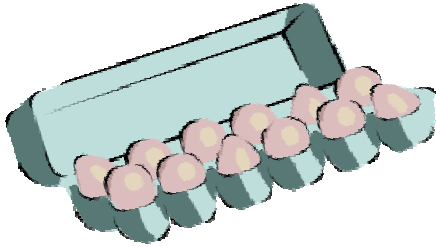


Child Protection Parent Inservice Material

2010-2011

A Dozen Things Parents Can Do to Help Create and Maintain Safe Environments at Church and School



-1-

Satisfy yourself that adults having contact with your children have been carefully screened.

-2-

Visit the classrooms and places where activities are held to assure yourself that these are safe environments.

-3-

Become involved in programs and activities at church and school.

-4-

Teach your children that some areas of their bodies are private (those covered by a swimsuit) and should be touched only by a few trusted people such as a doctor or nurse.

-5-

Encourage your children to speak openly about their experiences & not keep secrets about their relationships with other people, especially if they are uncomfortable, confused or upset.

-6-

Know your child's teachers and those adults who have some supervisory role in relationship to your children.

-7-

Discourage your children from accepting inappropriate gifts.

-8-

Do not allow your children to travel unchaperoned or stay overnight with adult non-family members as part of Church/school activities without your explicit written permission.

-9-

Insist that your children not be allowed to travel without explicit written permission, given only after careful review of the travel arrangements.

-10-

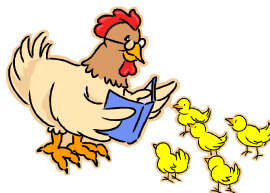
Listen carefully and with a discerning ear to what children are saying to one another about the adults around them.

-11-

Be aware of the diocesan Code of Conduct in effect for Church workers and promptly report any violations of the same to the appropriate authorities.

-12-

Strive to live lives of truth, holiness and virtue, treating all human beings as human persons and not objects for gratification or power; and teach your children to live the same way.





What has the Catholic Church in the United States done to effectively respond to sexual abuse by church personnel?

The Catholic Church in the United States has done more to protect children than almost any other organization in the United States.

Consider these facts:

- Safe Environment training is taking place in 193 dioceses of the country. Over 2 million adults have been trained to recognize the behavior of offenders and what to do about it.
- Over 5 million children have been equipped with the skills to help them protect themselves from abuse.
- Background checks are conducted on Church personnel who have contact with children. Over 2 million volunteers and employees; 52,000 clerics; 6,205 candidates for ordination have had their backgrounds evaluated.
- All dioceses have Codes of Conduct spelling out what is acceptable behavior. This serves to let people know what can and cannot be done as well as letting others know what behavior can be expected. It encourages the reporting of suspicious behavior.
- All dioceses have Victim Assistance Coordinators, assuring victims that they will be heard. In 2009, \$6,536,109 was spent on therapy for the victims of clergy sexual abuse.
- All dioceses have Safe Environment Coordinators who assure the ongoing compliance to the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.
- Bishops are meeting with victims.
- Dioceses/eparchies have Healing Masses, retreats for victim/survivors and other reconciliation events.
- There is a Zero Tolerance policy on abusers since 2002. When even a single act of sexual abuse by a priest or deacon is admitted or is established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law, the offending priest or deacon will be removed permanently from ecclesiastical ministry, not excluding dismissal from the clerical state, if the case so warrants (CIC, c. 1395 §2; CCEO, c. 1453 §1).⁴
- Dioceses require intensive background screening as well as psychological testing for those wishing to enter the seminary.

The Catholic Church has worked hard to protect children. Much has been done but more needs to be done. Until child sexual abuse is no longer a part of society, the Church will continue its efforts to stop it.



Stop It Now!

Together We Can Prevent the Sexual Abuse of Children

PREVENTION TOOLS

Have questions?
Need resources?

Get Help Now!

Online Help Center
<http://GetHelp.StopItNow.org>

Stop It Now! prevents the sexual abuse of children by mobilizing adults, families and communities to take actions that protect children before they are harmed.



351 Pleasant Street
Suite B-319
Northampton, MA 01060
Phone: 413.587.3500
Fax: 413.587.3505
www.StopItNow.org
info@StopItNow.org
Helpline: 1.888.PREVENT

Behaviors to Watch for When Adults Are With Children

We all have personal likes and things that make us uncomfortable. "Personal space" is the private area of control inside an imaginary line or boundary that defines each person as separate. Ideally, that boundary helps us stay in charge of our own personal space. It helps keep out the things that make us uncomfortable - unsafe and unwanted feelings, words, images, and physical contact. Solid social rules strengthen the boundary. Behaviors that routinely disrespect or ignore boundaries make children vulnerable to abuse.

Do you know an adult or older child who doesn't seem to understand what's acceptable when it comes to:

Personal space

- Makes others uncomfortable by ignoring social, emotional or physical boundaries or limits?
- Refuses to let a child set any of his or her own limits? Uses teasing or belittling language to keep a child from setting a limit?
- Insists on hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling with or holding a child even when the child does not want this physical contact or attention?
- Frequently walks in on children/teens in the bathroom?

Relationships with children

- Turns to a child for emotional or physical comfort by sharing personal or private information or activities, normally shared with adults?
- Has secret interactions with teens or children (e.g. games, sharing drugs, alcohol, or sexual material) or spends excessive time emailing, text messaging or calling children or youth?
- Insists on or manages to spend uninterrupted time alone with a child?
- Seems "too good to be true, i.e. frequently babysits different children for free; takes children on special outings alone; buys children gifts or gives them money for no apparent reason?
- Allows children or teens to consistently get away with inappropriate behaviors?

Sexual conversation or behavior

- Frequently points out sexual images or tells dirty or suggestive jokes with children present?
- Exposes a child to adult sexual interactions or images without apparent concern?
- 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)?

Good boundaries help prevent abuse. For more information and guidance about starting a conversation with someone who behaves in these ways, please visit our Online Help Center, <http://GetHelp.StopItNow.org>

www.StopItNow.org

info@StopItNow.org

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The Company Your Child Keeps

Always know where your children are and who is supervising them. Be aware if an adult chaperone is paying attention to your child to the exclusion of others. Be concerned about the adults with whom your child communicates via e-mail or phone, if the adult seems to monopolize his or her time. Be prudent about excursions and outings which you allow your child to attend, try to serve as a chaperone yourself as often as possible. Let your children know that their friends are welcome in your home.

Fun Educational Sites for Kids and Teens

<http://www.netsmartzkids.org/indexfl.htm> Interactive site for **elementary children** designed to teach internet safety.

<http://www.fbi.gov/kids/k5th/safety2.htm> Safety tips for **elementary children** from the FBI.

<http://pbskids.org/license/> Interactive game for **elementary children** from PBS to teach children internet safety

<http://www.blogsafety.com/teentips.htm> Safe blogging hints for **teens**

<http://www.safeteens.com/> A place for **teens and parents** to learn how to use the Internet safely. No preaching, just good advice.

<http://www.netsmartz.org/netteens.htm> Interactive site for **teens** designed to teach internet safety.

<http://tcs.cybertipline.com/> Interactive site for **teens** designed to teach internet safety.



Diocese of Erie, Office for Protection of Children and Youth
For more information regarding diocesan policies and procedures, please go to
<http://www.eriecd.org/protectyouth.htm> or contact
Mrs. Karen Streett, 814-824-1222 or kstreett@eriecd.org