



Victims Don't Drive Demand! Traffickers and Buyers Do!

152 Arrests of Traffickers in 2019*

130 Arrests of Traffickers in 2020*

167 Arrests of Traffickers as of 8/2021*

RED FLAGS AND WARNING SIGNS YOUR CHILD IS BEING TRAFFICKED

Child traffickers entice their victims through the use of physical force, threats, psychological manipulation, and other tactics. Coercion does not include physical abuse. Instead, it is a type of psychological abuse. This could include:

- » Threatening to harm the child
- » Threats of physical violence against the victim's family
- » Humiliating and shaming the victim

Threatening to expose their illegal activities to loved ones, teachers, parents, or law enforcement, said Charisma de los Reyes who was a policy analyst and coordinator of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Program for San Diego County Child Welfare Services, are some of the tactics that traffickers use to lure in their victims. It is important for parents to spot some of the following warning signs in order to know if their child may be trafficked:



- » Unexplained gifts, cash or clothes, and other material items, also referred to as "love bombing." These gifts could be signs that a trafficker is trying to win the affection of your child.
- » Look at your child's appearance. Do they have new clothes or a change in their hair-style? Is there a sudden weight loss?
- » A child with two cell phones. Many times, an exploiter wants direct contact with the victim, separate from their personal phone.
- » A child's social media accounts, especially dating apps downloaded on their phone or tablet. These apps not only can connect potential sex buyers but they are known to be a virtual recruiting station for predators.
- » Keep an ear out for a change in language, or use of slang. Listen to your child's language. Hearing your child talk knowledgeably about sex or drug use might



- be a sign that your child may be in trouble.
- » A child's mood or behavior can be indicative of a problem. Things like depression, signs of abuse, and/or self-mutilation.
- » Youth child is missing school or being late to school and other activities.
- » Alienation from others or a change in friends are common red flags for sex trafficking.
- » Your child being secretive, or talking about mysterious travel or an older boyfriend.

Source: *Who Is Most At Risk And Warning Signs For Spotting Child Sex Trafficking* 7 San Diego

* Source Southern Nevada Human Trafficking Task Force

HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- » Make sure your child knows your phone numbers by heart if they lose their phone.
- » Teach your child to never use their full name when creating an account. Make sure names are generic and do not include biographical information like a birth date, names of family members and pets, and their address.
- » Teach your child only to accept "friend requests" or "follow" people they know personally.
- » Make sure your child knows that anything posted (photos, videos, messages, etc.) on the Internet lasts FOREVER. There's no permanent delete.
- » Make sure your child knows never to post a nude or racy photos/videos or do sexting, even with friends. These can be used for blackmail or to manipulate the child into doing something that is inappropriate.





» **Monitor your child's online accounts by creating your own account for each one they have.** Make sure your child does not block you on these accounts or only allow you partial access. Know your child's passwords for all their devices. Make this mandatory or they will no longer continue to have the privilege of having a cell phone, computer or Internet connection.

- » **Make sure your child is instructed to disconnect all location services that are found inside games, apps or social media.**
- » **Teach your child never to post something that indicates trouble at home or with a friend such as, "I just ran away." "I hate my parents." "I hate school." "I want to get out of here."** These are the types of messages traffickers are looking for so they can quickly become a person to "help."
- » **Turn on the "find my friends" location services and follow your child's location at all times.**
- » **Check the apps on your child's phone and make sure they are not utilizing a location "spoofers," which is a program to trick you into thinking they are at one location, but actually are at another place.**

Arizona State University School of Social Work Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research

Top 10 Ways to Protect Your Children From Becoming A Sex Trafficking Victim



» **LISTEN AND BE PROACTIVE:** Talk to your child and ask questions about how they feel about their peers and the people around them. Children often struggle with peer pressure and bullying.

» **ENCOURAGE EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND HOBBIES:** Athletics, arts, and organized volunteer activities serve to help a child build their self-esteem, self-worth.

- » **TEACH MEDIA LITERACY:** Teach your child how to identify and understand the hidden meaning behind messages in TV shows, movies, song lyrics, magazine articles and photos, apps, commercials, slogans, or social media posts.

» **KNOW WHO IS REACHING OUT TO YOUR CHILD:** Knowing who your child is talking to or spending time with will help protect them and allow you to give them guidance about someone who may be a negative influence.

» **KNOW ITS OKAY TO SAY "NO":** Teach your child that it is OK to say "no." Have a way for your child to be able to contact you, at any time, in case they have to get out of a bad situation.

» **TEACH YOUR CHILD ABOUT SEX:** Supplement what your child learns from teachers, what they hear from their friends, and what they read online. Children are naturally curious and are likely to search for information about sex online. Teach your child that it is okay to say that it is not okay to have sex out of feelings of obligation or fear.

» **SPEND TIME WITH YOUR CHILD:** Spend quality time with your child, without distractions, so they can feel comfortable talking about what is going on in their lives. Volunteering together at community projects is a great way to spend quality time and, at the same time, teach them about empathy and helping people who are in difficult and challenging situations.



» **KNOW WHERE AND HOW YOUR CHILD**

GETS NEW THINGS: Sex traffickers will use gifts to lure your child. Take a regular inventory of your child's belongings and ask questions if you see expensive electronics, clothing, purses, makeup, hairstyles, or items that you did not pay for or that you know your child cannot afford.

» **MAKE SURE THAT YOUR CHILD CAN CONTACT YOU:** Many children do not know your phone numbers or where you work. They should know them by heart.

» **GET COUNSELING IF ITS NEEDED:** If your child has symptoms of depression or anger that are disruptive at school or home, seek professional help. Ignoring these signals for help can drive them to seek comfort from a stranger who might traffick them.

Source: Adapted from Tips for Parents to Protect Children from Predators from the book Walking Prey by survivor Holly Austin Smith.

The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) is a national, toll-free hotline, available to answer calls from anywhere in the country, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. They are not a government entity, law enforcement or an immigration authority. 1-888-373-7888



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