

# Beware of **ONLINE** **SEXUAL PREDATORS!**

The Internet has revolutionized our lives, and, despite its many benefits, the Internet has opened the door for predators to sexually exploit unsuspecting children. Every child is just one click away from obscenely graphic and addictive pornography, and new threats—like cyberbullying and ‘sexting’—also flourish.

Parents and other adults are the first line of defense against online threats; however, Sexual predators communicate with child victims through websites, e-mail, public and private chat rooms, and instant messaging. The ultimate goal of the online predator is to meet their victim face-to-face, and the predator will say and do anything in order to do so.

- 1.) Don't allow the computer to be in the child's bedroom. Put the computer in a common area.
- 2.) Outline family rules concerning the use of the Internet.
- 3.) Ask your child which chat rooms they use, how many screen names they have and how many profiles they have on the Internet. Ask for the profile passwords and periodically check online activity.
- 4.) Ask your child to show you their profile and their buddy list (contacts).
- 5.) Explain to your child that if they get a picture, or if someone says something that makes them feel uncomfortable, to tell you immediately. They will not get in trouble.

*For more information on **ONLINE PREDATORS**, visit the following websites*



[www.icatraining.org](http://www.icatraining.org)



[www.NetSmartz.org](http://www.NetSmartz.org)



[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)



[www.cybertipline.com](http://www.cybertipline.com)

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## A Message From The Sheriff

The men and women of the Carroll County Sheriff's Office thank you for taking an interest in public safety. By reading this publication, you are joining with law enforcement in protecting your children against online sexual predators.

Communicating with the citizens effectively is a core component of this agency. We appreciate the opportunity to share this information with you hoping that you will partner with us.

We encourage you to implement a few, if not all of the measures outlined in this publication. Additionally, you can obtain more information and resources by accessing our website at [www.carrollcountysheriff.com](http://www.carrollcountysheriff.com).

The members of the Carroll County Sheriff's Office are dedicated professionals who are not only committed to the safety of your family, but stand ready when called upon to serve all Carroll County citizens.

Sincerely,

James T. DeWees  
Sheriff

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# Keep them **SAFE!**



*A message from the*

**Carroll County Sheriff's Office**

Child sexual predators seem to be all around us – in our communities, our schools, our churches and even our families. A child who experiences sexual abuse is, understandably, every parent's worst fear. Since we can't be with our children to protect them every moment of their lives, it's easy for us to feel overwhelmed and powerless to protect them from the people parents loathe and fear most. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to keep your children safe in a world that can seem scary at times.



## *Protect Your Children from* **SEXUAL PREDATORS!**

### **HOW DOES A CHILD PREDATOR OPERATE?**

Child molester statistics show that there are 400,000 registered molesters in our country. Sexual offenders are often people with whom we entrust our children in school and home. There are some basic behavioral signs and strategies practiced by child molesters. Being aware of these signs and trusting your instincts can help protect your child. Here are a few **“RED FLAGS”** alert you that your child may be targeted. These flags are not absolutes, and the actions may be innocent and free of exploitation.

☞ **WATCH PEOPLE WITH WHOM YOUR CHILD SPENDS TIME.** A predator grooms the child to gain trust by offering to play games, buying gifts and acting respectful and caring to create a friendship.

☞ **STAY ATTENTIVE TO ADULTS WHO OFFER TO TAKE CARE OF THE CHILD.** These adults include babysitters, teachers, coaches or even relatives.

☞ **SUPERVISE THE PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE CHILD AND THE ADULT.** A child predator removes barriers with a child by introducing physical contact that is nonsexual in nature initially. This could be an arm over the child's shoulder or tucking the child's hair behind her ear frequently.

### **What does a Child Predator Look Like?**

*The truth is, they look just like yourself !!*

Child predators know how to manipulate children, and present unsolicited activity and contact in a way that the child (victim) either doesn't mind the attention or they think that it was their idea.

Statistically, child predators are family members, or persons who have a close relationship with the intended victim. Approximately 1 in 6 boys are sexually assaulted before they reach their sixteenth birthday. Sexual abusers of boys tend to be males who are known by the victim; however, female predators tend to violate boy victim over female victims. You can stop and or prevent your child from predatory exploitation by following these simple tips:

1. *Know your children's friends and the people they spend time with. Introduce yourself to the parents of these friends and visit their homes before you allow your children to visit there. Know who lives there, who hangs out there and that they can be trusted.*
2. *Check the sex offender registries in the areas where your children spend time – the community, the park, the playground, school, church, etc.*
3. *Make your children feel comfortable talking with you about ANYTHING. Be understanding, comforting, reassuring and nonjudgmental.*
4. *Make it clear to your children that if someone touches them inappropriately or attacks them, it is NEVER their fault, regardless of the circumstances.*
5. *Establish regular check-in procedures and times for occasions when your child is not with you.*