



Child Sexual Abuse Risk Reduction Protocol For Youth-Serving Organizations



**Prevent Child Abuse
Kentucky™**

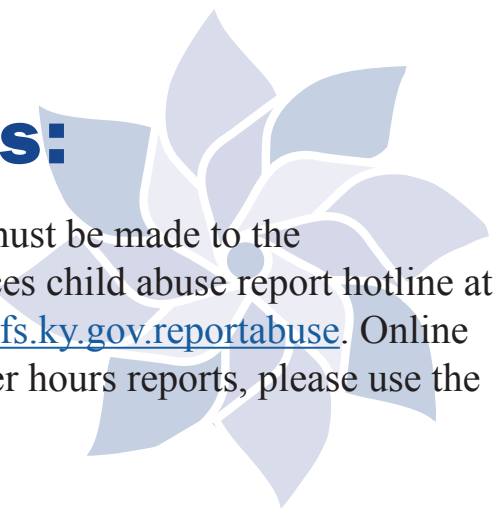


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Reporting Requirements:

If child abuse or neglect is suspected, a report must be made to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services child abuse report hotline at 1-877-KYSAFE1 or online at <https://prdweb.chfs.ky.gov/reportabuse>. Online reports can be made during business hours. After hours reports, please use the child abuse report hotline.





Introduction

This guide is designed for youth-serving organizations who are interested in adopting strategies to prevent child sexual abuse. Every year, in youth serving organizations across the United States, an estimated 35 million adults come into contact with more than 70 million children and teens. Within these organizations, our children learn new skills, build self-esteem, and are challenged to explore worlds that might not be available to them at home. Unfortunately, the same factors that create a nurturing environment for children may also increase their vulnerability. Youth-serving organizations work hard to create a safe place for youth, employees and volunteers so children can grow, learn and have fun. Part of creating a safe environment is making sure children are not harmed in any way. It is vital organizations create a culture where child sexual abuse is discussed, addressed and prevented.

Tips for Developing and Implementing Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Policies



Organizations should take several steps to effectively implement child sexual abuse prevention strategies.

Maintain open dialogue

Create an open environment where employees and volunteers feel comfortable discussing child sexual abuse and how to prevent it.

Have clear goals

When deciding what child sexual abuse prevention policies and practices to implement in your organization, identify clear goals.

- Articulate how implementation of strategies, policies, or practices adopted accomplish identified goals.

Obtain input in drafting and evaluating prevention policies and practices

Obtain buy-in from all levels so policies are accepted and understood by everyone. All processes can be specific to child sexual abuse planning or may be integrated into current risk management procedures. Suggested tasks include:

- Gather a group of stakeholders, such as caregivers, employees or volunteers, and attorneys to develop a draft policy.

- Approve the policy, which includes making sure it complies with existing policies, state and national laws, child protective services and law enforcement requirements. If you represent a federally funded education program or activity, please consult Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. If your organization falls under the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic umbrella, please consult the Safe Sports Authorization Act of 2017.
- Develop a system to track allegations of child sexual abuse and outcomes of cases. This does not mean you investigate allegations, that should be done by law enforcement or Child Protective Services.
- Inform all members of your organization about the policy.
- Implement the policy.
- Evaluate the policy to continuously measure whether goals are being met. Evaluate implementation at regular intervals and assess effectiveness. If needed, make changes to meet the goal, or consider more efficient ways to meet the goal.

Integrate best practices

In choosing child sexual abuse prevention policies and practices, gather information from other sources.

- Begin with the strategies discussed in this document.
- Talk with other similar agencies or professional organizations.



SIX CRITICAL COMPONENTS

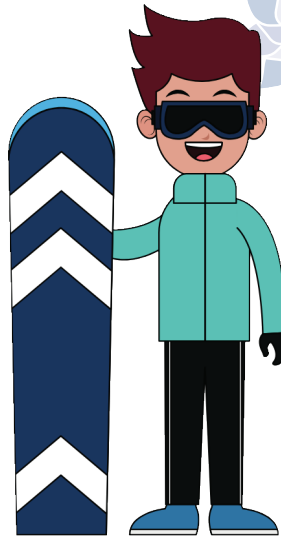
The following were compiled by experts such as advocates, researchers, and youth-serving organizations (Centers for Disease Control, 2004).

COMPONENT 1:

Strategies for Screening and Selecting Employees and Volunteers

Maintain open dialogue

- Develop policies and processes for screening and selecting employees and volunteers.
- Develop criteria that define how screening information will be used.
- Identify who will make the final hiring decision.
- Define areas of concern such as a fixation on a particular age or gender of youth or a history of crimes endangering the welfare of a minor related to sex or violence.
- Consult with an attorney to ensure your screening and selection policies do not violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act or other federal or state laws prohibiting discrimination in the workplace.



Education about your organization and youth-protection policies

Letting applicants know your organization is serious about protecting youth may deter some people at risk of abusing youth from applying.

- Inform applicants about your organization's policies and procedures relevant to child sexual abuse prevention during the initial interview.
- Share your code of conduct or ethics.
- Require applicants to sign a document describing the policies and procedures of your organization to demonstrate their understanding and agreement.
- Ask applicants if they understand and can adhere to any of the policies and procedures.

Who should be screened?

- All applicants, both adults and teenagers, for all positions that come in contact with children.
- Consider more in-depth written applications and personal interviews for adolescents, for whom work history and criminal background checks may be unavailable.
- Do not make exceptions for people you know or have worked with in the past.



Written application

The written application provides information needed to assess the background and interests of applicants. Questions will help determine whether applicants have mature, adult relationships as well as clear boundaries and ethical standards for their conduct with youth.

- Ask about previous work and volunteer experiences.
- Ask questions pertinent to child sexual abuse screening such as:
 - What age/sex of youth do you want to work with?
 - Why do you want the job?
- Require written permission to contact personal references, to perform a criminal background check, and to conduct a child protective services screening. The permission statement should include an indemnification clause developed by an attorney to protect your organization from false allegations or other legal issues.
- Ask open-ended questions. These answers should guide you throughout the screening and selection process.
- Use disclosure statements to ask applicants about previous criminal histories of sexual offenses, violence against youth, and other criminal offenses. The applicant may not disclose past offenses, but the inquiry will demonstrate your organization's seriousness about protecting youth and potentially discourage applicants at risk for perpetrating child sexual abuse.
- Clarify you are interested in learning about an applicant's past perpetration of child sexual abuse rather than a history of victimization.

Personal interview

The personal interview provides an opportunity to meet applicants, determine if they are a good fit for your organization and ask additional questions to screen for child sexual abuse risk factors.

- Clarify and expand upon the applicant's answers to questions from the written application.
- Ask open-ended questions to encourage discussion and ensure applicants understand the organization's stance and expectations surrounding child sexual abuse prevention. By setting the stage during the interview process, individuals working and volunteering for your organization will feel more comfortable following policies when potential breeches related to child sexual abuse arise.
 - What do you consider inappropriate contact between adults and minors to be?
 - If you suspect a co-worker or volunteer is having inappropriate contact with a child or youth, what would you do?

Reference checks

Reference checks provide additional information about applicants and help verify previous work and volunteer history.

- Obtain verbal - not just written - references for applicants.
- Match references with employment and volunteer history. Is anyone important missing from the references, such as the supervisor from the applicant's most recent job? To provide a more complete picture of the applicant, the references should come from a variety of sources and should not be limited to friends and should exclude family.
- Be aware many employers will only provide basic information, such as dates of employment or rehiring eligibility. If a former employer will only provide limited information, clarify whether the person providing the reference is limiting information because of company policy.





The following questions may be useful for reference checks:

- How would you describe the personal characteristics of the applicant?
- How does the applicant interact with youth?
- Why would this person be a good candidate for working with youth? Is there any reason this person should not work with children?
- Have you seen the applicant discipline youth (other than their own children)?
- Is the applicant eligible for rehire at your organization?

Criminal background checks

Criminal background checks are an important tool in screening and selecting employees and volunteers. However, they have limitations clarified below.

- Use background checks as only one part of child sexual abuse prevention efforts. Using background checks alone may give your organization a false sense of security.
- Save time and resources by delaying criminal background checks for applicants who make it through the written applications, personal interviews, and reference checks.

- Obtain permission from applicants before beginning a criminal background check.
- Determine the type and level of check required for each applicant. Types of checks include name, fingerprint, sex offender registries and social security number. Checks may be implemented at county, state, and national levels. Records are not always comprehensive, so a thorough search may be needed to address concerns about an applicant. For example, if an applicant has moved frequently, checks in multiple states may be necessary.
- Plan for the time and financial resources needed to conduct background checks.
- Decide which offenses to examine in the background checks and which offenses will disqualify applicants. For child sexual abuse, absolute disqualifiers include violent behavior and child sexual abuse perpetration history. Depending on the risk of the situation or the mission of your organization, drug and driving offenses may also be disqualifiers.
- Develop procedures to keep the results of criminal background checks confidential. Select a secure storage location and limit access to files.
- Ensure your organization's process for conducting criminal background checks is legally sound. Consult county, state, and national laws and regulations, as well as your organization's attorney and insurance company, as needed.





Criminal background check resources

**Links may change after print date*

- Criminal background check resources in Kentucky include:
 - The Kentucky State Police: <https://kentuckystatepolice.org/background-checks/>
 - Kentucky Administrative Office of the Courts: <https://kycourts.gov/aoc/criminalrecordreports>
- To request a Child Abuse Central Registration Check in Kentucky, contact the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services: <https://chfs.ky.gov>
- Kentucky Sex Offender Registry, pursuant to KRS 17.580, the Kentucky State Police provides sex offender registration information to the public at <http://kspor.state.ky.us/>
- National Offender Registry, the United States Department of Justice houses the National Sex Offender Public website <https://nsopw.gov/>
- The US Center for Safe Sports maintains a free Disciplinary Database designed to keep the public informed when individuals connected with U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements are subject to restrictions or sanctions during or after an investigation. <https://tinyurl.com/yaq8sz7v>



COMPONENT 2: Strategies for Guidelines on Interactions between Individuals



Balancing positive and negative

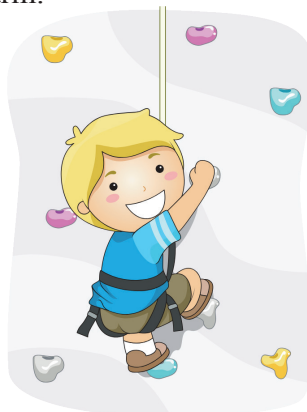
- Find a balance between encouraging positive, appropriate interactions and discouraging inappropriate, harmful interactions.
- Adopt strategies with this balance in mind to ensure youth benefit from your program without risk of sexual abuse or harm.



Appropriate vs. inappropriate behaviors

Children and youth need positive interactions with safe and nurturing adults in order to thrive. However, inappropriate or harmful interactions can put youth at risk for negative outcomes. Organizations should identify and define appropriate, inappropriate and harmful behaviors. These categorizations can be spelled out in your code of conduct or policies and should be shared with all staff and volunteers on a regular basis.

- For example, telling risqué jokes in front of youth is inappropriate and harmful.



Ratios of employees/volunteers to youth

Setting ratios for the number of employees/volunteers to youth can ensure safety. There is no standard ratio for all situations. When making decisions about ratios, consider contextual variables such as:

- Age and developmental level of youth and employees/volunteers. Typically younger youth need more employees/volunteers overseeing them.
- Risk of the activity. Does the activity involve isolation from others?
- Location of the activity. Is the activity in an enclosed classroom or at a park, where it is easier to lose track of individuals? Encourage employees/volunteers to actively interact with youth to maintain adequate supervision and monitoring. Even with a satisfactory ratio of employees/volunteers to youth, youth are not being monitored if all of the employees/volunteers are immersed in their own conversations or otherwise distracted.



Risk of interactions between youth

Your organization needs to address interactions among youth in addition to monitoring interactions between employees/volunteers and youth.

- Address all situations where unsupervised youth can sexually or physically abuse other youth. For example, if your organization has a policy preventing adults from being present in locker rooms because of risk, this may result in a situation where unsupervised youth can sexually or physically abuse other youth. A potential solution is a policy requiring more than one adult to be present at all times.
- Develop policies to deal with bullying and sexual abuse so positive interactions can be promoted while acknowledging some interactions are inappropriate and harmful.

One-on-one interactions

Some organizations limit one-on-one interactions between youth and adults (i.e. having at least two adults present at all times with youth). The goal is to prevent the isolation of one adult and one youth, a situation that elevates the risk for child sexual abuse. This strategy may be modified based on the mission of your organization.

- Limit one-on-one interactions whenever possible by having at least two adults present at all times.
- Choose one of three options relating to this policy:
 - Make this a mandatory policy at all times.
 - Make this policy dependent on the risk of the activity or situation, such as overnight trips.
 - Maintain other safeguards, such as extra supervision or contact with youth and employees/volunteers and more stringent screening if the mission of your organization requires one-on-one time between employees/volunteers and youth (e.g. mentoring programs).



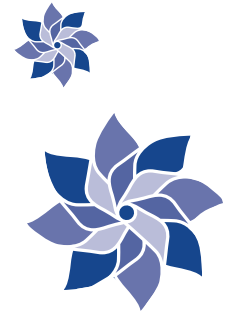


Prohibitions and restrictions on certain activities

Some activities, such as hazing and secret ceremonies, overnight trips, bathing, changing, bathroom interactions, and nighttime activities, pose greater risks for child sexual abuse. Prohibiting or restricting such activities will depend largely on the context of your organization. For example, a sleep-away camp would not be able to prohibit overnight trips or bathing.

Out-of-program contact restrictions

There are two types of out-of-program contact restrictions. The **first type** involves the contact of youth with employees/volunteers outside of the program. Your organization should limit contact between employees/volunteers and youth to organization-sanctioned activities and programs and/or to certain locations, such as activities within your organization's building. Contact can also involve communication via social media, text messages or email. Employees/volunteers should not engage with youth through electronic means that are one-on-one in nature and secretive, this includes "friending" or following youth on social media platforms.



The **second type** is contact between youth and people not affiliated with your organization that occurs while youth are under the care of your organization.

- Develop a system for monitoring the comings and goings of all youth and adults who enter and leave your facility. This system might include procedures for signing in and out.
- Develop specific policies about interactions between youth and people not affiliated with your organization if it is located in a building housing more than just your program or if your organization's activities take place in public areas (e.g. sports field).

Caregiver information and permission

Your organization should obtain addresses and contact information for youth and caregivers (i.e. parents and guardians). This information should never be released to unauthorized individuals. Your organization also should obtain permission from caregivers to participate in certain activities, such as field trips, late-night activities and overnight trips.

- Inform caregivers about what their children/youth will be doing and where they will be going.
- Allow caregivers to have input on what activities or interactions they are comfortable with for their children.

Responsibility for youth

Your organization should clarify when it is responsible for youth and when caregivers are responsible.

- Develop a policy on when your organization starts and stops being responsible for youth.
- Consider who is responsible for youth before and after activities officially begin.
- Communicate the policy to caregivers and youth in writing. Organizations may also want caregivers to sign an acknowledgment they have read and understand the policy.



COMPONENT 3: Strategies for Monitoring Behavior

Monitor inappropriate or harmful behaviors

- Refer to your organization's interaction policies referenced on page six and what has been defined as an inappropriate or harmful behavior.
- Understand the boundaries your organization has established and identify when someone has crossed the line. Potential inappropriate behaviors include employees/volunteers showing favoritism, giving gifts, and looking for time alone with youth.

Monitor appropriate behaviors

- Acknowledge, praise and encourage appropriate behaviors.
- Reward and reinforce positive interactions between employees/volunteers and youth.

Monitor potential risk situations

Acknowledge some situations pose more risk for inappropriate or harmful behavior than others. For example, interactions during an overnight trip are harder to monitor than interactions in a classroom.



Responding to what is observed

Your organization must be prepared to respond to interactions among youth and between employees/volunteers and youth.

- Develop a monitoring protocol so employees/volunteers are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Employees/volunteers should be prepared to respond immediately to inappropriate or harmful behavior, potential risk situations, and potential boundary violations.
- Enforce the protocol so appropriate actions follow. Supervisors need to redirect inappropriate behaviors to promote positive behaviors, confront inappropriate or harmful behaviors, and report these behaviors if necessary.

Roles and responsibilities

All employees/volunteers should be responsible for monitoring behavior and interactions within your organization. Everyone needs to know how and what to monitor. Define roles and responsibilities by including monitoring within a job description, specifying what employees/volunteers need to do from the very beginning, and providing training for them to do so.

Clear reporting structure within organization

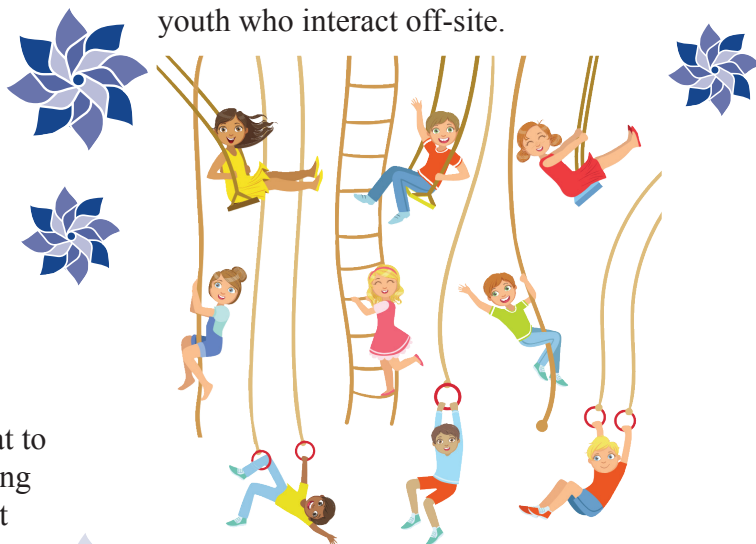
Your organization should have a well-defined reporting structure so people know who to contact if they observe potentially inappropriate or harmful behavior.

- Require employees/volunteers to report any harmful behaviors or practices.
- Establish a direct-line and back-up reporting systems within your organization. The back-up option should be used if the incident involves the direct-line authority.
- Create a climate which encourages people to question confusing or uncertain behaviors and practices.

Observation and contact with employees/volunteers

Your organization should use multiple monitoring methods to get a clear picture of how individuals are interacting.

- Use formal supervision, including regular evaluations.
- Use informal supervision, including regular and random observation (e.g. checking interactions throughout an activity period), and maintain frequent contact with employees/volunteers and youth who interact off-site.



Documentation of monitoring

Documenting monitoring has occurred emphasizes to employees/volunteers it is an essential, nonnegotiable part of your organization's child sexual abuse prevention efforts.

- Use written records.
- Provide positive reinforcement when good supervision occurs.





COMPONENT 4: Strategies for Ensuring Safe Environments



Visibility

Choosing or creating spaces open and visible to multiple people can create an environment where potential offenders do not feel comfortable abusing.

Use the following methods to increase visibility:

- Landscape to ensure open visible spaces with no possible concealment.
- Have clear lines of sight throughout the building.
- Secure areas not used for program purposes to prevent youth from being isolated (e.g. lock closets and storerooms).
- Install windows in doors.
- Institute a “no closed door” policy.
- Install bright lighting in all areas.
- Add mirrors in hard to see spaces.
- Ask someone new to walk through your organization to identify areas that may pose a threat.



Privacy when toileting, showering, changing clothes

Your organization should develop policies and procedures for reducing risk during activities such as toileting, showering and changing clothes. The policies and procedures should consider not just the risk of employee/volunteer sexual abuse, but also the risk of inappropriate or harmful contact among youth.



Access Control

Your organization should monitor who is present at all times.

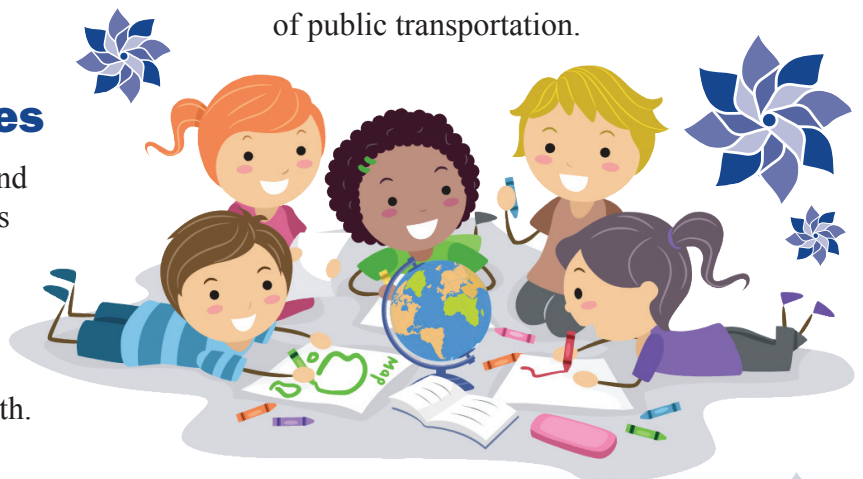
- Develop policies and procedures for admitting and releasing youth so their whereabouts is always known.
- Have policies and procedures for monitoring which people outside of your organization are allowed to enter the building and under what circumstances.



Off-site activity guidelines

Your organization should define and communicate its on-site and off-site physical boundaries.

- Decide and communicate when and where your organization is responsible for the youth it serves. This is particularly important in a multi-organization facility and on field trips.
- Develop policies for field trips and other off-site activities, such as how to handle off-site bathroom breaks and use of public transportation.

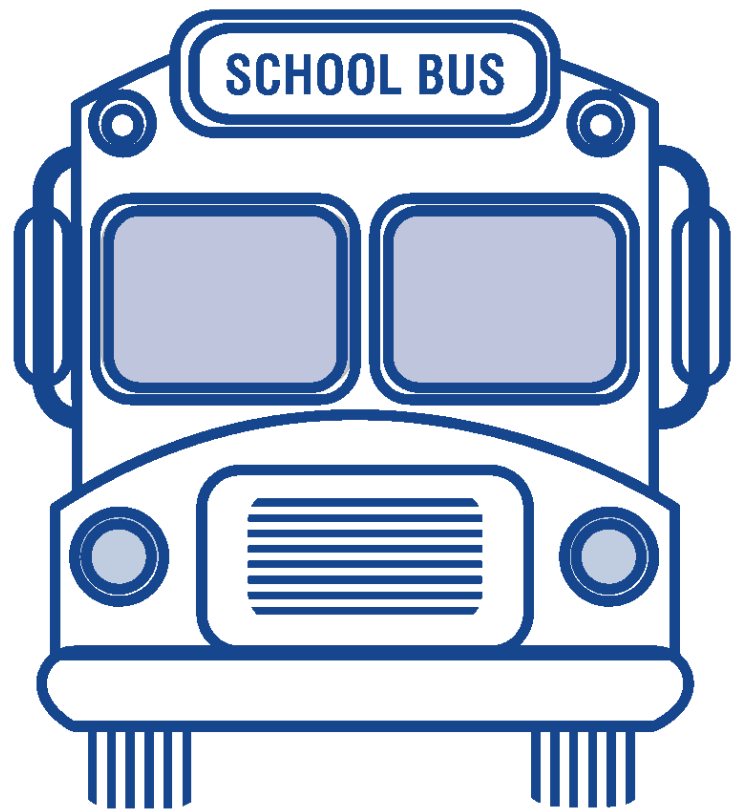


Transportation policies

Your organization should define who is responsible for transporting youth to and from activities and special events (e.g. field trips, overnight trips).

Decide how to answer the following:

- When is your organization responsible for transportation? When are caregivers responsible?
- Can a youth ride in a car with an employee/volunteer? If yes, under what circumstances? For example, can a youth be alone with an employee/volunteer in a car?
- What are pick-up procedures at the end of the day or the event?



COMPONENT 5:

Strategies for Responding to Inappropriate Behavior, Breaches in Policy, and Allegations and Suspicions of Child Sexual Abuse

Define inappropriate and appropriate strategies

- Clarify it is not the role of an employee/volunteer or your organization to evaluate or investigate an allegation or suspicion of child sexual abuse.
- Child protective services and/or law enforcement investigate allegations or suspicions.
- Help staff understand an inappropriate response to an allegation can harm the youth or the legal investigative process.

Partnering with others

- Utilize legal guidance to develop a reporting policy to ensure it is appropriate and legal.
- Partner with child protective services and law enforcement before any allegations arise in order to form relationships and ensure policies are in line with the law.



What to respond to within the organization and what to report to the authorities

It can be difficult to find the balance between being vigilant and protective of youth and being so hyper-vigilant the positive parts of programs (e.g. the relationships between adults and youth) are lost. The need for this balance involves recognizing the tension between over-reacting and under-reacting. By developing policies before any inappropriate behavior occurs, your organization can set reasonable expectations.

- Define the continuum of appropriate, inappropriate and harmful behavior.
- Delineate behaviors your organization will respond to internally and behaviors requiring a report to the authorities. For example, if a youth tells a sexually risqué joke, your organization may inform a direct-line supervisor and/or the youth's caregiver; provide the youth with guidance, redirection, and instruction; and/or file an incident report. However, if a youth or employee/volunteer engages in sexual contact with a youth, this violation should always be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- Act on all infractions of your organization's child sexual abuse prevention policy. If an employee/volunteer has breached an agency policy, your organization must take action. The consequences of violating policies should be explicit and violations should be addressed immediately. However, if abuse is suspected, it should be reported to authorities immediately.
- Report to authorities when an employee/volunteer witnesses or learns about sexual abuse of youth by anyone.

TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

- Preserve student dignity
- When possible, correct privately
- Remain consistent and fair
- Account for:
 - Maturity
 - Culture
 - History
- Promote Self Control

Reporting process

If evidence of child sexual abuse has surfaced, abuse is suspected, or an allegation has been made, a formal report must be made to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services at **1-877-KYSAFE1** or online at <http://prdweb.chfs.ky.gov/ReportAbuse>. Ensure your organization's reporting policies are consistent with current Kentucky laws (KRS 620). The following strategies address policies related to reporting evidence or allegations of child sexual abuse to outside agencies.





Internal Records

Although your organization should not investigate allegations or suspicions of child sexual abuse in lieu of reporting them to the authorities, it should develop a system to track allegations and suspicions of child sexual abuse cases.

- Include child sexual abuse as a category on general incident reporting forms for significant physical injuries. These forms should be completed by employees/volunteers who first learn of the abuse through hearing an allegation or making an observation.
- Review the general incident reporting forms with a supervisor. **The individual who received the information regarding the allegations should be the one who initiates the report to child protective services and/or law enforcement.**
- After investigation by child protective services and/or law enforcement, management should conduct incident review to identify possible gaps in service or opportunities for improvement.
- Record the resolutions of child sexual abuse cases if the information is available.

WHO MUST REPORT

- Mandatory reporters (every person in Kentucky is a mandated reporter)

TO WHOM TO REPORT

- Report immediately to child protective services and/or law enforcement
- Then report to the appropriate internal contact
- If needed, consult Kentucky Revised Statutes (<https://www.lrc.ky.gov/statutes/chapter.aspx?id=39420>) to ensure your policies are consistent with the law

WHEN TO REPORT

- Report to the authorities any time there is a reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect
 - All concerns of child sexual abuse should be reported to child protective services and/or law enforcement
 - Do not conduct your own investigation. Document exactly what the child said or did and provide this information to child protective services. Do not attempt to gain more information by asking the child additional questions



Any person who suspects child abuse has occurred is required by law to immediately make a report to the appropriate authorities.

Confidentiality policy

Because of the sensitive nature of child sexual abuse cases, your organization should decide in advance what information will remain private and what information can be made public.

- Withhold the names from the public of potential victims, the accused perpetrator, and the people who made the report to the authorities.
- Ensure your organization's confidentiality policy is consistent with state legal requirements.

Response to the press and the community

Your organization should decide on a strategy for responding to the press and the community *before* an allegation has been made.

- Designate a spokesperson for questions and inquiries.
- Have employees/volunteers go through training on how to deal with the press and the community, if appropriate.

Membership or employment of alleged offenders

Membership may include situations such as members of a place of worship or local community organization. Remember, an allegation of child sexual abuse does not equate to guilt. The person alleged to have engaged in sexually abusive behavior should not be labeled as an offender or sexual abuser. However, once a suspicion or allegation has been communicated, it needs to be reported to the authorities, and your organization must take certain steps to protect the youth under its care until the investigation is complete. A decision must be made whether to suspend membership or employment.

- Limit access to children or suspension of membership/employment immediately after receiving the report of child sexual abuse. Another option may include placing the alleged offender on probation until the case is resolved legally. Have an appeal process in which people found not guilty of perpetration in court may apply to return to their former positions in the organization.
- Develop policies on how to deal appropriately and responsibly with alleged or convicted offenders if your organization decides it may not be appropriate to revoke membership or employment. Some organizations, particularly faith-based or those dealing with youth-on-youth sexual abuse, may decide revoking membership sends the wrong message. Because these organizations need to manage circumstances in which alleged victims and offenders may be together, a well-constructed policy can help deal with this difficult situation.

- Required limited access agreements in which alleged or convicted offenders can attend a worship service or activity that does not involve youth but stipulate they may not be involved in any activity specific to youth. These individuals may also be required to attend permitted services and activities with a “buddy” or another adult who has agreed to stay with them at all times.
- Required informed supervision. Make sure at least one staff member is informed of the sexual abuse and is instructed to supervise vigilantly the accused adult or youth in his or her interaction with the program and/or organization.



COMPONENT 6:

Critical Content for Training about Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

Goals in training

- Set measurable goals. What are desired behaviors or performance changes in trainees?
- Plan the training to meet goals.
- Evaluate the training periodically to ensure it meets goals.



Single point of contact

- Designate one point of contact for questions and concerns to ensure messages about child sexual abuse are communicated consistently. This point of contact can be one individual or a group within a division of your organization.
- State explicitly every employee/volunteer is still responsible for preventing and responding for child sexual abuse.

Integration of content into the entire organization

- Ensure training content is modeled by everyone in your organization, from management to employees/volunteers.
- Training content should be evident in performance measures, supervisors' feedback to employees/volunteers, caregivers' observations and treatment of youth by your organization.
- Meld elements of your organization's philosophy or mission with the child sexual abuse training. For example, a faith-based organization may want to incorporate elements of its faith into the training content.

Training employees/volunteers

The following employees/volunteers should be trained in child sexual abuse prevention:

- People with access to or supervision over youth, including adults and youth in leadership positions.
- People responsible for enforcing child sexual abuse policies or overseeing people in the chain of command (e.g. supervisors of employees/volunteers with access to or control over youth).
- Management and leaders in your organization, even those without contact with youth, so concepts can be reinforced throughout the culture of your organization.
- New and current employees/volunteers.

Open dialogue

Create an environment in which trainees feel comfortable raising questions and concerns. Being receptive to questions reduces barriers to coming forward, reporting and being proactive about preventing and responding to child sexual abuse.



Child sexual abuse information

To prevent child sexual abuse, employees/volunteers need to understand general information about child sexual abuse (e.g. what child sexual abuse is, how often it occurs).

- Provide a definition of child sexual abuse.
- Define the continuum of appropriate, inappropriate and harmful behavior from your organization's perspective.
- Provide information about the prevalence of child sexual abuse.
- Describe risk and protective factors for victimization and perpetration.
- Address common myths about offenders, such as the myth most people who sexually abuse are strangers to the youth.

Importance of preventing child sexual abuse

Employees/volunteers need to understand why they should be concerned with preventing child sexual abuse.

- Emphasize employees/volunteers are an integral part of your organization's efforts to create a safe, healthy and respectful environment.
- Explain how child sexual abuse policies protect youth from sexual abuse, adults and youth from allegations of sexual abuse, and organizations from being accused of not doing enough to prevent child sexual abuse.
- Help employees/volunteers feel comfortable and motivated to prevent child sexual abuse and opportunities to practice how to handle situations (e.g. monitoring interactions).
- Give employees/volunteers opportunities to ask questions and express concerns about child sexual abuse prevention.



Healthy development of youth

Employees/volunteers should learn about healthy youth development so they can (1) promote positive development in areas of self-confidence, independence, and social interactivity and (2) understand and be aware of risk behaviors in which youth may engage.

- Teach employees/volunteers about healthy youth development and when certain behaviors are appropriate.
- Educate employees/volunteers about sexual development and how to distinguish between healthy and inappropriate or harmful behaviors when monitoring interactions.
- Keep in mind some behavior considered developmentally appropriate may create problems for organizations when it is done at inappropriate times.



Protective factors

Employees/volunteers should know youth-serving organizations exist in order to promote a healthy and safe environment where youth can thrive. The very things youth-serving organizations do may be protective against child sexual abuse. For example, close, caring, and connected relationships between youth and employees/volunteers can be extremely beneficial for youth development and can help youth feel supported and loved, and may protect youth from child sexual abuse. Because of the nature of the interactions in these relationships, however, they can also put youth at risk of being sexually abused by employees/volunteers.

- Help employees/volunteers learn to maintain a balance between providing a nurturing environment and working to prevent child sexual abuse.
- Assist employees/volunteers in learning to interact with youth with care and concern in order to foster youth development.



Immunity and support for reporters

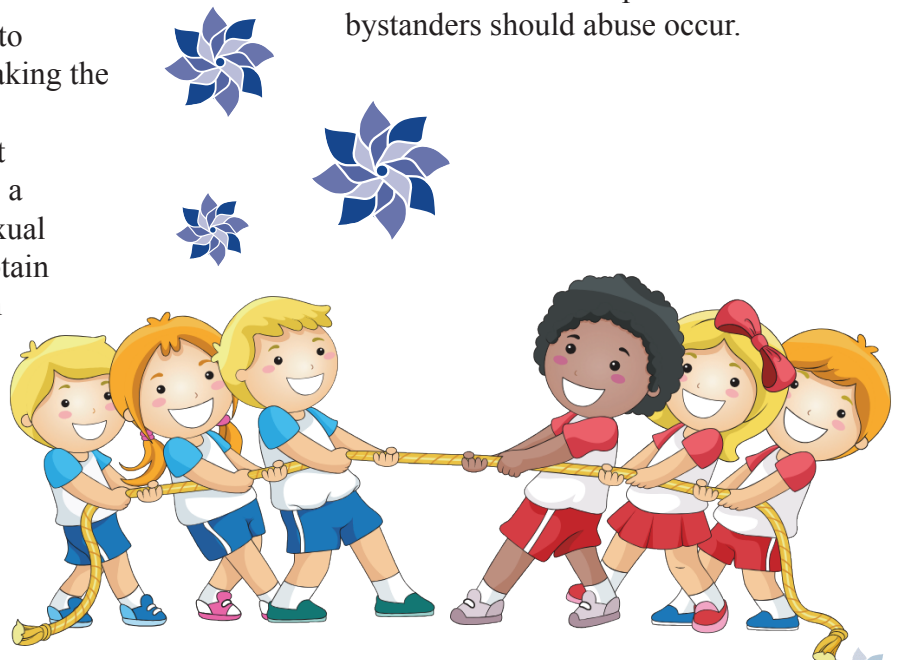
Employees/volunteers need to know they are protected from civil or criminal liability when making a report of known or suspected child abuse (KRS 620.050).

- Reassure employees/volunteers they will be supported by your organization and its management in their efforts to protect youth and debriefing and/or counseling will be available to reporters and bystanders should abuse occur.

Handling disclosures

Employees/volunteers need to be able to respond appropriately to the person making the disclosure.

- Teach employees/volunteers what they should and should not say to a victim who is disclosing child sexual abuse. Visit www.pcaky.org to obtain guidance on talking with children about child sexual abuse.
- Contact Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky at 859.225.8879 or pcaky@pcaky.org for advice on training about these matters.



Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Planning Tool for Organizations

This checklist can help your organization plan child sexual abuse prevention efforts; it summarizes critical strategies discussed in this Risk Assessment Protocol for Youth-Serving Organizations.

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Component	Strategy	Done/in place	Short term (next 12 months)	Long term (3-5 years)	Does not apply to my organization
Screening and selecting of employees/volunteers	Educating about organization and youth protection policies				
	Written application				
	Personal Interview				
	Reference checks				
	Criminal background checks				
Guidelines on interactions between individuals	Appropriate/inappropriate/harmful behaviors				
	Ratios of employees/volunteers to youth				
	One-on-one interactions				
	Risk of interactions between youth				
	Out-of-program contact restrictions				
	Caregiver information and permission				
	Responsibility for youth				
Monitoring behavior	Responding to inappropriate behavior observed				
	Clearly define roles and responsibilities for staff/volunteers				
	Documentation monitoring has occurred				
Ensuring safe environments	Visibility				
	Privacy when toileting, showering, changing clothes				
	Is access to children limited to those staff and volunteers of the program?				
	Off-site activity guidelines				
	Transportation policies				

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Component	Strategy	Done/in place	Short term (next 12 months)	Long term (3-5 years)	Does not apply to my organization
Responding to inappropriate behavior, breaches in policy, and allegations and suspicions of child sexual abuse	What to respond to and what to report				
	Reporting process				
	Internal records				
	Confidentiality policy				
	Response to the press and the community				
	Membership/employment of alleged offenders				
Training employees/volunteers	All policies and procedures decided upon by the organization				
	Child sexual abuse definitions				
	Importance of preventing child sexual abuse				
	Personal conduct				
	Healthy development of youth				
	Handling disclosures				
	Immunity and support for reporters				





Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky™

PCAK is Kentucky's premier statewide non-profit organization committed to preventing the abuse and neglect of Kentucky's children. The agency has a variety of programs and services aimed at reducing and preventing child abuse and neglect.

PCAK provides technical assistance in developing policies and procedures sensitive to the needs of families and children, as well as training on a variety of topics.

A sample of available training topics include:

- Child Sexual Abuse Prevention in Youth-Serving Organizations
- Pediatric Abusive Head Trauma
- Internet Safety
- Recognizing, Reporting and Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect
- Protecting Your Children: Advice from Child Molesters
- Engaging Fathers
- Understanding Healthy Child Development as a Tool to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse

A sample of available printable and reproducible resources include:

- Ages and Stages: A Parent's Guide to Discipline
- Are They Good For Your Kids?
- As A Family, What Can Do to Reduce the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse?
- How to Choose a Safe Child Care Provider or Caregiver
- Healthy Child Development Information Cards

Visit www.pcaky.org for a complete list of trainings and resources.

PCAK staff are available to work directly with your agency to provide training on a variety of topics. To discuss your training needs, please call PCAK at 859.225.8879 or email at pcaky@pcaky.org

An interactive version of this tool can be found at
<https://www.pcaky.org/self-assessment-questionnaire-organizations>.

A tool specific to caregivers thinking about who has access to their children can be found at <https://www.pcaky.org/prevent-csa-as-a-parent>.



**Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky thanks the
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