

# Ten Tips for Protecting Children and Offering Outreach to Victims/Survivors

## 1 Sexual abuse is about the victim.

Many people are affected by abuse but the individual most impacted is the victim who has suffered a violation of trust that can affect his or her entire life.

## 2 No one has the right to have access to children.

No one, no matter who they are, has an automatic right to be around children or young people who are in the care of the Church without proper screening and without following the rules.

## 3 Common sense is not all that common.

Dioceses, schools, parishes, and especially families, must educate themselves and others on how to protect children.

## 4 Child sexual abuse can be prevented.

It is critical to build safety barriers around children and young people to keep them from harm—such as protective guardians, codes of conduct, background evaluations, policies and procedures, and safety training programs.

## 5 The residual effects of having been abused can last a lifetime.

The sense of violation goes deep into a person's psyche and feelings of anger, shame, hurt and betrayal can build long after the abuse has taken place. Those who have been abused can heal, but it often takes time, therapy, and the support of loved ones.

## 6 Feeling heard leads toward healing.

Relief from hurt and anger often comes when one feels heard, when one's pain

and concerns are taken seriously, and a victim/survivor's appropriate sense of rage and indignation are acknowledged.

## 7 You cannot always predict who will be an abuser.

Experience shows that most abuse is committed by someone who has gained the trust of a victim/survivor and his/her family.

## 8 There are behavioral warning signs of child abusers.

Some abusers isolate a potential victim by giving him or her undue attention or lavish gifts, others allow young people to participate in activities which their parents or guardians would not approve, such as watching pornography, drinking alcohol, using drugs, and excessive touching, such as wrestling and tickling.

## 9 People can be taught to identify grooming behavior.

Grooming behaviors are the actions which abusers take to project the image that they are kind, generous, caring people, while their intent is to lure a minor into an inappropriate relationship. Offenders can be patient and may groom their victim, his or her family, or community for years.

## 10 Background checks work.

Background checks in churches, schools and other organizations keep predators away from children both because they scare off some predators and because they uncover past actions which should ban an adult from working or volunteering with children.



# Happy Families

Write a story or draw a picture of your family doing something from the happy families list.



Show respect even  
when they disagree

Take turns talking  
and listening

Share the chores

Play together

Give hugs everyday

Learn to apologize  
and to forgive

Do things together

Protect each other



# Happy Families:

## 1. Show respect even when they disagree

There is a right way and a wrong way to settle a fight. Hitting each other is always wrong. Using hurtful words is always wrong. You don't have to agree about everything.

## 2. Take turns talking and listening

It is fun to know what everyone is thinking. Don't interrupt or make fun of others when they say something you don't agree with.

## 3. Share the chores

Instead of dreading chores make a game of it. See who can finish first or whose room is cleanest. Cleaning time can double as music time. Turn up the music or better yet sing! Do a little everyday then your room won't be so hard to clean. Ask your parents what you can do to help instead of waiting to be asked. This makes parents very happy. Warning: It might even make them faint!

## 4. Play together

Parents stay very busy. Playing together doesn't have to mean a video or board game. You can make a game out of anything. How about playing I Spy, Tic Tac Toe, or telling stories or jokes.

## 5. Give hugs everyday

Don't just get hugs be a hugger!

## 6. Learn to apologize and to forgive

Everyone makes mistakes sometimes. The first person to apologize always feels better about themselves. Practice saying, "I'm really sad and I'm really sorry for what I've done." It makes it easier to say when you really mean it.

Forgiving means you choose to overlook and forget when someone hurts you. When someone says

they are sorry believe them. Their actions will show if they were being honest.

If someone physically hurts you, tell an adult even if they ask for your forgiveness.

## 7. Do things together

Being together is important. You don't always have to do things that cost money. Go for walks. Read together or read to a younger brother or sister. Cook together. Visit parks, nature refuges, libraries, museum, church, or extended family. Looking at old family photos is always fun.



## 8. Protect each other

Parents protect you by taking you to the doctor and dentist. Knowing where you are at all times is a parent's job. When you are playing outside check in with your parents.

Parents aren't always going to be around so remember when you are alone never talk to strangers and never tell a stranger on the phone that you are home alone.

If you go online tell your parents if someone asks you for your name or where you live. Not everyone online is who they say they are. Protect yourself and your family by not telling about yourself or your family to anyone online.



April is Child Abuse Prevention Month  
Celebrate your happy family!



# Watch for These Warning Signs of Abuse in Minors

No longer wants to see a **particular person** they had been close to

Declining **academic** performance

Tries to hide use of **technology**

No longer interested in **activities** they used to enjoy

Changes in **personality**

Demonstrates **aggressive behavior** or constantly angry

Tries to get minors **alone**

Commits physical and emotional **boundary violations**

**Withdraws** from family or friends

Keeps **secrets** with minors

Gives lavish **gifts** to minors

Allows or encourages minors to **break laws** or rules

Is overly interested in **spending time** with minors

Has **inappropriate** or suggestive conversations with minors

Does not believe the **rules** apply to them (or, does not follow rules or protocols)

Takes **photos** without approval, or asks minors to send them photos

## ... and These Warning Signs of Perpetrators