

HOW CHILD MOLESTERS GAIN ACCESS

- They pay attention to your child and make them feel special.
- They present the appearance of being someone you and your family can trust and rely on.
- They get to know your child's likes and dislikes very well.
- They go out of their way to buy gifts or treats your child will like.
- They isolate your child by involving them in fun activities so they can be together –alone.
- If you are a single parent, they may prey upon your fears about your child lacking a father figure or stable home life.
- If their career involves working with children, they may also choose to spend free time helping children or taking them on special outings.
- They take advantage of your child's natural curiosity about sex by telling “dirty” jokes, showing them pornography and playing sexual games.
- They will probably know more about what kids like than you do; i.e. music, clothing, video games, language, etc.
- They make comments like “anyone who molests a child should be shot!” or “Sexually abusing kids is the sickest thing anyone could do.”
- If they are a parent, it is easier to isolate, control and molest their own children. They can sexually abuse their children without their spouse ever suspecting a thing. They gradually block the communication between children and their other parent, and make it look like they are the good parent.
- They may touch your child in your presence so that the child thinks you are comfortable with the way the sex offender touches them.

WHO IS THE TYPICAL MOLESTER

- They are probably well known and liked by you and your child.
- They can be a man, a woman, married or single.
- They can be a child, adolescent, or adult.
- They can be of any race, hold any religious belief and have any sexual preference.
- They can be a parent, stepparent, relative, family, friend, teacher, clergyman, babysitter, or anyone who comes in contact with children.
- They are likely to be a stable, employed, and respected member of the community.
- Their education and intelligence doesn't prevent them from molesting your child.

GROOMING TECHNIQUES

Offenders spend a great deal of time and energy in the process of “grooming” their victims. They generally gain the victim's trust and confidence to begin the process. Because the offender is generally someone known to the victim, the teen/child may feel that he/she has no alternative but to accept the abuse.

The next step in grooming is introducing the victim to sexual types of touch. This is often accomplished slowly, so that the victim is gradually desensitized to the touch.

Sexual offenders then manipulate the victim to keep the secret. The offender may trick or force a victim into keeping the sexual abuse a secret.

The grooming procedure is extremely effective, and consequently, the vast majority of children/adolescents do not disclose the abuse. Adults may be set up for victimization in similar ways.

WHY DON'T CHILD MOLESTERS GET CAUGHT

- Sex offenders convince your child that no one will believe them if they tell someone.
- They tell your child that their parents will be disappointed in them for what they have done.
- Sex offenders warn your child that the child will be the one punished if they tell someone.
- They may threaten your child with physical violence against them, you (a parent) or another loved one, or a pet.
- Sex offenders may get your child to feel sorry for them or believe they are the only one who understands the offender.
- If the sex offender is a parent or lives in a home with children, their behavior may look accidental. They may “accidentally” expose themselves or “accidentally” walk in on your child while they are using the bathroom or changing clothes.
- If they are a parent, their behavior may look “normal” to other people. They may use situations like tucking the kids in at night to touch them sexually.
- They may have told their children that “this is what all parents do with their children” so that children do not know to tell.
- They may be so good at manipulating children that the child may try to protect the sex offender.

SEX OFFENDER RISK LEVEL

An End-of-Sentence Review Committee surveys the records of all sex offenders upon release and determines the level of risk that each poses to “the community at large.”

Level 1: Lowest risk to re-offend within community at large; offense occurred within family; low level of physical harm or violence to victim; the majority of offenders fall into this level.

Level 2: Moderate risk to re-offend within the community at large; more than one victim; “groom” victims and family; abuse of a position of trust (like teacher, clergy, coach, babysitter)

Level 3: Highest risk to re-offend within the community at large; violence used; victims usually unknown to the offender.

SEX OFFENDER SCREENING LIST

This is not an absolute guide to identifying sex offenders. This is information to pay attention to if it is exhibited by people who spend time with, or care for, your children. If someone behaves this way toward your children, they are probably not suitable to be left alone with your children.

Exceptionally charming and/or helpful;

and

Engaging in peer-like play, preferring the company of children;

and

“Roughhousing”, wrestling, and/or tickling children, and obtaining immediate insider status;

and

Failing to honor clear boundaries, getting defensive or putting other adults on the offensive.

If someone exhibits these behaviors, it is a good idea to learn more about them, supervise them with your children, or not allow them near your children at all.

PERSONAL AND FAMILY SAFETY PREVENTION AND AWARENESS INFO

What is sexual assault?

Sexual assault is any unwanted or forced sexual contact including touching or fondling. Rape is forced penetration. For adolescents, force often involves emotional manipulation. Any sexual activity without someone's consent is sexual assault.

How vulnerable are young people?

As many as one in three girls and one in five boys will experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 16. In addition, about one in four high school and college age women will experience rape or attempted rape. Most sexual assaults happen to people under the age of 18. Both young women and young men are vulnerable.

What do young people and teens need to know?

- Sexual assault is forced, unwanted sexual touching or intercourse, and that no one has the right to try to trick, force, or coerce them into doing something they do not want to do.
- Sexual assault can happen even with people they know and trust.
- Sexual assault is never a victim's fault.

The following are specific behaviors that are inappropriate and may be warning signs that someone might try to take advantage of you. It is important for young people to be able to identify early warning signs of disrespect, such as:

- Someone who tries to isolate or separate you from friends and/or family, or tries to be with you alone.
- Someone who gives you presents, food, and/or drugs.
- Someone who doesn't respect your opinions or limits.
- Someone who ignores or pushes past the boundaries that you set.

How do you start a conversation?

Talking to your child or teen about rape shouldn't be a one-time conversation, and you don't have to say everything at once. Instead, open up an on-going dialog about safety over time. You can:

- Use natural moments to bring up sexual assault, such as news about a rape, attempted abduction, or a television program containing a reference to sexual abuse. Ask your child what they have heard and what they know. Give them the opportunity to ask questions.
- Let your child know that you have read this article and want to check in with them about safety. Ask for their thoughts as you share your own.
- Link a discussion of personal and touching safety with conversations you have about bike safety and fire safety.
- Be open and available for your children to come to you. Let them know they can talk to you any time about anything that is on their mind.
- Create a family rule to have no secrets from each other. Secrecy and isolation are the most important goals for offenders. If they cannot isolate a child and convince them to keep the touching a secret, they cannot offend.