

Managing the Risk of Child-to-Child Abuse in Ministry

INSURANCE BOARD

OCTOBER 12, 2016

PRAESIDIUM

Our Passion. Your Protection.

Agenda

How Peer-to-Peer Abuse Occurs

Abuse Risks

Behavioral Warning Signs

Detection and Prevention

Summary



A Paradigm for Prevention: The Praesidium Safety Equation™

Development of the Safety Equation™

- Literature search
- Root cause analysis of cases
- Researching the behavioral patterns of child molesters
- Continued monitoring of child molester behaviors



What We Believe

Abuse can be prevented.

Everyone is responsible for preventing abuse.

Abuse prevention requires a commitment.

Commitment starts with you!

Scope of the Sexual Abuse Problem

1 in 4 girls and **1 in 6** boys

300% increase in child-to-child abuse

80% of abuse unreported

Increasing litigation and legislation

How Peer-to-Peer Abuse Occurs

Red Flags in Adult-to-Child Abuse

Physical

- Wrestles
- Tickles
- Massages
- Hugs too long or too often
- Lap-sits older children

Behavioral

- Encourages breaking of rules
- Keeps secrets
- Encourages alcohol use
- Encourages drug use
- Encourages use of porn

Psychological

- Isolates children from parents and peers
- Creates personal friendships
- Chooses favorites
- Overly involved



How Peer-to-Peer Abuse Occurs

Impulsive offense

Acting in the moment

Can happen during times of stress or anger

Peer-to-peer abuse can be prevented

- Clear policies
- Effective supervision



Sexual Behavior in Youth



Sexual Curiosity



Sexual Abuse



Sexual Curiosity

“Information gathering” process wherein youths look at and touch one another

Often trying to determine appropriate gender roles

Typically a voluntary activity occurring between peers of same age group



Sexual Abuse

Criterion to be considered are as follows:

- Age difference between youths
- Size difference between youths
- Developmental difference between youths
- Intellectual difference between youths
- Difference in status of peer group
- Type of sexual activity
- Amount of force or coercion
- Reactions of youth involved
- One-time occurrence or repetitive

What Would You Do?

A 14-year old child going through puberty is sexually exploring feelings for another child in the youth group. It is safe to assume that this is natural curiosity/child development.

TRUE



FALSE



It doesn't matter – whether they explore their feelings or sexually act out, we're still going to report it.

It is important to communicate information and report on everything.

Abuse Risks

Where Peer-to-Peer Abuse Happens

Physical environmental characteristics include:

- Bathrooms
- Showers
- Vehicles (especially buses)
- Isolated areas



When Peer-to-Peer Abuse Happens

Activity risks include:

- Night time
- Nap time
- Shower time
- Changing clothes
- Free time
- Serves mixed age groups
- Periods of transition
- When youth supervise other youth
- *Truth or Dare* style games
- Swimming

How Adults Contribute to Risk

Adult risk characteristics include:

- Lack of knowledge on warning signs
- Lack of awareness
- Close in age to youth in program
- Not recognizing peer-to-peer as reportable behavior



Behavioral Warning Signs

Youth at Higher Risk to Offend

Youth characteristics that increase risk include:

- Exhibits sexualized behavior
- Uses sexually explicit language
- Taunts or harasses other youth
- Displays anger or aggression
- Violates others' boundaries
- Avoids supervision
- Dominates other youth
- Youths with clinical disorders



Youth at Higher Risk of Victimization

Seen as “different” from others

- Smaller and/or bigger in size or height
- Lonely, quiet, or shy
- With a physical, developmental, or intellectual disability
- Inadequate in sports or other recreational activities
- Treated differently by adults
- Considered an outsider by peers

Warning Signs in Individual Behaviors



1. Changes in demeanor
2. Sudden reluctance or refusal to participate or engage
3. Avoiding other youth or caregivers
4. Avoiding other participants
5. Clinging to adults

Warning Signs in Individual Behaviors



6. Seeking constant supervision

7. Significant decline in performance

8. Unexplained injuries

9. Vague disclosures

10. Reluctance or refusal of routine activities

- Won't change clothes
- Won't go to restroom
- Won't go to bed

11. Sudden development of sexualized behavior

Warning Signs in Individual Behaviors



12. Excluding self

13. Servitude

- Does chores for other participant
- Gets water
- Gives snack to peer
- Gives possessions to peer

14. Sudden dissatisfaction with a program or placement

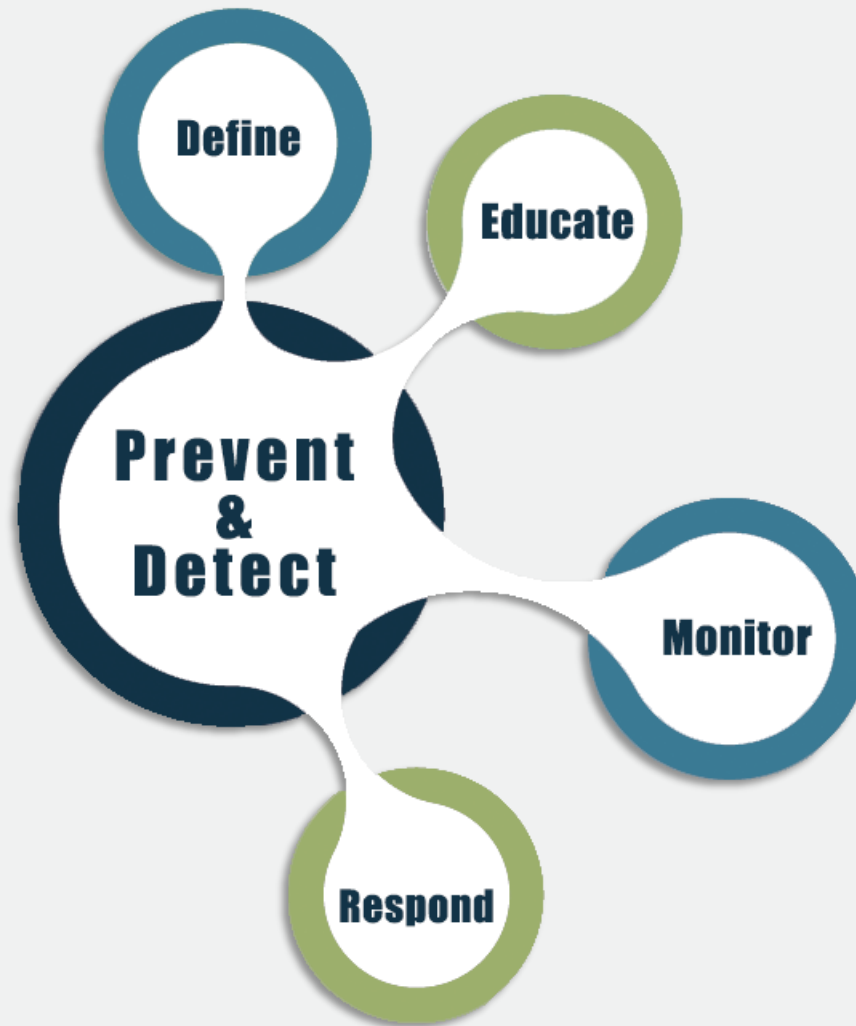
- Begs adult not to make child attend
- Begs not to return somewhere
- Adult calls to complain

Warning Signs

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14. Sudden dissatisfaction with a program or placement

Detect and Prevent

Four Ways to Prevent and Detect



1. Define Expectations

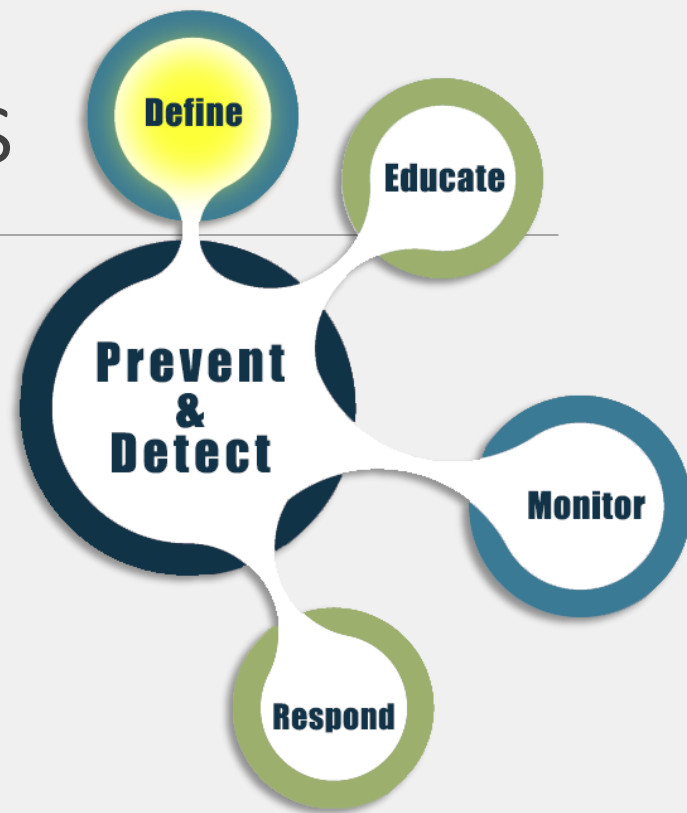
Privacy

Boundaries

Rules of Appropriate Attire

Rules for Affection

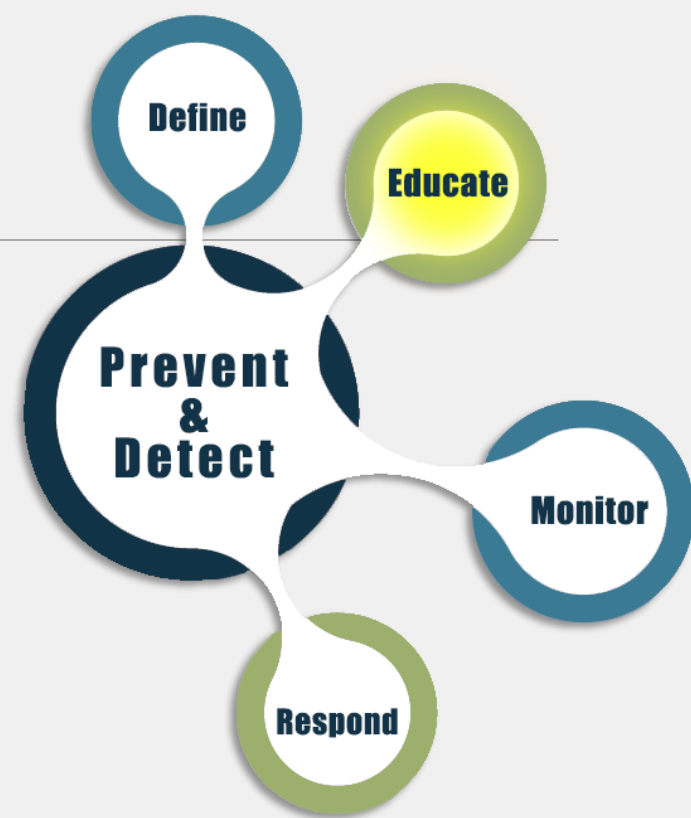
How to Report Concern



2. Educate Youth, Staff, and Volunteers

Topics to discuss with youth:

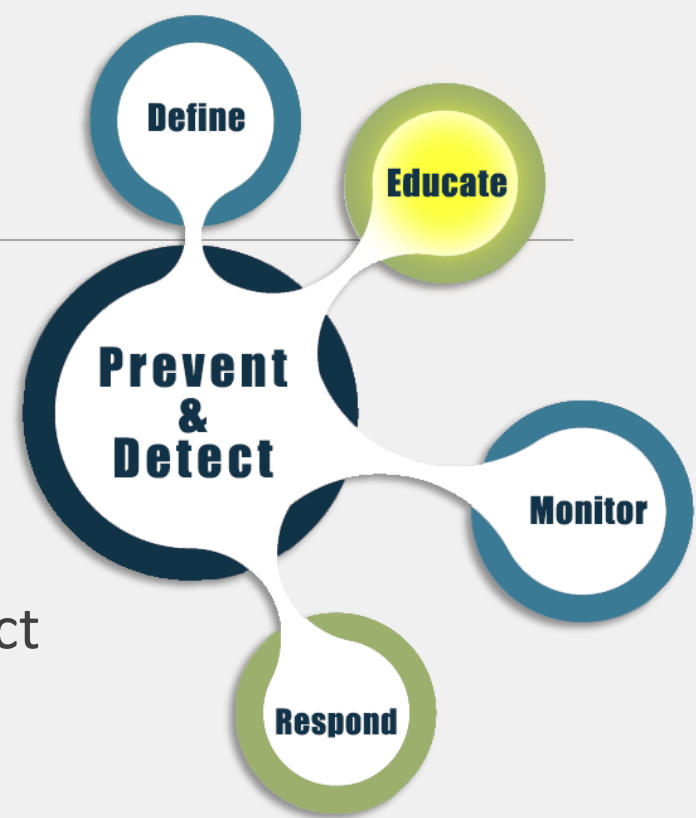
- Acceptable and unacceptable contact
- You have the right to be safe
- If you experience any situation that upsets you, tell us right away
- Your concerns will be taken seriously
- We will do everything we can to protect your rights
- Be a courageous observer



2. Educate Youth, Staff, and Volunteers

Topics to discuss with staff, caregivers and volunteers:

- Acceptable and unacceptable contact
- How to monitor
- High risk activities
- High risk behaviors and group dynamics
- How to report concerns

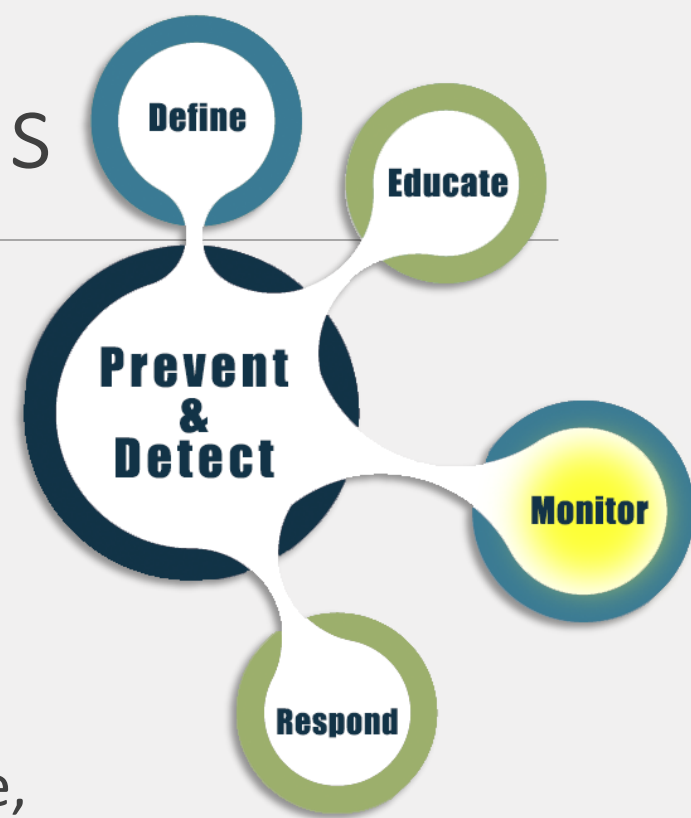


3. Monitor Interactions

Identify high risk activities

Methods

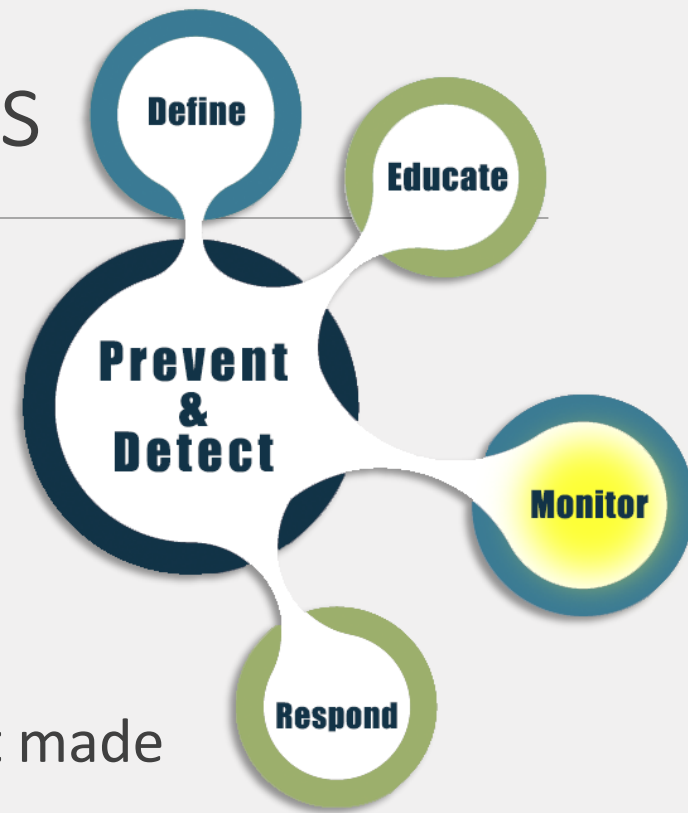
- Direct observation (constant, routine, and random)
- Electronic surveillance (cameras, motion detectors, baby monitors, window/door buzzers)



3. Monitor Interactions

Sample questions to ask youths:

- Is anyone touching you in a way that you don't like?
- Has anyone said anything to you that made you feel bad?
- Is anyone asking you to keep secrets?
- Is anyone scaring you?

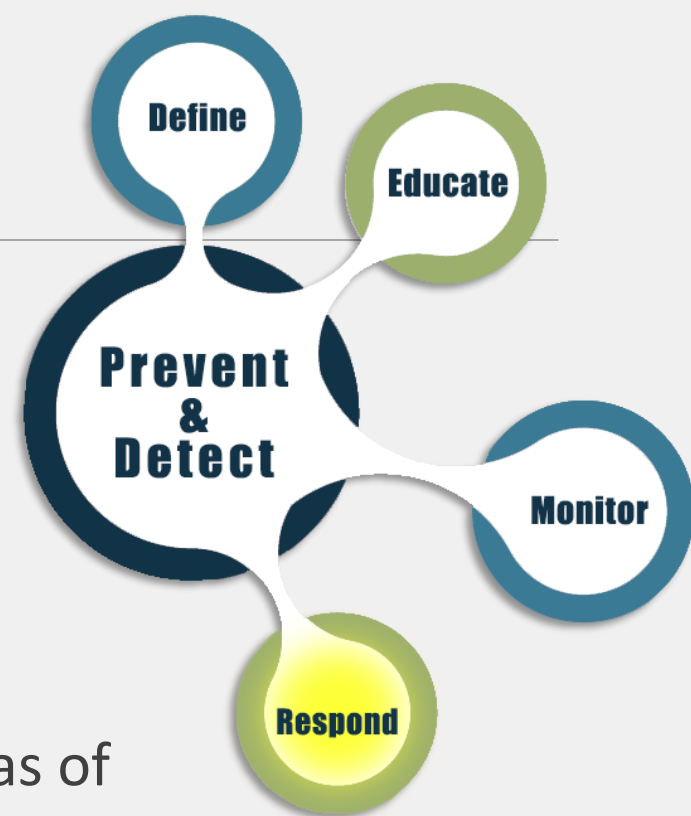


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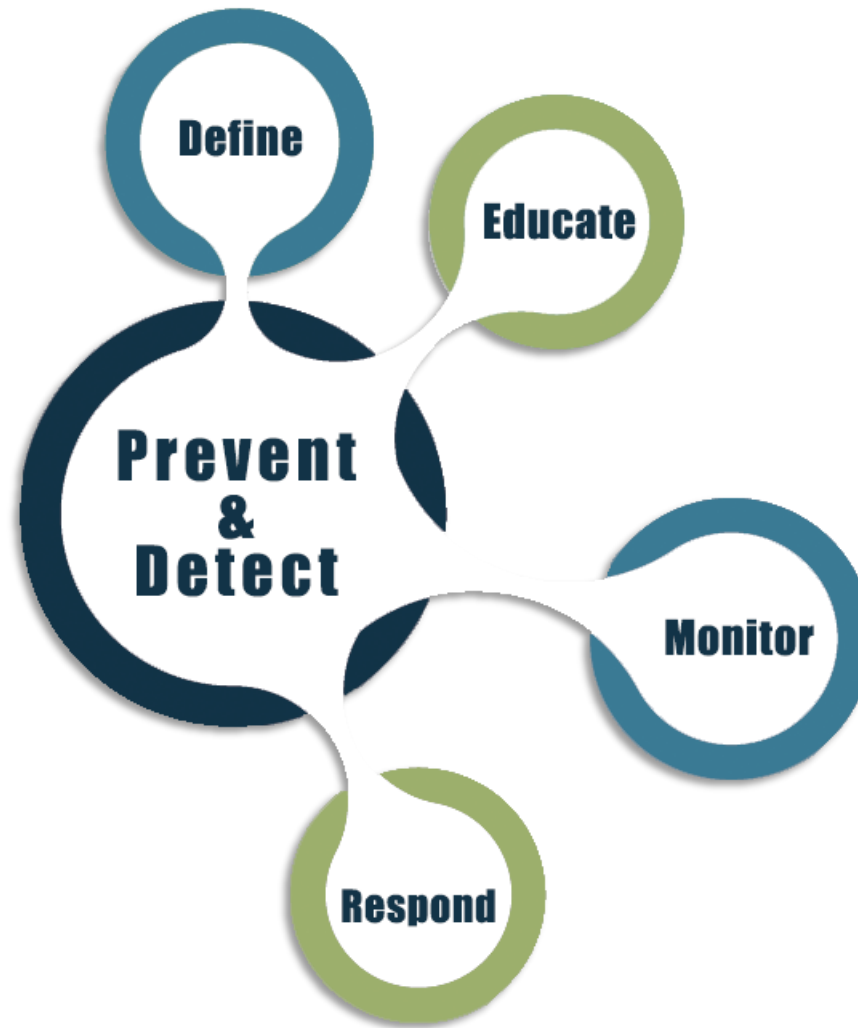
4. Respond Quickly

Guidelines for responding quickly:

- When youth disclose a concern, address the concern immediately. Do not wait. Take the time.
- Document the disclosure and all areas of related concern.
- Communicate the incident to your immediate supervisor or agency case manager and follow the agency's protocol.
- Report the incident to the Texas DFPS Abuse Hotline within the appropriate timeframes.







Four Ways to Prevent and Detect



Summary

Preventing Peer-to-Peer Abuse: The Essentials

-  Staff behavior sets the tone; youths should not define what is appropriate behavior.
-  There is no standard definition of “normal curiosity.”
-  Monitoring and supervision is key.
-  Report any sexual activity.

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