



# Child Protection Parent Inservice Material

2015-2016

What does safe environment and the efforts to prevent child abuse have to do with religion anyhow?



You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bushel basket. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. Matt. 5:13

Catholic doctrine compels us to protect our children, as "the human body shares in the dignity of the image of God" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 364). Sexual abuse harms human dignity, causing damage that can last a lifetime. God loves us and wants us to be safe. The Church has an obligation to help parents protect the dignity of their children.

(Mary Jane Doerr, OCYP, USCCB)

Not only does the Church have an obligation to help its parents protect their children; the Gospel impels us to make a difference in the world around us. Sexual abuse affects every level of society and all ethnic and economic groups. By creating a safe environment in our parishes and schools, and by instructing our young people and their parents on the realities of abuse and predatory behavior, we make a difference not just for ourselves but in the wider social world in which we live.

(Fr. Hugh Gillespie, Diocese of Brooklyn)

## Communicating with Children

The dignity of children begins at home...

*"I will respect your thoughts and feelings by being attentive."*

*"I trust you will listen to me, too."*

Always keep communication open between you and your children.

Encourage them to speak about their day in school and afterward. Always listen respectfully and try not to react with emotion if you hear something which shocks or surprises you. Be ready to discuss, advise, and correct them in a calm and loving way. Praise your child whenever possible and if it is necessary to be disapproving, choose your words carefully and be as kind as possible when speaking. Children want to please their parents and can be emotionally hurt by critical comments. Always let the child know you love him or her; it is the behavior you may not like. The more open a parent can be, the more interested in the child's behavior, the easier it will be for the child to speak to the parent if serious problems occur.

**Be a good listener!**



## Tricks, Lures, & Warning Signs of Predators

**Abusers and sexual predators use various methods to entice children and ensure their cooperation/participation. Here are some lures you can warn your children about.**

### **Bad News Trick:**

The predator tells a child that something has happened (sickness or death of a parent, fire...), and that they have come to pick up the child and bring him/her home.

### **Bribes And Treats:**

Offers of something special that the child may want, and then asking for sexual favors in return.

### **Trust Grooming:**

The predator gives assistance to a child when needed or may offer to help the family of the child by offering rides or babysitting. This puts the predator in a position of trust for future abuse.

### **Drugs and Alcohol:**

Drugs and/or alcohol can be given to a child to make them more compliant.

### **"Accidental" Touching:**

Wrestling, tickling, accidental or deliberate contact with genitalia as part of the rules to a game.

### **Keeping Secrets:**

The predator leads the child to believe that there is some secret that is just between them and shouldn't be told to parents.

### **Pornography:**

Showing "dirty" pictures to children to raise curiosity about sex. (Speaking profanely and telling sexual jokes can also be used to gain a child's interest in sex.)

### **Help Me Tricks:**

Requesting help from a child, i.e. asking for directions, finding a lost pet, carrying heavy packages.

### **Internet lures:**

A predator will try to get personal information from the child. The predator may act as though he or she is the same age as the child in order to establish a friendship. He or she often will send the child sexual material and will try to set up a meeting with the child.

### **Abuse of Power or Authority:**

A predator may be in a position of authority such as a coach, police officer, priest/minister, or teacher and use this position to get children to be obedient to his or her request.

### **Special Attention/Favoritism:**

The predator gives special attention or favor to a child to gain trust for future sexual abuse.

**Real safety in the digital world is all about active, involved, loving parenting.  
It's a team effort that builds a strong Catholic family!**

**Check out these resources:**

*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/parents-and-parenting>

*Diocese of Erie Family Life Office* ~ [http://www.eriercd.org/flo\\_links.asp](http://www.eriercd.org/flo_links.asp)

*Faith and Safety: Technology Safety Through the Eyes of Faith* ~ <https://faithandsafety.org>

*NetSmartz Workshop* ~ [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)

*Diocese of Erie Office for Protection of Children and Youth*

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

