trust, honesty, respect, equality and compromise. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in one of your March 2018 bulletins

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

The Diocese of Erie has committed significant resources to help those who were harmed by clergy sexual abuse to recover from their horrible experiences. We hope our efforts will help, but we realize that only the grace of God can provide the complete healing the victims need. In the midst of this sorrowful story, lessons have been learned and taken deeply to heart. Ineffective policies of the past have been rejected. Understandings that did not measure up to human realities have changed. New insights and policies can now offer protection to all our people. If now, or at any time in the past, a priest, deacon, or other person representing the Church has abused you, you are urged to contact our Victim Assistance Coordinator, Dr. Robert Nelson, at 814-871-7723. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in your April 1, 2018 bulletin

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Child Abuse Prevention Month: April is national Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is most appropriate that Child Abuse Prevention Month is held during the Easter season. There is no better time than Easter to celebrate the protection of our most valuable gift from God – our children. For information on what the Diocese of Erie is doing, and what you can do to become more informed and involved in keeping our children safe check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm> .

Please run this in your April 8, 2018 bulletin

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Child Abuse Prevention Month: Be Vigilant. It is vitally important that we are constantly vigilant concerning the behaviors of those who interact with children. And we must always communicate our concerns to the appropriate parties. Sometimes this means communicating our safety concerns to our children. And sometimes this means communicating our concerns about seemingly inappropriate behavior to those who are in a position to intervene. Parents must also listen carefully to their children and observe both their children's activities and the behavior of older children and adults who interact with them. When children exhibit dramatic behavioral changes, adults must find out what caused the changes. Being aware of what's happening with our children means talking to, listening to, and observing them - at every opportunity. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in your April 15, 2018 bulletin

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Child Abuse Prevention Month: Preventing Child Abuse is Everyone's Responsibility. It is every adult's moral responsibility to protect possible victims by reporting the suspected abuse or neglect to the responsible authorities. Sexual abuse of minor is a pervasive societal problem, and only concerted and sustained efforts by all adults in every segment of society can help to protect children and youth. *To report suspected abuse of a minor, call Childline at 1-800-932-0323.* To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in your April 22, 2018 bulletin

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Child Abuse Prevention Month: What Happens When Abuse is Reported? People who hold positions of trust in Catholic institutions are mandated by Pennsylvania law to report child abuse. Teachers, teacher's aides, and counselors in our schools; therapists and social workers in our counseling agencies; clergy, parish employees, and volunteers in schools and parishes all have the obligation to report the reasonable suspicion of child abuse to ChildLine, the local police, or other appropriate agency. To see the specific reporting procedure for the Diocese and to see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in your April 29, 2018 bulletin

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Child Abuse Prevention Month: Safety Rules Bear Repeating. Research reminds us that teaching children how to resist the overtures of a potential molester requires repetition and reinforcement. Children and young people need to know the rules, and they need to hear them over and over and over again so that the rules become part of a thought process. This is done in the same way we teach the rules about looking both ways before crossing the street and the danger of getting too close to an open flame. Empowering children to speak up and resist the overtures of potential molesters can stop a child molester in his or her tracks. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in one of your May 2018 bulletins

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse: Child sexual abuse is a great deal more prevalent than many imagine. Some studies suggest that as many as one in six boys and one in four girls will be the victim of some form of sexual molestation before the age of 18. That means that, directly or indirectly, child sexual abuse will touch most of us during our lifetime. And although we would like to believe that most accusations are false, the facts tell us that children rarely lie about being molested. In fact, they rarely tell anyone at all. An adult study about the prevalence of sexual abuse found that 42% of the men and 33% of the women who were victimized as children had never told anyone. (Source: Sharon Womak Doty, “Refresher from the Protecting God’s Children® Program”) To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in one of your June 2018 bulletins

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Listen to your children: This summer, when your children are out of school and on different schedules, meeting new people and going to new places, make sure that you talk to them often about their experiences and the people they’ve met. Listen carefully to your children. If possible, observe and get to know the other children and adults who are part of your children’s summertime fun. Above all, communicate your safety concerns to your children. Make sure they know that they can come to you with any concerns they may have about the people they interact with. And if you hear of or observe behaviors that may be inappropriate, make sure to communicate your feelings to people who are in a position to intervene. Communications is key to creating and maintaining a safe environment all year round. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in one of your July 2018 bulletins

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Dangers of Cell Phone Cameras: Cell phone cameras are a mixed blessing. Forget your camera? Whip out the cell phone, and your toddler’s first step, friend’s goofy mishap, or fender-bender is captured for posterity. But cell phones are also being used in a sinister way – to silently take pictures of unsuspecting children, adolescents, and adults in compromising positions and without their consent. Plus, digital photos can be placed on the internet very quickly – within minutes of taking the photo – and distributed around the world. In fact, some web sites have been created for the sole purpose of posting photos taken surreptitiously with camera phones. Be aware of anyone using a cell phone in an awkward way, such as not holding it up to his or her ear or facing his or her mouth in a walkie-talkie style. Be especially cognizant of any suspicious cell phone use in areas where people could be in various stages of undress or where children are gathered. If you see someone using a cell phone in a way that appears suspicious, don’t be afraid to ask what he or she is doing or to alert someone in a position of authority about your concerns. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in one of your August 2018 bulletins

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Annual Compliance Audits: Did you know that an independent auditing company audits the Diocese of Erie, and in turn, all parishes and catholic schools each year for compliance with the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*? Our 2016-2017 audit found the Diocese of Erie to be in full compliance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Charter. The Office for the Protection of Children and Youth is currently working on the yearly audit report due September 1st. To read the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* visit <http://www.usccb.org>. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in one of your September 2018 bulletins (required)

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Diocesan Child Protection Policies: The Diocese of Erie, along with all dioceses of the United States, has policies and procedures in place to address the national problem of child abuse and to aid in creating safe environments. The diocese is committed to on-going screening and training of paid or volunteer persons who have regular contact with our children and youth under the age of 18. It is also committed to the yearly inservicing and training of our children, youth and parents regarding touching-safety and safe environments. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in one of your October 2018 bulletins(required)

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Code of Conduct: The Diocese of Erie is committed to protecting the children and youth who are entrusted to its care and to ensuring that those in ministry with our young people are in right relationship with the children/youth receiving services. To share in the ministry of Christ is a great privilege as well as a tremendous responsibility. The *privilege* is the joy of sharing in the mission of Jesus Himself. The *responsibility* is acting in a way that conforms to the attitude and actions of Christ. In this spirit, the diocese has issued a ministerial Code of Conduct, which can be accessed at <http://www.eriecd.org/pdf/codeofconduct.pdf>. The code is included in the diocesan *Policy for the Protection of Children*, which also includes mandates for creating safe environments. To read the policy, go to <http://www.eriecd.org/pdf/protectionpolicy.pdf> For more information, contact Mrs. Cindy Zemcik, at the diocesan offices at 814-824-1195.

Please run this in one of your October 2018 bulletins

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Bullying Prevention Month: Relational bullying is unwarranted, persistent, unwelcome behavior in the form of criticism, isolation, or fabricated allegations that can damage relationships. Examples include social exclusion (“You can’t be with us”), spreading rumors (“Did you hear...?”), and withholding friendship (“I won’t be your friend if you...”). Though relational bullying can often seem ambiguous to outside observers and often garners less attention than physical bullying or verbal bullying, it should not be discounted simply as normal, adolescent behavior. In fact, several recent studies suggest relational bullying is more strongly related to emotional distress and teen depression than any other form of bullying. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in one of your November 2018bulletins

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Homeless Youth and Protecting our Youth: We consider our homes to be safe places for our children, but 1.7 million US youth experience homelessness every year. 50,000 youth sleep on the streets for six months or more each year. One of the main causes of youth homelessness is family instability, which includes child abuse and/or neglect, domestic violence, parental substance abuse and family conflict. The website of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network offers information on a range of child safety topics. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Please run this in one of your December 2018 bulletins

Child Protection and Creating Safe Environments

Keeping God's Children Protected and Safe: To know that we are children of God is to live in complete love, with deep abiding security and the ability to dream, to sing, to create, to laugh, and to play without worry. As we grow older, we face a new reality – we cannot approach all God's creation with the same trust and confidence. We learn, through sometimes hurtful and damaging experiences, that some people reject the ability that God gave them to love and respect others – they ignore God's call. The Diocese of Erie's program to safeguard children helps remind us of these very facts. With the help of this program, the faithful are guided and educated about the responsibility of how to keep God's children protected and safe. To see what the Diocese of Erie is doing to help create safe environments, check out <http://www.erieecd.org/protectyouth.htm>

Updated : November, 2017