



DON'T TOUCH ME

#DontTouchMe

Informational Toolkit

Beware of Predator Traits
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Beware of Predator Traits

Recognizing the behaviors and traits of individuals who may pose a risk to children is crucial for community safety. Key indicators include:

1. **Preference for Children's Company:** Individuals who prefer to spend time with children over peers may seek roles that provide access to minors, such as coaching or tutoring.
2. **Grooming Behaviors:** Predators often build trust through attention, gifts, or favors, creating a bond to facilitate abuse.
3. **Boundary Violations:** Disregarding personal boundaries, such as unnecessary touching or invading personal space, can be a red flag.
4. **Manipulative Tactics:** Creating dependency by isolating the child from others or positioning themselves as the sole confidant is a common strategy.
5. **Access to Child-Oriented Environments:** Seeking employment or volunteer opportunities that involve close contact with children can be a tactic to gain access.
6. **Possession of Child-Centric Materials:** An unusual interest in children's toys, games, or media without a clear reason may indicate inappropriate intentions.
7. **Excessive Physical Contact:** Engaging in frequent physical interactions like tickling or wrestling, especially when the child is uncomfortable, is concerning.
8. **Secretive Communication:** Encouraging children to keep interactions or relationships secret from others is a warning sign.
9. **Use of Adult Content:** Introducing or exposing children to pornography as a means to normalize sexual behavior is a tactic used by some offenders.
10. **Prior Abuse History:** A history of abusive behavior or allegations, even if unproven, should be taken seriously.

Awareness of these behaviors enables communities to take proactive steps in protecting children and addressing potential threats.



For additional information visit nso-mi.org/DontTouchMe

Tips for Parents/Guardians

Parents who suspect their child is being abused should take decisive, informed steps to ensure their child's safety and well-being. Here are some possible actions, along with sources for further guidance:

Ensure Immediate Safety

- **Emergency Response:** If you believe your child is in immediate danger or is being harmed at this very moment, call 911 (or your country's emergency services) right away.

Document Evidence and Observations

- **Record Details:** Keep a written record of any signs, behavioral changes, physical marks, or conversations that make you suspect abuse. This documentation can be useful for law enforcement or child protective services (CPS).

Report to Authorities

- **Contact Child Protective Services:** Reach out to your local CPS office to report your suspicions. They have the authority to investigate allegations and take protective measures.
- **Notify Law Enforcement:** In many jurisdictions, mandatory reporting laws require certain professionals—and sometimes parents—to report suspected abuse. If the abuse is severe or criminal in nature, contact your local police department.

Seek Professional Guidance and Support

- **Consult with a Pediatrician or Therapist:** A healthcare provider or child psychologist can help assess your child's situation and offer guidance on next steps. They can also provide necessary documentation if physical or emotional signs of abuse are present.
- **Counseling and Support Services:** Consider professional counseling for both you and your child. Support services can provide coping strategies and emotional support during a difficult time.

Maintain Open Communication

- **Talk with Your Child:** Approach the conversation with sensitivity. Let your child know they are safe and that you are there to help. Avoid leading questions; instead, listen carefully and validate their feelings.

Utilize Community Resources

- **Hotlines and Legal Aid:** Contact national or local hotlines that specialize in child abuse for advice and legal support. These resources can provide immediate guidance and connect you with professionals who understand the legal process.

Taking these steps not only helps in protecting your child but also contributes to holding abusers accountable. Early intervention can prevent further harm and begin the process of healing and justice.

If you're ever in doubt, remember that professionals are available to help, and taking action can make all the difference.



Resources: Childhelp, The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Child Welfare Information Gateway, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, The American Academy of Pediatrics, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

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Statistics

Child abuse remains a critical issue in the United States, with significant numbers of children affected each year. The following statistics provide insight into the prevalence and impact of child maltreatment:

General Prevalence

- **Annual Reports:** In 2022, approximately 558,899 children were victims of abuse and neglect in the U.S., equating to about 8 children per 1,000.
- **Lifetime Exposure:** Approximately one in four children experience child abuse or neglect during their lifetime.

Types of Maltreatment

- **Neglect:** Neglect accounts for approximately 78% of child maltreatment cases.
- **Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse constitutes about 18% of reported cases.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse is reported in approximately 9% of cases.

Demographics of Victims

- **Age:** Children under the age of 4 account for 79.4% of abuse or neglect fatalities, with 47.7% being under the age of 1.
- **Gender:** Both boys and girls are vulnerable to abuse; however, certain studies indicate that 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys will be sexually abused before they reach age 18.

Perpetrators

- **Relationship to Victim:** Approximately 90% of child sexual abuse victims know the perpetrator in some way, with 68% being abused by a family member.

Fatalities

- **Child Deaths:** In 2022, an estimated 1,990 children died from abuse and neglect, an increase from 1,930 in 2021.

Impact of Parental Substance Abuse

- **Correlation:** There is a strong statistical link between child maltreatment and parental substance abuse. In 2019, the percentage of victims with caregivers who abused alcohol or other substances increased, highlighting the connection between parental substance abuse and child maltreatment.

Reporting and Investigations

- **Investigations:** In 2004, approximately 3.5 million children were involved in investigations of alleged abuse or neglect in the U.S., with an estimated 872,000 children determined to have been abused or neglected.

These statistics underscore the urgent need for continued efforts in prevention, reporting, and intervention to protect children from abuse and neglect.



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