

# Community Information Packet

what you need  
to know to help keep  
you and your children  
safe

**Snohomish County Sheriff's Office**  
[sheriff.snoco.org](http://sheriff.snoco.org) (click sheriff services)

**425-388-3393**

**Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse**

**Crisis Line: 425-252-4800**

Revised 5/14

**QUICK REFERENCE GUIDES**

**SCSO:.....(425) 388-3393**  
**TTY:.....1-800-833-6388**

**FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO START A SHERIFF'S**  
**NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH:**  
**Office of Community Partnerships**  
**[neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org](mailto:neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org)**

**Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse**  
**24 Hour Crisis Line..... (425) 252-4800**  
**TTY:.....(425) 258-7081**

**DOC – (Adult Offenders)**  
**Marysville.....(360) 658-2150**  
**Monroe.....(360) 794-2592**  
**Lynnwood.....(425) 771-7116**  
**Everett.....(425) 290-3200**

**CPS – Intake.....1-866-280-6714**

**JRA – (Juvenile Parole).....(425) 670-6040**

**Juvenile Probation.....(425) 388-7800**

**R.A.I.N.N.....1-800-247-0390**  
**(National Hotline that will connect you to your**  
**local Sexual Assault Center)**

## **Introduction**

The Snohomish County Sheriff's Office is pleased to provide **OffenderWatch®** for the citizens of Snohomish County. **OffenderWatch®** is the nation's leading registered sex offender management and community notification tool with hundreds of leading agencies in dozens of states utilizing it. **OffenderWatch®** provides the most accurate and timely information available and now this information is available to you!

You may enter any address in the county and see information on the publishable offenders within the specified radius of the address you enter.

Offenders move frequently, so instead of having to check the maps on a weekly basis, the best way to stay informed is to take advantage of our free email alert system. You may confidently register as many addresses in the county as you wish, and we will continuously monitor the addresses and send you an email alert if a new offender registers an address within the specified radius of any address you register. There is no cost for this service and no limit to the number of addresses you can register—your email address and physical addresses are all confidential. Tell your friends and neighbors and be sure to register your home, school, work, gym, day care, park, soccer field, parents or children's homes—any address of interest to you!

### **PROVIDENCE INTERVENTION CENTER FOR ASSAULT AND ABUSE MISSION STATEMENT:**

"The Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse provides community leadership and action that empowers and advanced the roles, rights, and well-being of woman, children, and men.

The Center's sexual assault advocates, staff, and volunteer advocates commit to ending sexual violence through prevention, education, and community development. The Center promotes emotional and physical healing for persons victimized by sexual violence."

### **SNOHOMISH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to provide safe communities through dedication and professional service.

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>INDEX</b>	<b>Page</b>
About the Department of Corrections	5
Why Does Law Enforcement Conduct Community Education Meetings?	7
Sex Offender Risk Level Classification	8
Talking to Your Children about This Offender	9
Who Are The Offenders?	11
Understanding Sex Offenders: What the Sex Offenders Tell Us	12
Behavioral Indicators of Men or Women Who Have Molested Children	14
Understanding Grooming	15
Facts about Child Sexual Abuse	17
General Recommendations For Child-Adult Boundary & Personal Safety Standards	18
Tips for Caregivers	20
What Children Should Know	22
How to Teach Personal Safety to Your Child	23
Be Alert to Common Tricks	25
Book List for Parents	26
Acquaintance Rape: Can I Reduce My Risk?	28
Internet Resources	29
A Parent's Guide to Internet Safety	30
Neighborhood Safety	36
Personal Safety Tips for Adolescents & Adults	27
Getting Involved	39

## **About the Department of Corrections**

The Department of Corrections was established in 1981 for the purpose of supervising adults who were convicted of felony and gross misdemeanor offenses and were ordered to complete supervision by the Court. During that supervision, the Community Corrections Officer will monitor compliance of the offender's conditions or rules of supervision. Throughout the history of the Department, there have been many changes in the sentences and supervision of offenders. In many cases, these changes were implemented by the Legislature as a result of feedback from the community. These progressive changes have given the Department more authority to target high-risk areas on the offenders we supervise. However, the Department of Corrections must supervise the offenders under the rules of supervision that were set forth at the time of their sentence.

The Department of Corrections supervises only a small percent of the registered sex offenders in the state. Most of these offenders are supervised in collaboration with Department of Corrections staff, local law enforcement officials, treatment providers, and other members of the community. The Department refers to this group of individuals as the Risk Management Team. One of the most important aspects of this team approach to supervision is obtaining information from the community. With your assistance we can enhance community safety.

The information you have been given during the Community Notification Meeting will assist you in protecting yourself, your family, and your community against sexual assaults. In addition, you may have been given information about an offender who is on supervision with the Department of Corrections. Included in that information should be a list of conditions the offender must comply with while they are being supervised and a telephone number for the Community Corrections Officer who supervises the offender. If you think the offender has violated the conditions of his/her supervision, please provide that information to the Community Corrections Officer. However, if you believe an offender has committed a new criminal offense, please contact the police immediately. For your convenience, we have included some general information that may answer many questions about the supervision of sex offender under the Department of Corrections.

### **What is minor contact?**

Many sex offenders have conditions prohibiting contact with minors. What these conditions generally mean is that the offenders can not initiate or prolong contact with anyone under the age of 18. If the offender initiates physical or verbal contact with a minor or prolongs those contacts with minors, he or she may be in violation and the contact will be investigated. There is also incidental contact with minors. This is when a minor initiates either physical or verbal contact with an offender. The offender's responsibility is to disengage that contact immediately and leave the situation. Finally, some offenders have conditions prohibiting contact with just victim age and gender specific minors, and some have special conditions allowing contact with specific minors such as their own children. The court usually sets these types of conditions at the time of sentencing.

Offenders who are prohibited from having contact with minors are generally

required (unless specified otherwise in their J&S) to have a chaperone/guardian with them when attending church or recreational activities where the concentration of minors is generally increased. This person has met with and been approved by the therapist, CCO or both. This person is knowledgeable of the offender's crime, potential high-risk situations, and conditions. An approved chaperone/guardian has also signed paperwork and has been notified there is a potential for civil liability if they were supposed to be acting as a chaperone and a violation or new crime were to occur. If an offender is in the presence of an approved chaperone, he or she may be in the presence of minors. This does not mean any of the offender's conditions change. It allows the offender to participate in activities which are considered safer in the presence of an approved person.

#### **How are offender residences screened by the Department of Corrections?**

There is no "perfect" place for any sex offender to live. Sex offenders are in this and every community. They have a much better chance for success when they have a stable living environment. The Community Corrections Officer (CCO) investigates proposed addresses on a case by case basis. Each investigation is unique based upon the individual offender's risk factors, conditions of the Judgment and Sentence, conditions of supervision, and the offender's specialized needs. As part of the investigation process, the CCO may contact some or all of the following stakeholders: local law enforcement; landlords; community groups relevant to the offender's placement; neighbors; treatment providers; and the CCO's supervisor.

#### **Why is the sex offender living near kids/schools/and parks?**

Kids are everywhere! Again, there is no "perfect" place for a sex offender to live. It is almost impossible to find a location free of children. Each offender is unique and has their own individual risk factors and may or may not have a condition, which prohibits them from having contact with minors. The CCO makes every effort to minimize the offender's opportunity to contact minors or other groups at risk. Finding housing for sex offenders is a difficult task and the Department of Corrections welcomes your assistance in helping to locate housing for them.

#### **What does sexual deviancy treatment do and can offenders be cured/rehabilitated?**

Sexual deviancy treatment is designed to allow the offenders to evaluate their own offense cycle and specific high-risk behaviors that are associated with it. In many ways, sexual deviancy behaves much like alcoholism or drug addictions. Sex offenders will usually follow a fairly specific chain of events or emotional issues that eventually lead to a new offense. The goal of treatment is for the offenders to identify their cycle and to develop some tools to stop the cycle and avoid high-risk situations. For example, while someone who is a recovering alcoholic should not enter a bar, a pedophile should not go into a place where children congregate. In the end, the offender will have the tools to prevent future offenses but it is ultimately up to the individual. What can be said, is that sexual deviancy treatment has been shown to reduce the re-offense rate. Some studies have shown that offenders, who have completed sexual deviancy treatment, have less than a four- percent chance of committing a new sexual offense, compared to a 15% chance of untreated offenders.

## **WHY DOES LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMUNITY EDUCATION MEETINGS?**

As a result of the Community Protection Act of 1990, a law enforcement agency now has the opportunity to share information regarding offender's residence location, crime(s), and methods of operation and conditions of release with the public. This information is provided to you in accordance with Washington Association of Sheriffs' and Police Chiefs' (WASPC) Model Policy. We are fortunate to be able to have community notification meetings and find out about offenders that are living in our community. However, do not be lulled into a false sense of security that this is whom you need to be fearful of. It is important to know that when you gain information about a specific offender at a community education meeting, you gain knowledge to protect your family from anyone who would harm them. Whether or not you decide to talk to your children about this offender, make sure that you talk about the fact that there are many dangerous people out there that we know nothing about - the offenders that have never been caught. In the end, we hope to provide a safer community and believe that this can be achieved by interaction and communication between, and among, members of the community, victim service providers, local law enforcement and other agencies. Everyone's goal should be empowerment of the community through education. Through a proactive approach we can all assist in making our neighborhoods and homes safer, and reduce the potential for victimization. Everyone should be partners in this endeavor.

In addition to community notification meetings you may receive notice in the mail of a registered sex offender living in your community where there is no community notification meeting. It is the hope of the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office that when you receive one of these notifications that you will go to our web site to gain additional information about the offender as well as taking advantage of the resources provided through the web site. These resources support the idea of taking universal precautions to protect you and your family from anyone who might wish to harm them.

### **SEX OFFENDER RISK LEVEL CLASSIFICATION**

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) through the "Model Policy" established guidelines for risk level classification and the dissemination of information about sex offenders. The End of Sentence Review Committee is made up of a variety of state and local agencies that together complete risk level assessment of most sex offenders either convicted in Washington State or convicted in another state and move to Washington. The purpose of risk level assessment is to provide the community with information about convicted sex offenders who pose a moderate or high risk to re-offend.

For **level I offenders**, law enforcement agencies shall share information with other appropriate law enforcement agencies. If the level I offender is a juvenile, the information shall be shared with the principal of the public or private school he or she will be attending. Upon request, the agency may disclose relevant, necessary and accurate information to any victim or witness and to any community member who lives near the residence where the offender resides, expects to reside, or is regularly found. RCW 4.24.550(3)

For **level II offenders**, in addition to what is stated for level I offenders, law enforcement agencies may distribute information to those schools, child care and adult care facilities, libraries, and businesses and organizations serving children, women and vulnerable adults in the area where the registered offender resides, is expected to reside or is regularly found. (RCW 4.24.550(3)). The most common method for notification of level II offenders is through notification flyers.

For **level III offenders**, in addition to what is stated for level II offenders, law enforcement agencies may disclose information to the public at large. RCW 4.24.550(3)

The county sheriff is to publish by legal notice, advertising, or news release a sex offender community notification that conforms to the guidelines established under RCW 4.24.5501 in at least one legal newspaper with a general circulation in the area of the sex offender's registered address or location. Law enforcement agencies are expected to distribute offender notification flyers to the general public and are encouraged to host, minimally, periodic community forums for expanded sex offender management information and public safety education. The county sheriff shall also cause to be published twice yearly a current list of level III registered sex offenders. This list shall be maintained by the county sheriff on a publicly accessible web site and updated at least once a month, unless the information is posted on the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs website. RCW 4.24.550(4)

### **Sexually Violent Predator (SVP): Civil Commitment:**

There are currently hundreds of sexually violent predators civilly committed in Washington State. These offenders are housed at the Special Commitment Center (SCC) located at the McNeil Island Correctional Center. These offenders are not serving prison sentences. They fall under the jurisdiction of DSHS. To be civilly committed an offender must meet three specific criteria. 1. That they have been convicted of a sexually violent act, 2. They have been diagnosed with a personality disorder or mental abnormality, 3. That this diagnosis makes it more likely than not that they will commit a future sexually violent act.

The End of Sentence Review Committee does initial screening of cases meeting the criteria. The offender is then sent to psychologist for a forensic evaluation to professionally answer the same three questions. If the offender is found to meet the criteria then the case is forwarded to a prosecutor who will make a final determination whether the case will go forward for civil commitment. If the case does go forward then a jury trial will make the final determination if the offender is to be civilly committed.

Once the offender is civilly committed then they receive specific sex offender

treatment for sexually violent predators. After completing six phases of sex offender treatment (which may take years, if ever completed) the offender must be considered for placement in a Secure Community Transition Facility (SCTF) in the general community. The placement of these facilities is currently taking place in several counties in Washington State. These facilities are maintained by DSHS. These offenders have the highest degree of supervision at no time being left in the community without a trained DSHS employee with them. The facility is secure, alarmed and staff is on site 24 hours a day. After it is found that the offender has successfully transitioned into the community they can be released from the SCTF to maintain their own living arrangements. Any release to an SCTF, less restrictive alternative or unconditional release can only be granted through the court where the conviction as a sexually violent predator occurred.

### **TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT THIS OFFENDER**

Because offenders get their power through secrecy the single most effective means of protecting your child is communication with your child. They have to feel comfortable discussing sensitive matters with you. If they feel they can talk with you about their true feelings and that they will not be "put down" for it, then they will be more likely to tell you when they are put in an uncomfortable situation by a child molester. Also, children need to know that there are many adults who can help if they have a problem.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children provides handouts such as "Personal Safety for Children" and "Child Protection" which explain basic safety rules for children. For a list of free child safety pamphlets, call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, toll free (1-800-843-5678) the Jacob Wetterling Foundation toll free (1-800-325-HOPE), or call your local sexual assault program, victim services agency, or social services agency.

### **NOW THAT I KNOW THAT A SEX OFFENDER LIVES IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD, WHAT SHOULD I DO DIFFERENTLY TO PROTECT MY FAMILY AND MYSELF?**

Open communication between parents and children are vital components of family safety. Talk to your children. Explain in general terms that this person has hurt someone before and that children should stay away from this individual. Review safety tips. Be aware of common lures. Remember, the purpose behind community notification is to reduce the chances of further victimization of persons by this offender. The information gained through this notification should assist you and your family in avoiding situations that allow for easy access to victims. Don't harass your neighbor. An offender put in a stressful state is more likely to relapse. Let's help them succeed. We win with fewer victims.

### **WHAT DO I TELL MY KIDS ABOUT THIS OFFENDER?**

Avoid scary details. You may know more than your children need to know. Keep information general, as it may protect them from others who would try to harm them as well. Explain the importance of avoiding dangerous situations in general rather than trying to teach them how to be safe from just the one person you know about.

Some basics to tell your kids about this offender:

DON'T accept a ride from the offender.

DON'T go into the home or yard of the offender.

TELL your parents if this person approaches you, or offers you toys, money or gifts.

TRY to use the buddy system when kids play outdoors.

CALL 911 if your parents aren't home and this offender approaches you.

If you are aware that this offender has done any of these things, call 911.

**ARE YOU GOING TO TELL US IF THE OFFENDER MOVES OUT OF THIS NEIGHBORHOOD SO WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ANY MORE?**

No. The information shared about sex offenders is basic safety information that we should all be aware of. There are sex offenders in this and every community. It would serve no purpose to have people relax, or not follow safety measures because the one they knew about moved from the neighborhood.

## **WHO ARE THE OFFENDERS?**

When most people imagine a child molester, they picture some ugly, old man in a trench coat coaxing children to come to him in exchange for some candy. They don't picture Uncle Joe or Aunt Lorraine, their neighbor next door, the friendly parishioner, another family member, or trusted co-worker. They don't think of mom or dad, or in the case of single parents, their significant other. This misconception has been effectively dispelled through information obtained in thousands of child sexual abuse investigations over the years. Child molesters come from all walks of life and from all social economic groups. They can be male or female, rich or poor, employed or unemployed, religious or non-religious, or from any race. People unknown to them, relatives, friends, or caregivers can molest children.

Both men and women molest children, although the majority of those identified and prosecuted for sex offenses, are men. Adults who molest children can generally be divided into two groups, according to their behaviors. A small percentage of sexual offenders have a lifelong exclusive attraction to children and have little or no emotional interest in adult partners. These offenders are classified as pedophiles. Most pedophiles have molested numerous children. However, the majority of sex offenders are not exclusively attracted to children. They generally have adult relationships, and generally have fewer child victims. Also, adults who molest children of their same gender (i.e. an adult male who molests a boy) are not necessarily homosexual.

The incestuous or intra-familial molester is usually an adult male (father, stepfather, grandfather or live-in boyfriend of the mother), however, mothers or other female caregivers also sexually abuse children. The molestation is usually secretive and is sometimes accomplished through misuse of power, mental duress, bribes, tricks or misuse of parental role under the guise of sex education or threats. The molestation usually occurs over an extended period of time, occasionally into the victim's adulthood.

Children are also molested by other children. A significant portion of children are molested by juvenile offenders. Juvenile offenders may offend against other children in their family, such as younger siblings or extended family members. They may also molest extra-familial children that they have regular access to, such as children in the neighborhood or children they baby-sit. Any sexual contact between juveniles, when one is over the age of sexual consent (16), and the other is under, may be considered a criminal act. When both children are under the age of sexual consent, a criminal act is committed when one child is more than two years older than the other child (i.e. a 12 year old boy having sexual contact with a 7 year old boy), or there are forceful or coercive elements. Sexual exploration between peer age children which does not contain forceful or coercive elements is not considered a crime.

## **Understanding Sex Offenders: What the Sex Offenders Tell Us**

*Barbara Boslaugh Haner, MN, ARNP*

There are over 20,000 registered sex offenders currently residing within Washington State. Although most media attention is given to known sex offenders moving into the area, the majority of sex offenders are unknown to the general public. The typical sex offender is male, at least a high school graduate, is more likely than other criminals to be employed and typically do not have criminal records. Although many believe offenders are dirty old men in trench coats lurking in the bushes around schools, in fact 85%-90% of child sexual abusers are known to the family. Sex offenders most often are family members, friends, and other adults with significant relationships with children who rely on secrecy and manipulative behavior patterns to identify and target their victims. Additionally, while most other criminals decrease their criminal activity as they age, sex offenders typically do not. Instead, most sex offenders continue to offend against their targeted populations until they are physically incapable.

Child sexual abuse usually begins with a sex offender gaining both the parent's and the child's trust and friendship, becoming a valuable and indispensable part of the family. Once a relationship has been established, the offender will begin to test the child's knowledge and ability to protect themselves. Sexual jokes, back rubs, "accidental" sexual touching, and hugging, often done in the presence of the parent, are utilized to "test the waters." If these behaviors are not received with alarm, the offender will increase the amount and type of sexual exposure. To adjust the child to sexual activity, offenders commonly utilize casual or accidental exposure to pornography.

Offenders also take great precautions to avoid causing physical pain or injury to their victims because injury sharply increases the likelihood the child will disclose the behavior. Most sex offenders of children are content with self-exposure, fondling, masturbation, and oral sex. Penile penetration is rare. This preparation, or grooming process, is often so sly that children are not aware that these behaviors violate the "good touch, bad touch" philosophy that is the current gold standard for education. The emphasis on "stranger danger" is not applicable within this criminal act. By creating an environment that isolates the child from their peers and other family members, the offenders often instill a sense of responsibility for the sexual behavior on the child.

What do the offenders tell us about prevention? Turning to convicted offenders has generated concrete suggestions to decrease the risk of child sexual assault.

- **Secrets:** Offenders tell us that teaching the dangers of secret friendships, secret gifts, secret behaviors, and secret places is more valuable than any other educational format.
- **Believe:** Listen, and trust your child. Children rarely lie about sexual abuse.
- **Education:** Teach accurate and healthy values about sexuality. If we don't teach our children about sex, the offenders will.
- **Remind:** Frequently remind your child about when and where people can touch their bodies.

- Monitor: Get to know your child's friends and peers, as well as adults that have contact with your child. Be wary of older children and adults who want to spend a lot of time alone with your child. Are the gifts or privileges your child receives appropriate?

Increased awareness and understanding of how offenders target and maintain their victims is vital to effective prevention. From information supplied by convicted offenders, programs can be developed that effectively counteract the methods utilized by offenders. Without good safety programs and informed professionals and parents, children will continue to be vulnerable and sexually victimized.

## **BEHAVIORAL INDICATORS OF MEN OR WOMEN WHO HAVE MOLESTED CHILDREN**

**CAUTION:** Some people who have molested or plan to molest a child exhibit no observable behavior pattern that would be a clue to their future actions.

### **PERSONS WHO MOLEST CHILDREN OFTEN:**

1. Are aware, in many cases, of their preference for children before they reach age 18. Most offenders are adult males, but some women also molest children.
2. Are usually in an adult relationship or are married. A small number never marry and maintain a lifelong sexual and emotional interest in children.
3. Relate better to children than adults and may feel more comfortable with children and their interests.
4. Have few close adult friends.
5. Prefer children in a specific age group.
6. Prefer one gender to the other; however, some are bisexual in their preference.
7. Seek employment or volunteer opportunities with programs involving children in the preferred victim age group for this type of offender.
8. Pursue children for sexual purposes and may feel emotionally attached to the extent that emotional needs are met by engaging in relationships with children. Example: An adult man spends time with neighbor children or relatives and talks at length about his feelings for them or his own feelings of loneliness or loss in order to get the child's sympathy.
9. Photograph or collect photographs of their victims, dressed, nude or involved in sexual acts.
10. Collect child erotica and child-adult pornography which may be used in the following ways:
  - a) To lower the inhibitions of victims.
  - b) To fantasize when no potential victim is available.
  - c) To relive past sexual activities.
  - d) To justify their inappropriate sexual activities.
  - e) To blackmail victims to keep them from telling.
11. Possess alcohol or narcotics and furnish them to their victims to lower inhibitions or gain favor.
12. Talk with children in ways that equalize their relationship.
13. Talk about children in the same manner as one would talk about an adult lover or partner.
14. Seek out organizations (such as North American Man-Boy Love Association/NAMBLA) and publications that support his sexual beliefs and practices.
15. Offer to baby-sit or take children on trips in order to manipulate situations to sleep with or be near children or bathe or dress them.
16. Are seen at parks, playgrounds or places frequented by children or teenagers.

## **UNDERSTANDING GROOMING**

Grooming techniques are specific behaviors that sex offenders engage in which increase the likelihood that they will successfully be able to abuse a child and not get caught. The behaviors are planned and serve the purpose of preparing the victim or the people around the victim, making it easier for the perpetrator to offend against the child.

Most sexual-abuse is preceded by grooming, particularly when the victim is known to the offender. Grooming is a process that can take quite a while, even months or years, and can be very subtle and sneaky. Victims of grooming often do not realize that they are being manipulated until after they have been sexually abused, and even then, some victims do not see how the grooming led to their abuse.

The first step in grooming is used to identify potential victims. Offenders give children “tests” to see who might offer the least resistance to being abused. Offenders look for children who:

- Are vulnerable
- Have poor boundaries
- Will keep a secret
- Have poor self-esteem
- Have few social supports or friends
- May have behavioral problems

Grooming is used to gain a child’s trust and confidence so that they will want to spend time with the perpetrator. Behaviors used to accomplish this include:

- Singling out specific children for attention
- Giving gifts, particularly those that may be allowed by a parent
- Allowing children to violate parent’s rules
- Relates to the child as a peer through music, movies, and other common interests
- Bribing children
- Providing drugs or alcohol
- Taking the child on special outings

Grooming is used to increase a child’s comfort level with being touched and with sexual material. These behaviors may include:

- Physical contact such as tickling or wrestling
- “Accidentally” touching a child’s genitals
- Using excuses such as checking development or cleaning to look at and touch a child’s genitals
- Sexually explicit conversations
- Viewing pornography with the child

Once abuse has occurred, grooming techniques are used to manipulate children into keeping the abuse a secret and to feel responsible for the abuse. Behaviors that help to accomplish this goal include:

- Threats of harm to the child or family
- Threats of harm to the offender, such as “I will go to jail” or “I will never be able to see you again”
- Telling children that they are “learning” about sex
- Telling children that they “like” it or “want” the abuse
- Telling children that no one will believe them if they tell
- Threatening to show pictures or videos of child’s abuse

Offenders don’t only groom children, but they use specific behaviors to gain the trust of family and community members. This decreases the likelihood that people around them will be concerned about their behavior and makes the victim less likely to be believed if they do disclose. Offenders engage in such behaviors as:

- Being very charming and helpful
- Taking jobs or volunteer positions where they have access to children
- Establishing themselves as an insider very quickly
- Making themselves indispensable, either financially or through other means

This grooming process is a critical time for adults to intervene and prevent the abuse of a child. Identifying the behaviors of an adult who is a potential risk of harm to children and taking action to intervene is the key to protecting children. If you think a child is being groomed, trust your “gut feeling” and act on it:

- Listen for statements or questions from your child that would support your suspicions
- Encourage your child to tell you more about the time he or she spends with the person
- Assert yourself and end questionable behavior
- Be willing to stop all contact between the child and the potential abuser, even if it makes you the “bad guy”

## **FACTS ABOUT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

Child sexual abuse is the exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or any significantly older person. It is called incest if it occurs between family members. Child sexual abuse can include a variety of behaviors including fondling, verbal stimulation and pornography, but also more violent behaviors such as rape.

### **SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM**

- One in four girls is sexually assaulted by age 18.
- One in five boys is sexually assaulted by age 18.
- Over 1/3 of child sexual abuse cases involved children five years old or younger.
- 85-90% of child sex offenders are known to victims and their family.

### **CHARACTERISTICS**

- Sexual abuse may begin when a child is in early childhood and may last several years.
- Most children do not tell anyone about sexual abuse.
- The typical offender is a male using his position of power to take advantage of a child's trust, need for affection and innocence.
- Child sexual abuse occurs in all socio-economic and racial groups.
- Children very rarely lie about sexual abuse incidents.

### **PREVENTION**

Education can help prevent sexual exploitation of children. Children and adolescents can learn to recognize potentially exploitative situations and can learn to say "no" to inappropriate touching. Parents can teach these skills to their children. Schools can implement a child sexual abuse prevention curriculum into their health program. Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse can provide age appropriate materials for discussions with your child(ren).

### **DISCLOSURE**

Children may disclose sexual abuse in a variety of ways. They may come to you in private, and tell you directly and specifically what is going on. Unfortunately, this is one of the less common ways for children to disclose. More common ways include:

#### **INDIRECT HINTS**

For example, "My brother wouldn't let me sleep last night." "Mr. Jones wears funny underwear." "Daddy's trying to poison me." "My babysitter keeps bothering me." A child may talk in these terms because he/she hasn't learned more specific vocabulary, feels too ashamed or embarrassed to talk more directly, has promised not to tell, or for a limited vocabulary. Keep in mind that in order to make a report you do not need to know exactly what form the abuse has taken.

#### **DISGUISED DISCLOSURE**

"I know someone who is being touched in a bad way. What would happen if a girl told her mother she was being molested but her mother didn't believe her?" Here the child might be talking about a friend or sibling, but it is just as likely to be talking about him/herself. Encourage the child to tell what he/she knows about the "other child." It is probable the child will eventually tell you whom they are talking about.

#### **DISCLOSURE WITH STRINGS ATTACHED**

"I have a problem but if I tell you about it you have to promise not to tell anyone else." Most children are all too aware that some negative consequences will result if they break the secret of abuse. Often the offender uses the threat of these consequences to force the child to remain silent. Let the child know you want to help him/her and that the law requires you to make a report if the child discloses abuse; just as the molestation itself is against the law, so too it would be against the law for you not to report. Assure the child you will respect his/her need for confidentiality by not discussing the abuse with anyone other than those directly involved with the legal process who might include the school nurse or counselor, school principal, and/or the CPS investigator.

#### **HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE**

- Find a private place to talk with the child.
- Do not panic or express shock.
- Express your belief that the child is telling you the truth.
- Use the child's vocabulary.
- Reassure the child that it is good to tell.
- Reassure the child that it is not her/his fault, that she/he is not bad.
- Determine the child's immediate need for safety.
- Let the child know that you will do your best to protect and support her/him.
- Let the child know what you will do.
- Report to the proper authorities.
- If a child discloses during a lesson, acknowledge the child's disclosure and continue the lesson. Afterwards, find a place where you can talk with the child alone. It is best to present the curriculum before a playtime or recess so that you have a natural opportunity to talk with children privately, if they come forward.

#### **REPORTING ABUSE**

If you have a concern that any child is being abused, your role is NOT to investigate the situation. It is your responsibility to report the abuse, which begins the process of allowing professionals to figure out what has happened and get help for the child. It can be difficult not to ask the child questions about what happened, but this can hurt an investigation and may make it difficult for professionals to determine what has occurred. Many people are a mandated reporter, which means they are required by law to report concerns for child abuse, such as medical providers, teachers, daycare workers and counselors. In most cases, it is best to report initial concerns for abuse to Child Protective Services and they will decide if reporting to law enforcement is necessary.

Remember, you don't have to be sure abuse occurred to report. It is appropriate to report even if you just have a concern.

## **General Recommendations for Child-Adult Boundary and Personal Safety Standards**

- All persons over the age of 16 residing or regularly visiting in a residence providing over night care will have a Washington State Patrol Criminal History Background check.
- Child care will not be provided by persons impaired by drugs (prescribed or illicit) or alcohol.
- Family members and/or caregivers will not conduct inspections or touching of genitalia, anus, buttocks or breast areas without a clear and specific medical complaint and reasonable cause to suspect that an injury or illness exists. This may include continuous or reoccurring complaints of pain, burning with urination, observable blood, and/or scratching or rubbing.
- All adults will actively practice courteous and consistent behavior with children. This includes not forcing or verbally coercing or demeaning a child to participate in a social interaction when they demonstrate behavioral or verbal resistance or reluctance. This includes hugging, kissing, or other physical contact.
- Family members will not bath or shower together.
- Family members will not share beds (excluding adult partners sleeping together).
- All family members or household residents and guests will be dressed appropriately at all times. Undergarments and see through fabric are not considered appropriate.
- No tickling or wrestling is to take place between children and persons over the age of 16.
- Privacy will be provided for bathing and toileting as is appropriate for the child's age and ability.
- Permission will be sought to enter any bathing, sleeping, or toileting locations regardless of whether the door is locked.
- Locks with appropriate safety over ride systems are provided for sleeping, bathing, and toileting locations.
- Weapons will be secured with trigger locks and/or secured in a locked location. Ornamental weapons will be secured as is appropriate.
- Sexually explicit (pornography) discussions or portrayals (videos, video games, print, computer, and television) will not be conducted or displayed in the home while children under the age of 16 are present.
- Portrayals (video games, videos, movies, television and print) of inter-personal violence will not be conducted or displayed in the home while

children under the age of 16 are present.

- Family members and other caregivers will not direct the child to engage in secretive behavior or the purposeful withholding of information from other family members.
- Conflicts will be resolved without striking, punching, pushing, throwing items, yelling, or engaging in degrading or demeaning behavior or verbalizations.
- No attempt will be made to influence the child's behavior through verbalization about another family member.
- Custody or other emotionally laden subjects will not be discussed with or within the hearing of the child

## **TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS**

### **LISTEN TO CHILDREN**

Believe what they are telling you.

### **TAKE RESPONSIBILITY**

Know where your children are at all times. Be familiar with their friends and daily activities.

### **BUILD SELF-ESTEEM**

A child who has low self-esteem cannot protect him/herself. Listen carefully to your children's fears, and be supportive in all your discussions with them, replacing fear with knowledge.

### **TEACH DECISION MAKING**

Children at all ages can make decisions. Practice early with little decisions so big decisions later are easier. Teach them to trust their own feelings, and assure them they have the right to say NO to what they sense is wrong.

### **BUILD SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

Children need positive adult role models and need to know where to go for help.

### **CHOOSE SUBSTITUTE CAREGIVERS CAREFULLY**

Interview and monitor babysitters, group leaders, youth pastors, etc. Be alert to a teenager or adult who is paying an unusual amount of attention to your children or giving them inappropriate or expensive gifts. Contact the Sheriff's Office and request any available information about the person. This will include if the person is a registered sex offender.

### **PROTECT KIDS WHO ARE HOME ALONE**

Set ground rules, designate emergency contacts, and develop safety plans for latchkey kids.

### **TALK WITH CHILDREN**

Teach your children that no one should approach them or touch them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. If someone does, they should tell their

parents immediately.

**BE SENSITIVE**

Watch for changes in a child's behavior. They are signals that you should sit down and talk to your children about what caused the changes.

**USE ROLE-PLAYING**

Rehearse safety situations with your child. Give them power through knowledge. Play the "what if" game.

**LET KIDS BE KIDS**

Teach them what they will need to know to be safe and let them know you will do your best to protect them. Don't scare the fun out of children.

**ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES:**

Teach and allow your child to have appropriate boundaries. They should never be forced to spend time with someone they are uncomfortable with, hug or kiss unfamiliar relatives, or provide any type of physical contact against their will. Allow children to say no to adults when appropriate, and respect their boundaries.

## **WHAT CHILDREN SHOULD KNOW**

As soon as a child is old enough to articulate a sentence, he or she can begin the process of learning to protect him or herself against abduction and exploitation. Children should be taught all of the following safety measures and tips.

## **WHO I AM AND WHERE I LIVE**

Teach children about whom they are including their full name, birth date, complete address, phone number (including area code), and their caregiver's full names.

## **WHAT I DO IF I AM LOST**

If you are in a public place and get lost, don't wander around. Go to a checkout counter, the security office, or the lost and found. Tell the person in charge that you are lost.

## **GOING PLACES**

Never get into a car or leave with someone without checking with your parents, teacher, babysitter or caregiver before getting into a car or going anywhere. Always make sure your caregiver knows where you are.

## **STAY AWAY**

If someone follows you on foot or in a car, stay away from him or her. You shouldn't go near the car or talk to the people inside.

## **DON'T ASSIST ADULTS**

No one should be asking you for directions, to look for a lost puppy, or to ask for assistance. Adults should ask adults, not children.

## **RUN, SCREAM, AND TELL**

If someone tries to take you away, your best defenses are your legs and your voices. Yell, "I don't know this person and they're bothering me." Try to run and scream before they get too close. Call 911 at any phone. It's a free call; you don't need money.

## **NEVER HITCHHIKE**

Hitchhiking may put you at a risk for a dangerous situation.

## **DON'T KEEP SECRETS**

No one should ask you to keep a secret. Tell an adult you trust.

## **TELL SOMEONE YOU TRUST**

If you have a problem - any kind of a problem - you can talk to your parents, a teacher, a counselor, a principal, a police officer or a friend of the family.

## **YOU CAN CALL 911**

If you have an emergency, or are in a situation where you feel you are in danger, **CALL 911**.

## **HOW TO TEACH PERSONAL SAFETY TO YOUR CHILD**

### **Why should I teach personal safety to my child?**

- When sexual abuse occurs within a family, it is likely to continue for a period of time, even years, until it is discovered and stopped.
- Children who are well informed and empowered to act and who have someone who will listen to them can, in many cases, prevent or stop sexual abuse. Offenders do not usually choose victims who are likely to resist or tell.

### **What should I teach my child?**

Four elements are important to a child's ability to protect themselves from sexual abuse.

- Knowledge and ability to identify sexual abuse.
- A sense of being able to control their own bodies in exchanges of physical attention.
- Assertive techniques for telling someone not to touch them.
- Confidence in an adult who will believe them when told about an incident.

### ***Tell your child...***

- Your body is your own. You have a right to privacy in dressing, bathing, and sleeping.
- People touch each other in many ways. Most touches are pleasant and okay. Some touches, like tickling, might be confusing because they start out okay, but become not okay when the person won't stop. Some touches are hurtful and not okay. If you wonder whether a touch is okay or not, ask someone you trust.
- If anyone touches you in a way you do not like or understand or asks you to touch them in a "not okay" way, take action.
- You have our permission to say "NO" or "Don't touch me that way."
- You have the right to move away.
- You have our permission to tell a trusted adult - tell Mom or Dad, Grandma or Grandpa, your friend's mother, your teacher, your counselor, nurse, principal, police, or any other adult you think of. If you tell someone and they don't believe, tell someone else. Tell me! I will believe you and help you make you safe.
- No adults should touch your private body parts - your penis, vagina, breasts, and buttocks - except for health reasons. If an adult touches you and says, "This is our secret" we want you tell anyway. That kind of secret is not okay.
- You are not to blame if an adult touches you on the private parts of your body. The adult should know better. It is not your fault.
- We will believe what you tell us. We will protect you.

### ***What else should I do to protect my child?***

- Define family rules or boundaries, such as all family members must wear some clothing, must respect individual rights to privacy in dressing, bathing, or sleeping.

- Teach proper names for body parts from earliest years on. This gives your child language for understanding and telling.
- Periodically review personal safety as a total family. Remind the children they have your permission to tell if abuse happens to them. If the first person they tell does not seem to believe them, they should tell another, and another, until someone takes action.
- Check to see if your children understand your teaching by asking "what if" questions. Listen closely to their answers.
- If abuse should happen to your child, respond in a calm, matter-of-fact way, and reassure the child he/she has done nothing wrong and was right to tell.
- Always believe your child and follow up on any disclosures of abuse.

### **THE BIRDS AND THE BEES**

One of the most difficult times in a parent's life has to do with telling his or her child about sex. We often skip this vital part of parenting because we are too uncomfortable to give our children the information they are requesting or need. An incarcerated sex offender was asked how he picks his victims and he said "Show me a child who knows nothing about sex and I'll show you my next victim." You do not need to tell a three year old about sexual intercourse but when a child expresses interest in understanding where they come from and what sex is, it is important to give your child age-appropriate information, and to update that information as your child gets older and gains new cognitive abilities and skills. Children are naturally curious and need to have their questions answered. Providing your child with information will not cause him or her to go out and have sex but rather will help your child better understand his or her body and also help your child not to be a target for sex offenders. Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse can provide you with information on age-appropriate sex education free of charge. Educating our children now will help ensure their safety later.

### **NAME THOSE BODY PARTS**

When you play that age old game with your child of asking him or her to tell you where his or her nose is, it is important to remember the body parts no one names. When we fail to name a child's genitalia or give pet names to their genitalia we create a secrecy and mystery about parts of their bodies. This secrecy can create shame and embarrassment and make it difficult to discuss their bodies with their parents. From the time children are small and learning about fingers and toes and noses, they should also be learning about penises and vaginas. If you treat all their body parts as matter-of-fact, then your child will too and will have no problem telling you when something hurts or someone is touching them where they should not be touched.

Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse is available to you 24 hours a day - our number is (425) 252-4800 (collect calls accepted). If you have further questions or just need someone to talk to, please call us. Our services are free and strictly confidential.

## **BE ALERT TO COMMON TRICKS**

### **THE BRIBE OR TRICK**

The victim is offered something he or she might want. A young child might be offered candy, a toy, or gum; a teen might be offered money, free food, a ride or trip to some place novel or exciting. Sometimes a person will take a valued belonging and then offer to return it only if the victim goes with the person, or allows sexual contact.

### **THE ANIMAL TRICK**

The person is lured away from others by an invitation to play with, or receive a gift of a puppy or kitten, or some other cute or unusual animal.

### **THE EMERGENCY TRICK**

A person pretends that a fire, accident, illness, death, or some other emergency has happened to the victim's family, home, or friend. Or the person says there was a change in plans, and he/she is to pick up the child because the prearranged ride fell through.

### **THE HELP TRICK**

Someone asks the child/teen for help: For directions, to use the phone, to carry heavy bags, or to search for someone or something lost, like a pet, child, or money.

### **THE FRIEND TRICK**

A person pretends to know the family and says that the child's parents have asked him/her to come and give the child a ride home. A person pretends to have a mutual friend and uses that as a lure to separate the teen from others.

### **THE BAD CHILD TRICK**

A person accuses the child/teen of doing something wrong. The child/teen is ordered to go with the person. Sometimes a real-looking badge or ID is shown as fake proof of the predator's official status. Sometimes a child/teen will be convinced by someone they trust that his/her parents do not want him or her around anymore because the child/teen is a troublemaker, nuisance, or obstacle to the parents' happiness.

### **THE FLATTERY TRICK**

The person might ask the victim to go with him/her by posing as a photographer, so pictures or a video can be taken, such as a team photo, newspaper story, acting, modeling, or surveys.

### **THE OPEN THE DOOR TRICK**

The person tricks the victim into opening the house door or car door. The person might look like a repair person, say he/she needs to use the phone, deliver a package, needs help or directions. Sometimes a minor car accident is staged to

get the victim to pull over and open the car door.

## **THE SECRET TRICK**

Sometimes victims are warned to keep physical and sexual harassment or assault a secret because: no one will believe them, it is the victim's fault, their parents and friends will be angry or reject them if they knew, or that something awful will happen to them or loved ones if they tell. Often the victimization continues because the victim is afraid these threats might be true.

## **BOOK LIST FOR PARENTS**

Title: *From Diapers to Dating: A Parents Guide To Raising Sexually Healthy Children*

Author: Debra Haffner Year published: 2000

Summary: Whether she is discussing how to help kids deal with the onslaught of sexual messages they see in the media or providing sensible guidance on teaching the facts of life, Debra Haffner's value-oriented approach to raising sexually healthy children is informative and comforting. Organized from birth through age twelve, her acclaimed book presents a practical, step-by-step program, offering a wealth of practical techniques to help parents identify and communicate their own values about sexuality to their children, while also suggesting to parents the appropriate information to give to children of different ages.

Title: *Protecting the Gift: Keeping Children and Teenagers Safe (and Parents Sane)*

Author: Gavin deBecker Year published: 1999

Summary: All parents face the same challenges when it comes to their children's safety: whom to trust, whom to distrust, what to believe, what to doubt, what to fear, and what not to fear. In this empowering book, Gavin deBecker, the nation's leading expert on predicting violent behavior, offers practical new steps to enhance children's safety at every age level, giving you the tools you need to allow your kids freedom without losing sleep yourself. With daring and compassion, he shatters the widely held myths about danger and safety and helps parents find some certainty about life's highest-stakes questions.

Title: *Helping Your Child Recover from Sexual Abuse*

Author: Caren Adams and Jennifer Fay Year published: 1992

Summary: This book offers practical guidance for parents who courageously face the days and months after a child's abuse. Written in a positive, reassuring, jargon-free style, it discusses each stage of a child's recovery. Information for parents appears on the left-hand pages; sample conversations and activities for parent and child together are on the right-hand pages. The book presents the collective wisdom of numerous parents who have been through this experience and have learned how to help their children feel stronger, safer, braver, more loveable, worthwhile, and competent.

Title: *The Right Touch*

Author: Sandy Kleven Year published: 1997

Summary: This book reaches far beyond the usual scope of a children's picture

book. It is a parenting book that introduces a very difficult topic – the sexual abuse of young children. This gentle, thoughtful story is meant to be read aloud by a trusted caregiver. (3-8 year old)

Title: *My Body Is Private*

Author: Linda Walvoord Girard Year published: 1984

Summary: A mother child conversation introduces the topic of sexual abuse and ways to keep one's body private. (6-10 year olds)

Title: *Identifying Child Molesters: Preventing Child Sexual Abuse by Recognizing the Patterns of the Offenders*

Author: Carla Van Dam Year published: 2001

Summary: Understanding the behavior that molesters exhibit when trying to obtain access to children is essential to protecting children from their advances. This book teaches you to recognize and understand the seemingly invisible events that typically precede child sexual abuse.

## **ACQUAINTANCE RAPE: CAN I REDUCE MY RISK?**

Sexual assault is any sexual activity that is forced. Sexual assault is an act of control, aggression and anger. The force used against you can be physical such as hitting, being held against your will, or being threatened by a weapon. It also can be emotional or psychological, such as being pressured into sex through guilt, being given money or gifts in exchange for sex, or being taken advantage of while you are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Someone they know, such as a family member, friend, date acquaintance, or neighbor assaults more than 85 percent of sexual assault victims. Men and women, boys and girls can be victims of sexual assault.

Most sexual assaults are planned in advance with the offender seeking an opportunity to find someone who may be vulnerable to his/her tactics. Offenders seek victims who they believe are easy targets. There is no guaranteed way to prevent sexual assault, but we can identify tips for decreasing our vulnerability to offenders. The following are some suggestions to deter a sex assault:

- Be careful of your use of alcohol and drugs. Vulnerability increases when one is intoxicated or high.
- Know your sexual intentions and limits. You have the right to say "no" to any unwanted sexual contact.
- Communicate your limits firmly and directly. You have the right to expect your limits to be respected.
- Listen to your feelings. If you feel uncomfortable or think you may be at risk, leave the situation immediately and go to a safe place.
- Don't be afraid to "make waves" if you feel threatened. If you are being pressured or coerced into sexual activity against your will, don't hesitate to state your feelings and get out of the situation. Better a few minutes of social awkwardness or embarrassment than the trauma of sexual assault.
- Attend large parties with friends you can trust. Agree to "look out" for one another. Try to leave with a group rather than alone or with someone you don't know well.
- When starting to date a new acquaintance, have the first few dates in a public place. Avoid becoming isolated with someone you don't know well.
- For the first several dates, insist on paying your own way or taking turns with "treating." Sometimes offenders use the "you owe me" line to try to guilt someone into sex.
- As a relationship may progress, avoid becoming physically, emotionally or socially isolated from friends and family. Assaults within ongoing relationships do happen.
- Even if we take many precautions or steps to make ourselves less vulnerable, there is no guarantee that we can prevent a sexual assault. Remember:
  - Sexual assault is never the victim's fault.
  - Victims do not cause their assaults.
  - Offenders are responsible for their actions.

## *INTERNET RESOURCES*

Child Safety

<http://www.getnetwise.org>

Offers education for parents and children on using the internet safely.

Kid Safety

<http://www.ou.edu/oupd/kidsafe/inet.htm>

Easy-to-follow tutorial for kids covers the topics of Internet safety offers step-by-step instructions on how children should behave online.

FBI Kid's Page

<http://www.fbi.gov/kids/k5th/kidsk5th.htm>

[http://www.fbi.gov/kids/6<sup>th</sup>12th/6<sup>th</sup>12th.htm](http://www.fbi.gov/kids/6th12th/6th12th.htm)

The FBI lists safety tips for kids on Internet use and chat rooms. Also includes news stories about Internet criminal activity such as child pornography.

SMARTPARENT.COM

<http://www.smartparent.com/familyheart.htm>

Read child and family Internet safety information; find additional resources for both parents and kids..

Web Wise Kids

<http://www.webwisekids.com/>

Internet safety education for parents, teachers and children. Read the mission statement, get advice for parents or visit the kids' clubhouse.

Child safety

<http://www.netsmartz.org>

Interactive site focused on internet safety for kids, teens, parents and educators.

Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs

[www.wcsap.org](http://www.wcsap.org)

Children's Alliance

[www.childrensalliance.org](http://www.childrensalliance.org)

Office of Crime Victims Advocacy

[www.cted.wa.gov/ocva](http://www.cted.wa.gov/ocva)

Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration

[www.dshs.wa.gov/jra](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/jra)

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

Department of Corrections

[www.doc.wa.gov](http://www.doc.wa.gov)

WATCH

<https://watch.wsp.wa.gov>

<http://www.xbox.com/familysettings>

Family Settings allow you to regulate the games your kids enjoy as well as their Xbox LIVE interactions.

[http://www.nintendo.com/consumer/systems/wi/en\\_na/settingsParentalControls.jsp](http://www.nintendo.com/consumer/systems/wi/en_na/settingsParentalControls.jsp)

The Wii Parental Control settings offer you a means to manage what Wii content is accessible to the console users.

dawsonplace.org

[www.microsoft.com/protect](http://www.microsoft.com/protect)

Advice and tools to help protect your family from inappropriate content, contact, viruses, identity theft, and more.

18. Special Commitment Center Home Page—<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/hrsa/scc/>

## **INTERNET SAFETY**

Dear Parent:

Our children are our Nation's most valuable asset. They represent the bright future of our country and hold our hopes for a better Nation. Our children are also the most vulnerable members of society. Protecting our children against the fear of crime and from becoming victims of crime must be a national priority.

Unfortunately the same advances in computer and telecommunication technology that allow our children to reach out to new sources of knowledge and cultural experiences are also leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and harm by computer-sex offenders.

I hope that this pamphlet helps you to begin to understand the complexities of on-line child exploitation. For further information, please contact your local FBI office or the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-843-5678.

Louis J. Freeh, Former Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation

### **Introduction**

While on-line computer exploration opens a world of possibilities for children, expanding their horizons and exposing them to different cultures and ways of life, they can be exposed to dangers as they hit the road exploring the information highway. There are individuals who attempt to sexually exploit children through the use of on-line services and the Internet. Some of these individuals gradually seduce their targets through the use of attention, affection, kindness, and even gifts. These individuals are often willing to devote considerable amounts of time, money, and energy in this process. They listen to and empathize with the problems of children. They will be aware of the latest music, hobbies, and interests of children. These individuals attempt to gradually lower children's inhibitions by slowly introducing sexual context and content into their conversations.

There are other individuals, however, who immediately engage in sexually explicit conversation with children. Some offenders primarily collect and trade child-pornographic images, while others seek face-to-face meetings with children via on-line contacts. It is important for parents to understand that children can be indirectly victimized through conversation, i.e. "chat," as well as the transfer of sexually explicit information and material. Computer-sex offenders may also be evaluating children they come in contact with on-line for future face-to-face contact and direct victimization. Parents and children should remember that a computer-sex offender can be any age or sex the person does not have to fit the caricature of a dirty, unkempt, older man wearing a raincoat to be someone who could harm a child.

Children, especially adolescents, are sometimes interested in and curious about sexuality and sexually explicit material. They may be moving away from the total control of parents and seeking to establish new relationships outside their family. Because they may be curious, children/adolescents sometimes use their on-line access to actively seek out such materials and individuals. Sex offenders targeting children will use and exploit these characteristics and needs. Some adolescent children may also be attracted to and lured by on-line offenders

closer to their age who, although not technically child molesters, may be dangerous. Nevertheless, they have been seduced and manipulated by a clever offender and do not fully understand or recognize the potential danger of these contacts.

This guide was prepared from actual investigations involving child victims, as well as investigations where law enforcement officers posed as children. Further information on protecting your child on-line may be found in the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Child Safety on the Information Highway and Teen Safety on the Information Highway pamphlets.

## **What Are Signs That Your Child Might Be At Risk On-line?**

### **Your child spends large amounts of time on-line, especially at night.**

Most children that fall victim to computer-sex offenders spend large amounts of time on-line, particularly in chat rooms. They may go on-line after dinner and on the weekends. They may be latchkey kids whose parents have told them to stay at home after school. They go on-line to chat with friends, make new friends, pass time, and sometimes look for sexually explicit information. While much of the knowledge and experience gained may be valuable, parents should consider monitoring the amount of time spent on-line.

Children on-line are at the greatest risk during the evening hours. While offenders are on-line around the clock, most work during the day and spend their evenings on-line trying to locate and lure children or seeking pornography.

### **You find pornography on your child's computer.**

Pornography is often used in the sexual victimization of children. Sex offenders often supply their potential victims with pornography as a means of opening sexual discussions and for seduction. Child pornography may be used to show the child victim that sex between children and adults is "normal." Parents should be conscious of the fact that a child may hide the pornographic files on diskettes from them. This may be especially true if the computer is used by other family members.

### **Your child receives phone calls from men you don't know or is making calls, sometimes long distance, to numbers you don't recognize.**

While talking to a child victim on-line is a thrill for a computer-sex offender, it can be very cumbersome. Most want to talk to the children on the telephone. They often engage in "phone sex" with the children and often seek to set up an actual meeting for real sex.

While a child may be hesitant to give out his/her home phone number, the computer-sex offenders will give out theirs. With Caller ID, they can readily find out the child's phone number. Some computer-sex offenders have even obtained toll-free 800 numbers, so that their potential victims can call them without their parents finding out. Others will tell the child to call collect. Both of these methods result in the computer-sex offender being able to find out the child's phone number.

### **Your child receives mail, gifts, or packages from someone you don't know.**

As part of the seduction process, it is common for offenders to send letters, photographs, and all manner of gifts to their potential victims. Computer-sex offenders have even sent plane tickets in order for the child to travel across the country to meet them.

### **Your child turns the computer monitor off or quickly changes the screen on**

**the monitor when you come into the room.**

A child looking at pornographic images or having sexually explicit conversations does not want you to see it on the screen.

**Your child becomes withdrawn from the family.**

Computer-sex offenders will work very hard at driving a wedge between a child and their family or at exploiting their relationship. They will accentuate any minor problems at home that the child might have. Children may also become withdrawn after sexual victimization.

**Your child is using an on-line account belonging to someone else.**

Even if you don't subscribe to an on-line service or Internet service, your child may meet an offender while on-line at a friend's house or the library. Most computers come preloaded with on-line and/or Internet software. Computer-sex offenders will sometimes provide potential victims with a computer account for communications with them.

**What Should You Do If You Suspect Your Child Is Communicating With A Sexual Predator On-line?**

Consider talking openly with your child about your suspicions. Tell them about the dangers of computer-sex offenders.

Review what is on your child's computer. If you don't know how, ask a friend, coworker, relative, or other knowledgeable person. Pornography or any kind of sexual communication can be a warning sign.

Use the Caller ID service to determine who is calling your child. Most telephone companies that offer Caller ID also offer a service that allows you to block your number from appearing on someone else's Caller ID. Telephone companies also offer an additional service feature that rejects incoming calls that you block. This rejection feature prevents computer-sex offenders or anyone else from calling your home anonymously.

Devices can be purchased that show telephone numbers that have been dialed from your home phone. Additionally, the last number called from your home phone can be retrieved provided that the telephone is equipped with a redial feature. You will also need a telephone pager to complete this retrieval.

This is done using a numeric-display pager and another phone that is on the same line as the first phone with the redial feature. Using the two phones and the pager, a call is placed from the second phone to the pager. When the paging terminal beeps for you to enter a telephone number, you press the redial button on the first (or suspect) phone. The last number called from that phone will then be displayed on the pager.

Monitor your child's access to all types of live electronic communications (i.e., chat rooms, instant messages, Internet Relay Chat, etc.), and monitor your child's e-mail. Computer-sex offenders almost always meet potential victims via chat rooms. After meeting a child on-line, they will continue to communicate electronically often via e-mail.

Should any of the following situations arise in your household, via the Internet or on-line service, you should immediately contact your local or state law enforcement agency, the **FBI**, and the **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children:**

- Your child or anyone in the household has received child

pornography;

- Your child has been sexually solicited by someone who knows that your child is under 18 years of age;
- Your child has received sexually explicit images from someone that knows your child is under the age of 18.

If one of these scenarios occurs, keep the computer turned off in order to preserve any evidence for future law enforcement use. Unless directed to do so by the law enforcement agency, you should not attempt to copy any of the images and/or text found on the computer.

### **What Can You Do To Minimize The Chances Of An On-line Exploiter Victimized Your Child?**

Communicate, and talk to your child about sexual victimization and potential on-line danger.

Spend time with your children on-line. Have them teach you about their favorite on-line destinations.

Keep the computer in a common room in the house, not in your child's bedroom. It is much more difficult for a computer-sex offender to communicate with a child when the computer screen is visible to a parent or another member of the household.

Utilize parental controls provided by your service provider and/or blocking software. While electronic chat can be a great place for children to make new friends and discuss various topics of interest, it is also prowled by computer-sex offenders. Use of chat rooms, in particular, should be heavily monitored. While parents should utilize these mechanisms, they should not totally rely on them.

Always maintain access to your child's on-line account and randomly check his/her e-mail. Be aware that your child could be contacted through the U.S. Mail. Be up front with your child about your access and reasons why.

Teach your child the responsible use of the resources on-line. There is much more to the on-line experience than chat rooms.

Find out what computer safeguards are utilized by your child's school, the public library, and at the homes of your child's friends. These are all places, outside your normal supervision, where your child could encounter an on-line predator.

Understand, even if your child was a willing participant in any form of sexual exploitation, that he/she is not at fault and is the victim. The offender always bears the complete responsibility for his or her actions.

### **Instruct your children:**

to never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they met on-line;

to never upload (post) pictures of themselves onto the Internet or on-line service to people they do not personally know;

to never give out identifying information such as their name, home address, school name, or telephone number;

to never download pictures from an unknown source, as there is a good chance there could be sexually explicit images;

to never respond to messages or bulletin board postings that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, or harassing;

that whatever they are told on-line may or may not be true.

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **My child has received an e-mail advertising for a pornographic website, what should I do?**

Generally, advertising for an adult, pornographic website that is sent to an e-mail address does not violate federal law or the current laws of most states. In some states it may be a violation of law if the sender knows the recipient is under the age of 18. Such advertising can be reported to your service provider and, if known, the service provider of the originator. It can also be reported to your state and federal legislators, so they can be made aware of the extent of the problem.

### **Is any service safer than the others?**

Sex offenders have contacted children via most of the major on-line services and the Internet. The most important factors in keeping your child safe on-line are the utilization of appropriate blocking software and/or parental controls, along with open, honest discussions with your child, monitoring his/her on-line activity, and following the tips in this pamphlet.

### **Should I just forbid my child from going on-line?**

There are dangers in every part of our society. By educating your children to these dangers and taking appropriate steps to protect them, they can benefit from the wealth of information now available on-line.

### **Helpful Definitions:**

Internet - An immense, global network that connects computers via telephone lines and/or fiber networks to storehouses of electronic information. With only a computer, a modem, a telephone line and a service provider, people from all over the world can communicate and share information with little more than a few keystrokes.

Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs) - Electronic networks of computers that are connected by a central computer setup and operated by a system administrator or operator and are distinguishable from the Internet by their "dial-up" accessibility. BBS users link their individual computers to the central BBS computer by a modem which allows them to post messages, read messages left by others, trade information, or hold direct conversations. Access to a BBS can, and often is, privileged and limited to those users who have access privileges granted by the systems operator.

Commercial On-line Service (COS) - Examples of COSs are America Online, Prodigy, CompuServe and Microsoft Network, which provide access to their service for a fee. COSs generally offer limited access to the Internet as part of their total service package.

Internet Service Provider (ISP) - Examples of ISPs are Erols, Concentric and Netcom. These services offer direct, full access to the Internet at a flat, monthly rate and often provide electronic-mail service for their customers. ISPs often provide space on their servers for their customers to maintain World Wide Web (WWW) sites. Not all ISPs are commercial enterprises. Educational, governmental and nonprofit organizations also provide Internet access to their members.

Public Chat Rooms - Created, maintained, listed and monitored by the COS and other public domain systems such as Internet Relay Chat. A number of customers can be in the public chat rooms at any given time, which are monitored for illegal activity and even appropriate language by systems operators

(SYSOP). Some public chat rooms are monitored more frequently than others, depending on the COS and the type of chat room. Violators can be reported to the administrators of the system (at America On-line they are referred to as terms of service [TOS]) which can revoke user privileges. The public chat rooms usually cover a broad range of topics such as entertainment, sports, game rooms, children only, etc.

Electronic Mail (E-Mail) - A function of BBSs, COSs and ISPs which provides for the transmission of messages and files between computers over a communications network similar to mailing a letter via the postal service. E-mail is stored on a server, where it will remain until the addressee retrieves it. Anonymity can be maintained by the sender by predetermining what the receiver will see as the "from" address. Another way to conceal one's identity is to use an "anonymous remailer," which is a service that allows the user to send an e-mail message repackaged under the remailer's own header, stripping off the originator's name completely.

Chat - Real-time text conversation between users in a chat room with no expectation of privacy. All chat conversation is accessible by all individuals in the chat room while the conversation is taking place.

Instant Messages - Private, real-time text conversation between two users in a chat room.

Internet Relay Chat (IRC) - Real-time text conversation similar to public and/or private chat rooms on COS.

Usenet (Newsgroups) - Like a giant, cork bulletin board where users post messages and information. Each posting is like an open letter and is capable of having attachments, such as graphic image files (GIFs). Anyone accessing the newsgroup can read the postings, take copies of posted items, or post responses. Each newsgroup can hold thousands of postings. Currently, there are over 29,000 public newsgroups and that number is growing daily. Newsgroups are both public and/or private. There is no listing of private newsgroups. A user of private newsgroups has to be invited into the newsgroup and be provided with the newsgroup's address.

Federal Bureau of Investigation  
Cyber Division  
Innocent Images National Initiative  
11700 Beltsville Drive  
Calverton, MD 20705

Contact your local FBI office for further information

## **NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY**

**Fight crime in your neighborhood!  
Start a Neighborhood Watch Group!**

### **Benefits of a Neighborhood Watch Program**

- Neighborhoods working together create a greater sense of security and well-being. Knowing you "Look out for each other" lessens the fear of crime. You become the eyes and ears for the Sheriff's Office.
- Reduces the risk of being a crime victim. The preventive measures you are taught can substantially decrease the risk of being burglarized, as well as lowering the chance of vandalism, graffiti, and other crimes.
- You'll learn what to observe and report to your neighbors and to law enforcement. You'll learn what law enforcement needs to know when you report a crime.
- Knowing your neighbors is an important part of this program. You'll get to know who to contact, be aware of who belongs and who does not, and create a stronger sense of community. It simply comes down to our motto "We look out for each other"!
- Posting Neighborhood Watch signs on your street and Operation ID stickers on your windows tells criminals your neighborhood is watching. You inform the bad guys that you are not the easy victims and you know what you own and will report any crimes to law enforcement.
- Neighborhood Watch can be used for more than crime prevention. It can be used on a variety of projects such as area clean-up, food drives, local planning, neighborhood parties, child safety, etc. As a community working together you have the stepping stone needed to get things done.

### **Snohomish County Sheriff's Office**

Snohomish County Sheriff  
3000 Rockefeller Ave., MS 606  
Everett, WA 98201  
425-388-3393, 800-562-4367

## **PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS FOR ADOLESCENTS & ADULTS**

Incidents of violence can occur anywhere at anytime. Trust your gut feeling that something may be wrong. These are some guidelines that may help reduce potential vulnerability. Remember though, whether you choose to use these options or not, no one has the right to harm you.

### **AT HOME**

- Be aware of your surroundings. Be familiar with who is coming and going -- who belongs and who doesn't.
- Know your neighbors and learn who can be called for assistance when needed.
- Women may be safer using only first initials and last names on mailboxes and in phone directories.
- Change locks when you move into a new residence. Make sure your doors have dead bolt locks, security chains and peepholes. Use them!
- Don't hide spare keys outdoors.
- Check IDs when repair people, salespeople, meter readers, etc. come to the door. Don't hesitate to call and check them out or refuse them admittance if something feels wrong.
- If you let someone in and have second thoughts, be assertive. Tell them to leave or you leave. Pretend you are not alone by mentioning a friend or family member asleep in the next room.
- Make sure entrances, garages, grounds and hallways are well lighted.
- Leave porch lights on at night or when you expect to return after dark. Leave an interior light on in a room or two with the shades drawn. Leave a radio on.
- Instruct children and baby-sitters not to give out information about who is home, who is out or for how long.
- Don't leave notes on your door for others or allow solicitor's material to remain on your doorknob since they advertise your absence.
- If you suspect your home has been broken into, don't go in - go someplace else and call the police.
- Always lock doors when doing yard work or otherwise spending time in the yard. If you have a portable phone, take it outside with you.
- Be careful when using computer internet or on-line services. Use caution in providing personal information. Being flooded with e-mail can be annoying; having a chat room participant show up at your door uninvited can be terrifying.

### **IN YOUR CAR**

- Keep car doors locked at all times, and windows rolled up all the way.
- If you have car trouble, raise the hood and stay in your vehicle. If someone offers assistance, roll the window down just enough to talk to them. Ask them to stop at the first phone to call the police for you.
- Do not stop to help a stranger in a stalled vehicle -- go to a safe place and report the stalled vehicle to the police.
- Don't pick up hitchhikers.
- If someone tries to break into your car while you are in it, honk the horn in short, repeated blasts and try to drive away.

- If you are being followed, don't go home. Drive to the nearest police or fire station or an open gas station -- anyplace with people around.
- Try to keep your car maintained, and keep your gas tank at least half full.
- Park as close to your destination as possible, and in well-lighted areas whenever feasible.
- If security staff is available to walk you to your car, don't be embarrassed to use them. Most major malls offer this type of service.
- Check inside your car before getting in.
- If you leave keys with a parking attendant or at a service station, leave only the car (not your house) key.
- Purchase/lease a cellular phone and keep it charged.
- Always have your keys ready to unlock the car door and enter without delay. You appear vulnerable if you are looking for your keys as you approach your car.

### **ON THE STREET**

- Stay on populated, well-lit streets. Avoid shrubbery, dark areas near buildings, and other places an attacker might hide. Avoid shortcuts through alleys, vacant lots and other deserted places. When possible, avoid walking or jogging alone -- even during the day.
- Look around as you walk and be aware of your surroundings. Make it difficult for anyone to take you by surprise. Walk confidently at a steady pace.
- Avoid secluded or deserted areas and businesses (Laundromats, phone booths, etc.)
- Carry something that can make a loud noise that can scare off possible attackers.
- If using public transportation, sit near the driver.
- If you have gotten a ride in a cab or from a friend, ask the driver to wait and watch until you are safely inside your destination.
- Be cautious about revealing cash or credit cards.
- Try to limit the number of items you carry.
- If you carry a handbag, hold it close to your body with fastener closed and turned toward your body so a thief can't grab it and cause injury or knock you down. "Fanny-packs" keep your personal items close to you while keeping your hands free.
- Don't wear headphones. They block your ability to hear someone approach you.
- Again, trust your instincts. Do not hesitate to remove yourself from the situation. Forget the rules of etiquette and social norms. Be willing to make a scene if necessary. Most rapes are not committed by strangers, but by men who know their victims. Your safety may depend on a quick and decisive reaction.

**\*\*ABOVE ALL, BE OBSERVANT AND AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS AT ALL TIMES.\*\***

## **GETTING INVOLVED**

### **TELL FIVE PEOPLE**

What you have learned at this meeting might have been difficult to hear. It is frightening when you feel your family's safety is at risk. If you follow the advice given tonight you can go a long way to ensuring the safety and security of your family. Start a Neighborhood Watch, teach your children about personal safety and their bodies, be aware of who is in your neighborhood.

You were smart to come to the meeting, but some community members that you know were not able to come so make a commitment to tell five community members what you learned and have them make a commitment to tell five more and so on. With everyone working together as partners we can keep your community safer.

### **VOLUNTEER**

Providence Intervention Center for Assault and Abuse utilizes volunteers as Victim Advocates to support victims of sexual assault and child abuse. Dedicated volunteers are essential to our agency and the services we provide. Volunteer Victim Advocates answer crisis line calls and respond to area hospitals to support victims during their medical evaluations. Volunteers receive 36 hours of initial specialized training to prepare them for their role and also receive monthly training to ensure continued professional development. Volunteers are asked to commit to covering two crisis line shifts per month for a period of at least one year. If you are interested in more information about volunteering as a Victim Advocate call (425) 297-5771.

**Sign up for automatic email alerts** to receive the latest information about sex offenders living in your neighborhood. Go to <http://sheriff.snoco.org/>; click on "[Registered Sex Offenders](#)" in the left hand column and then click "[Sign up for automatic e-mail alerts](#)". Information is limited to moderate and high risk sex offenders only.