

Scouting

Child Lures

by Kenneth Wooden

Following are typical lures child molesters use to entice their victims. Preventive measures for each lure are printed in italics. Share what you read here with your children. It will be time well spent.

Affection

Children are caught off guard when an advance is made by a relative, friend, or someone they know.

Children from unhappy homes are the easiest preys for "love" lures because they are starved for affection. Parents need to show affection to their children and monitor activities such as summer camp and clubs. Be cautious of adults who want to spend time alone with your child.

Assistance

An adult, sometimes disguised as a handicapped or elderly person, asks a child for help with groceries, to find a lost pet, for directions, or other kinds of help.

Tell your child that adults should ask other adults for help, and if an adult stops to ask directions, your child should move out of reach and be ready to run.

Authority

Molesters often dress as police officers, clergy, firemen, and truant officers. They often carry badges and attach flashing lights to their cars. Others have posed as store detectives to accuse children of stealing and instruct them to "come with me."

Tell children to ask another adult to check the ID of the "official." Impersonation lures can be difficult to detect. Legitimate officials will not object to showing their ID.

Bribery

Young children are offered candy, toys, and other rewards. Older children are offered beer, drugs, or money in exchange for sex.

Be alert to new toys, gifts, or money that haven't been given through normal family channels. Teach children that no one repeatedly gives presents without wanting something in return.

Ego/Fame

Children are promised modeling jobs, beauty contest opportunities, auditions for commercials or movies, but told to keep it a secret from their parents. Photo/filming sessions begin harmlessly, but often escalate into pornography and seduction.

Chaperone your children's talent pursuits. Warn them not to trust people who encourage them to keep secrets from their parents.

Emergency

"Your mommy is sick and at the hospital ... Your house is on fire ... Your mommy sent me to get you ... come with me!"

Select a code word that only you and your children know. Tell your children never to go with anyone unless the code has been used. Prearrange emergency plans with your children.

Fear/Threats

These may be violent verbal threats, blackmail, or intimidation with guns or knives.

Teach children to run and scream for help. Children who are not paralyzed by fear may be excellent witnesses. Children who try to save themselves by cooperating with a molester become victims.

Jobs

Adolescents are offered high paying, interesting jobs. Interviews are held in secluded locations and advertised with only a post office box number.

Stress with adolescents that you want to know where and by whom they are being interviewed. Explain why.

Magic/Rituals

Sophisticated, destructive ritual abuse is emerging under the guise of the occult, or "the world of the unknown." Abused children become brainwashed and allow repeated abuse, eventually becoming abusers themselves.

Discuss concepts of good and evil at an early age so children are not confused by those who try to teach them otherwise. Be inquisitive if a child begins to reject basic social values. Become vigilant if your child suffers from frequent nightmares or becomes absorbed by horror films, certain music, or engages in unfamiliar rituals.

Name Recognition

Children are disarmed by adults who know their names and engage them in friendly conversation.

Many well meaning-parents "tag" clothes, lunch pails, etc., with the child's name, and even home address. This is an open ticket for the abductor or molester to be friendly and disarm the child of any apprehension.

If name tags are necessary on a child's clothing or belongings, place them in areas not visible to a passing observer.

Playmates

Some preschool and elementary school children who have been sexually abused are mentally programmed to lure other children.

If your child is constantly being taken to or asked to play at the house of another playmate, particularly where there is a single male or live-in boyfriend, check carefully why that one house/person/location is a popular place. Ask questions. Visit the location during playtime.

If you feel your children are becoming sexually knowledgeable or active, ask questions: Is

someone taking their photo, making video tapes, playing touching games, or having them remove their clothes?

Copyright © by the Boy Scouts of America. All rights thereunder reserved; anything appearing in *Scouting* magazine or on its Web site may not be reprinted either wholly or in part without written permission. Because of freedom given authors, opinions may not reflect official concurrence.

The Boy Scouts of America  <http://www.scouting.org>