

The Five Step Plan to Protect God's Children

Warning Signs of Abusers:

1. Discourages other adults from participating or monitoring.
2. Always wants to be alone with children.
3. More excited to be with children than adults.
4. Gives gifts to children, often without permission, often inappropriate gifts.
5. Goes overboard touching.
6. Always want to wrestle or tickle.
7. Thinks the rules don't apply to them.
8. Allows children to engage in activities their parents would not allow.
9. Uses bad language or tells dirty jokes to children.
10. Shows children pornography.

Remember, if we know the signs, we can identify potential abuse before it happens and won't have to rely on a child to report an incident.

Ways to Control Access:

1. Diocesan Policy for the protection of children:
 - a. *Diocese of Madison Policy Regarding Abuse of Minors, Sexual Misconduct, and Sexual Harassment*
 - b. *Diocese of Madison Code of Pastoral Conduct for Priests, Deacons, Pastoral Ministers, Administrators, Staff and Volunteers.*
 - c. *Virtus: Protecting God's Children for Adults for all employees and any volunteer working with children*
2. Use written applications for both employees and volunteers.
3. Require criminal background checks on all employees. Require criminal background checks on all volunteers who regularly work with children or who have or will have the opportunity to have children alone during a parish, school, or Church sponsored event.
4. Complete face to face interviews with volunteers.
5. Check references.

Remember, if we control access to our children, we send a message that we are alert and vigilant for the safety of our community's children. The steps we take are not because we don't trust an individual currently involved, but it is a step all currently involved as well as those coming to our programs that will signal to all how committed we are to ensuring that the environment and the adults in that environment are safe and set the safety of children as a priority.

Ways to Monitor Programs:

1. Identify secluded areas, lock empty doors, establish off limit places.
2. Develop policies regarding use of secluded areas.
3. Do not permit children to enter staff or adult only areas.
4. Only meet with children where other adults can have open access.
5. Supervisors should have open access to all activities.
6. Make sure enough adults are involved in the programs and/or activities.
7. Allow parents to have access to all programs. Insist that they check in when visiting.
8. Don't start new programs without approval from the pastoral council, the pastor, or the appropriate commission.
9. Encourage parental involvement.

Remember, the purpose for the monitoring is to send a clear signal to any potential abusers that the programs in our parishes and schools have open access and are monitored. It is a deterrent.

Ways to be aware:

1. Talk to your children.
2. Listen to your children.
3. Observe your children.
4. Let your children know that they can tell you anything.
5. Discuss with children where their private parts are and that nobody has the right to see or touch a child's private body parts except for the purpose of helping keep the child clean, healthy and safe.
6. Talk to your children often about protecting themselves.
7. Teach your children what to do if someone tries to touch them.
8. Teach your children what to do if someone makes them uncomfortable.

Remember, when we talk to, listen to, and observe our children, we are more likely to detect the signs when they are in danger. We can notice a sudden change in behavior if we are observant of our children and present to them.

Ways to Communicate Your Concerns:

1. Talk to the person involved.
2. Speak to their supervisor.
3. Notify a church official.
4. Call the child abuse hotline.
5. Call the police.

Remember, only by communicating concerns can we use our knowledge to protect children. Even if abuse is not occurring, it is still important to let others know when you have concerns.