

Diocese of Rapid City

Keeping God's Children Safe

A Safe Environment Newsletter

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We are just completing our winter lesson to our young people on the topic of safety online; or you have already completed the lesson. **April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month.** While this topic is always our concern, our nation emphasizes it yearly in April. The following article shares facts in these areas. Suggested sites for more on National Child Abuse Prevention Month are found at the end of page two.

Key Facts

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® gathers key facts regarding the issues of missing and sexually exploited children and Internet safety and updates these facts and statistics frequently. *Did you know...*

Most of us grew up hearing, "stay away from strangers." You may be surprised to learn most child abductions involve a relative or someone the child knows!

Missing children

The most recent, comprehensive national study estimated that in one year approximately **800,000** children were reported missing. Of these children: More than **200,000** children were victims of family abductions.

More than **58,000** children were victims of nonfamily abductions—but the abductor was someone the child knew in over half of these cases.

An estimated **115** children were the victims of "stereotypical" kidnappings where the perpetrator was a stranger.

These numbers clearly show that teaching our children to avoid strangers is not the answer. We must teach them how to recognize and respond to risky situations.

In 2014, there were **466,949** entries for missing children into the FBI's National Crime Information Center, also called NCIC.

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) has assisted law enforcement in the recovery of more than **205,550** missing children since it was founded in 1984. The recovery rate for missing children has grown from **62 percent** in 1990 to **97 percent** today.

As of January 2015, NCMEC's toll free, 24 hour call center has received more than **4,096,795** calls since it was created in 1984. Information about missing or exploited children can be reported to the call center by calling 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678).

We need to continue our daily diligence wherever we are. When we take protective action, success increases for youth!

Child sexual exploitation

According to a report to Congress in 2010, U.S. law enforcement agencies have seen a dramatic increase in cases of sexual exploitation of children since the 1990s.

This April is . . .

National Child Abuse
Prevention Month



www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth

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If you are a victim or have knowledge of a sexual abuse incident of a minor by a cleric, church employee or volunteer, please report the matter to:

Barbara Scherr
Victim Assistance
Coordinator
605-209-3418 (cell)

USCCB Office of Child and Youth Protection
<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection/index.cfm>

**Diocese of Rapid City
Safe Environment**
<http://www.rapidcitydiocese.org/safe-environment/>

State and local law enforcement agencies involved in Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces reported a **230 percent increase** in the number of documented complaints of online enticement of children from 2004 to 2008. In that same time period, they noted a more than **1,000 percent increase** in complaints of child sex trafficking.

As of January 2015, the CyberTipline has received more than **3.3 million reports** of suspected child sexual exploitation since it was launched in 1998. Suspected child sexual exploitation can be reported to the CyberTipline at www.cybertipline.com or 1-800-843-5678.

As of January 2015, NCMEC's Child Victim Identification Program has reviewed and analyzed more than **132 million child pornography images** since it was created in 2002.

1 in 6 endangered runaways reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) in 2014 were likely **sex trafficking victims**. **68 percent** of these likely sex trafficking victims were in the care of social services or foster care when they ran.

Child pornography and human sex trafficking broadens our call as Catholics to respond to those abused. The 2011 revision of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, re-affirmed our deep commitment to creating a safe environment within the Church for children and youth. We have listened to the profound pain and suffering of those victimized by sexual abuse and will continue to respond. What can you do to respond?

Internet safety

- 93 percent of teens ages 12 to 17 go online.
- Of children five years old and younger who use the Internet, 80 percent use it at least once a week.
- One in 25 children ages 10 to 17 received an online sexual solicitation where the solicitor tried to make offline contact.
- Four percent of cell phone owning teens ages 12 to 17 say they have sent sexually suggestive nude/semi-nude messages to others via text message; and 15 percent have received sexually suggestive nude/semi-nude images of someone they know via text.

Information may be found on these topics at: <http://www.missingkids.com/KeyFacts>
<http://www.kidsmartz.org/ChildAbduction>

TAKING ACTION

The most important information NCMEC's review revealed was that 83% of children who escaped their would-be abductors **kicked, yelled, and pulled away** to escape. Teach your child these and other abduction prevention skills, such as:

- Asking for permission before changing plans
- Asking for permission before approaching or getting into vehicles with anyone
- Recognizing the tricks would-be abductors use, such as offering rides or asking for help
- Telling a trusted adult whenever anything or anyone makes them uncomfortable

*When it comes to keeping your child safe, **YOU** are your child's best resource. The more you know about abduction prevention, the better protected your child will be. Use your knowledge to make conversations about personal safety a regular part of your family's routine. How can we help you?*

Why do we promote safe environment training, lessons, and information? To help protect our youth!
Please join us in this effort, and bring awareness to those around you!

April is **National Child Abuse Prevention Month!** Check out :
Prevention Month: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/>
Parish Ideas: http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/protecting/safeguard/Documents/2015_Child_Abuse_Prevention_Month_Packet.pdf

Blue Sunday: <http://www.bluesunday.org/>
Safety Tips:
<http://www.missingkids.com/Publications>