Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

No single sign confirms a child or youth is a victim of child abuse and neglect. However, the presence of multiple signs may indicate a need for concern and further assessment.

Emotional Abuse

- The child has delayed physical or emotional development
- The child may show extremes in behavior, such as overly compliant or demanding behavior, extreme passivity, or aggression
- The parent overtly rejects the child
- The parent constantly blames, belittles, or berates a child, is unconcerned about the child, and refuses to consider offers of help for the child's problems

Neglect

- The child may wear dirty clothing, shoes too small or large, clothing often in need of repair or inadequate for the weather
- The child seems to be hungry; hoards, steals, begs for food or comes to school with little food
- The child may appear depressed or to lack energy
- The child may have dirty or decaying teeth, may demonstrate poor hygiene
- The child frequently reports caring for other siblings, or states there's no one at home to provide care
- The parent seems apathetic, depressed, appears to be indifferent to the child
- The parent abuses alcohol or drugs
- The parent may deny the existence of a problem and blame the child, school, or others for problems at home

Physical Abuse

- The child has unexplained burns, bites, bruises, broken bones
- The child may have fading bruises or marks noticeable after absence from school
- The child seems frightened of parents and protests or cries when it is time to go home
- The child shrinks back at the approach of adults
- The parent offers conflicting, unconvincing, or no explanation for the child's injury, or the explanation is not consistent with the injury

Sexual Abuse

- The child has difficulty walking or sitting; may suddenly refuse to change for gym or other physical activities
- The child may demonstrate unusual sexual knowledge or behavior
- The child may report unusual nightmares or bedwetting
- The parent may be secretive and isolated, jealous or controlling with family members
- The parent acts unduly protective of the child or severely limits contact with others

Child Sex Trafficking

- The child or youth possesses money, cell phone or other material items that cannot be explained
- The child or youth reports participation in a sexual act in exchange for shelter, transportation, drugs, alcohol, money or other items of value
- The child or youth is accompanied by an overly controlling "friend," "partner," or "boss"
- The child or youth has signs of physical or sexual abuse; hesitant to explain tattoos or scars
- The child or youth may have low self esteem, anxiety, guilt or shame, be hostile or uncooperative, and demonstrate suicidal thoughts or actions

Institutional Abuse

- Any form of abuse or neglect may occur while a child is in the care of an institution
- If maltreatment is caused by employees of the institution, it is institutional abuse
- Make a report immediately upon becoming aware maltreatment is occurring while in the care of an institution

We all play a role in preventing **child abuse and neglect.**

1-844-CO-4-KIDS

(1-844-264-5437)

CO4Kids.org

COLORADO
Department of Human Services

Red Flags of Grooming Behavior

Child molesters need three things to operate: **access**, **privacy**, and **control**. There are usually specific red flags displayed when an adult is trying to gain access, privacy, and control.

Access

- Finds jobs and does volunteer work to be around children.
- Takes lower paying or less responsible positions just to be around kids.
- Befriends single parents and spends lots of time with the kids.
- Goes above and beyond the call of duty to spend extra time with kids.
- Breaks rules to be around kids.
- Grooms parents and community into permitting increased access to children.

Privacy

- Looks for opportunities to be alone with children, such as taking them to the bathroom; offering private lessons, rides, or tutoring; meeting in private spaces out of the sight of others; or staying late on a job or premises where there are children.
- Ignores policies and breaks rules regarding privacy with children.
- Discourages other adults from participating in or monitoring his or her activities with children.
- Communicates privately with children via e-mail messages, instant messages, texting, or social networking sites.

Control

- Becomes overly physical or becomes progressively more physically inappropriate.
- Spends too much time with a child or is overly involved in the child's private life.
- Encourages children to break or "stretch" rules (smoking, drinking, looking at pornography, using drugs).
- Gives special gifts, especially without permission.
- Treats children as if they were peers (uses inappropriate language or swears, tells off-color jokes, talks to kids about personal topics).
- Wants to keep secrets with children.
- Threatens or intimidates a child.

Report observations. What specific behavior worries you? What evidence of a concern do you have? On a piece of paper ahead of time, jot down notes on who, what, where, when, and why.

⚠ Report GROOMING behavior to the Archdiocese, Confidential Report Line at **720-239-2832** or **Reporting@archden.org**

Empowering Our Children

As we enter our 16th year of teaching the children entrusted to the care of the Archdiocese Religious Education Programs and Catholic Schools, we are launching a new evidenced based program, *Teaching Safety – Empowering God's Children*™. This program is a vehicle through which parents, teachers and catechists give children and young people the tools they need to protect themselves from those who might harm them.

The lessons focus on an age-appropriate discussion of touching safety, relative to the specific roles that different people play in a child's life. All of the lessons stress the importance of keeping private body parts "private" and of telling a trusted adult about anyone's behavior that causes a child to feel uncomfortable or threatened.

We believe this more robust curriculum will allow the Archdiocese of Denver to enhance our Promise to Protect and Pledge to Heal.

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