

# HELPING SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Families are the first line of defense in protecting children from sexual exploitation. However, they cannot do it alone. Children spend a lot of time away from their families. They may be in or traveling to and from places in the community such as schools, parks and libraries. Adult family members are not always with children in these places. They need support from their schools and communities to better safeguard children.

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® works with schools and communities to help them take a proactive approach to addressing child sexual exploitation. Using the following steps in your school or community may help reduce child victimization.

## PROACTIVE SCHOOLS

- Screen anyone with access to students such as educators, coaches and volunteers. Visitors should not be allowed to interact with students without proper supervision.
- Train staff on child sexual exploitation issues, including:
  - Recognizing signs of sexual exploitation.
  - Handling disclosures from students.
  - Reporting. Remind staff to report suspicions of child abuse *immediately*.
- Provide age-appropriate safety education programs for students throughout the year.
- Develop methods students feel confident using to make reports of sexual exploitation such as anonymous reporting.
- Work with parents and guardians to help protect children by offering informational programs and training about the issue.

## PROACTIVE COMMUNITIES

-  Encourage local legislators to advocate for laws which emphasize child safety.
-  Work with local child safety organizations to educate community members about child sexual exploitation issues such as child sex trafficking.
-  Notify the public of the sex offender registry and community notification requirements. Schedule community meetings and workshops to help raise awareness about these policies and issues.
-  Support local law enforcement efforts to establish neighborhood crime watch programs. Report suspicious people and activities to local law enforcement.



If you suspect a child is being sexually exploited, contact law enforcement immediately. You may also make a report to NCMEC's CyberTipline® at [www.cybertipline.org](http://www.cybertipline.org) or by calling **1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678)**.