

# Steps from *A Plan To Protect God's Children*™

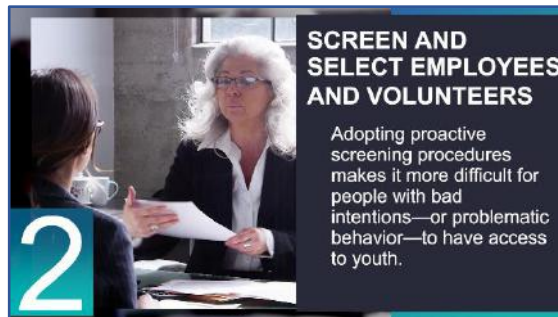


## Step 1—Warning signs of adults:

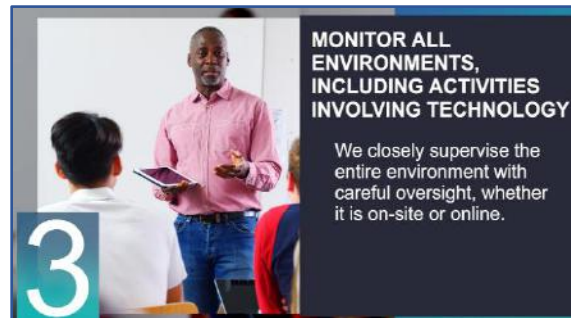
- Discourages others from participating/monitoring
- Attempts to be alone with, or isolates, children
- Seems more excited to be with children than adults
- Gives gifts, without permission
- Goes overboard touching, wrestling, tickling...
- Uses bad language, or tells inappropriate or sexual jokes to children
- Behaves or speaks as if the rules do not apply to them (ignores policy, bends rules)
- Allows young people to engage in activities parents would not allow
- Tells children to keep secrets from others
- Takes, posts or shares photos without the parent's or the organization's approval
- Shows young people sexual content or pornography (*which is also abuse*)

## Step 2—Screening measures:

- Create procedures to determine who has access to children
- Regularly review and distribute guidelines and policies for adults working with minors
- Use standard employment/volunteer applications
- Identify any history or known conduct that could create future harm
- Obtain previous experience with youth-serving organizations



- Complete face-to-face interviews
- Require criminal background checks (initial and refresher)
- Check personal and employment references
- Attend safe environment training
- Ensure compliance with the rules and policies
- Communicate the organization's commitment to keeping children safe
- Apply all of these measures consistently



## Step 3—Monitoring environments:

Employees & volunteers can monitor in-person environments:

- Maintain a healthy caution about any environment in which children are entrusted
- Identify secluded areas, lock empty rooms
- Develop and follow policies regarding the use of any area (open, secluded, off-site, etc.)
- Don't permit children to enter staff-only areas
- Only meet with children where other adults have open access
- Perform consistent and random status checks
- Ensure enough adults are involved in programs

- Don't start new programs without approval
- Encourage parental involvement to evaluate safety, giving parents proper program access

Employees & volunteers can monitor technology, too:

- Always use sanctioned devices/accounts to communicate with youth
- Never "friend," "follow," or communicate with youth using personal accounts
- Always communicate with youth during appropriate timeframes
- Never take or post photos of youth without the proper approvals
- Install and use appropriate blocking/filtering software



## Step 4—Being attentive to youth includes:

Recognizing the concerning behavioral cues children and youth may exhibit when experiencing abuse, such as:

- Sudden behavioral change(s) (likes/dislikes, health, eating habits)
- Appearing increasingly moody or aggressive, withdrawn or depressed
- Losing interest in school, or having a sudden shift in grades/school activities
- Becoming secretive or defensive (including with technology or online activities)
- Becoming fearful, anxious, or uncomfortable around certain people
- Bathing excessively or discontinuing personal hygiene
- Showing regressive behavior, such as bed-wetting, thumb-sucking, etc.

And, we can teach children and youth the following when advocating for their safety and boundaries:

- The *Personal Boundary Safety Rules*: Say “no,” try to get away, and tell a safe adult right away
- What to do when they feel uncomfortable, violated, unsafe, or if someone tries to force them, or their friends, to see, touch, or show their private parts
- Youth have a right to be safe; it’s OK to speak up
- Being abused/victimized is never the youth’s fault
- Youth always have safe adults who will advocate for their safety and protection
- When it comes to their safety, we will believe them and work to protect them



#### Step 5—Ways to communicate concerns:

- If you see or hear of a potential warning sign of inappropriate behavior, do not hesitate—speak to a supervisor right away
- If you continue to see inappropriate behavior, communicate again, or go to another supervisor
- If abuse has been disclosed to you, or you suspect that a child is being, or has been, abused, contact the child protection agency in your state
- If the suspected abuse involves a church volunteer, employee or member of the clergy, first contact civil authorities, and then also notify a church official
- If you are aware a child is in danger of imminent abuse, call emergency services right away (dial 911 immediately)
- When youth are being sexually exploited online, make a report to [www.CyberTipline.org](http://www.CyberTipline.org), or you can also contact law enforcement

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### To report abuse in Washington:

If you suspect a child is in imminent danger from abuse, please call **911** immediately.

To report *known* or *suspected* child abuse, contact:

**DSHS within 48 hours:**

**1866-End-HARM**

**<https://www.dshs.wa.gov>**

### For more information:

Safe Environment Office

**[safeenvironmentprogram@seattlearch.org](mailto:safeenvironmentprogram@seattlearch.org)**

**206-274-3188**

**1-800-261-4749**

Archdiocesan Victim Assistance Office

**[helpline@seattlearch.org](mailto:helpline@seattlearch.org)**

**1-800-446-7762**



## Protecting God’s Children®

### 4.0 Program for Adults



## Quick Reference Guide