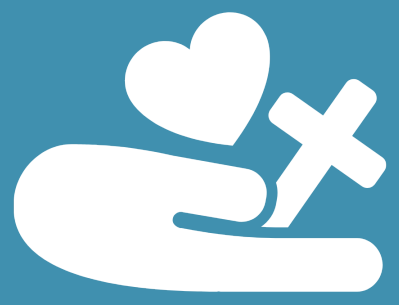
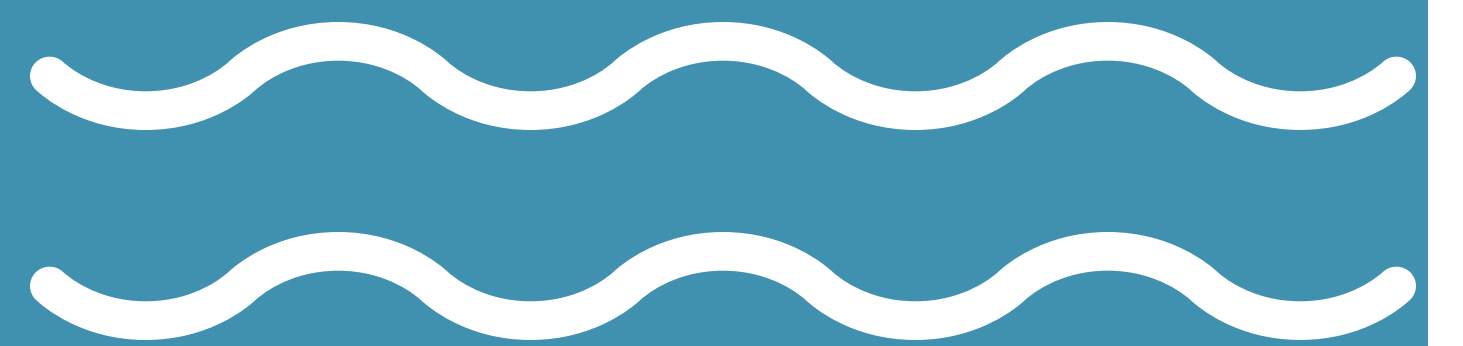


VERSION 1.0



EUROPEAN FREEDOM NETWORK
CHURCH ACTION GROUP - PARENT RESOURCE

PARENT RESOURCE



09/10/2021

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The European Freedom Network

OUR MISSION

The European Freedom Network is a Christian community that exists to fight human trafficking and commercial exploitation in Europe and to seek the restoration of victims in collaboration with strategic stakeholders.

OUR VISION

We see a world free of Human Trafficking and Commercial Exploitation where every person has the opportunity to live in freedom and dignity and to flourish.

OUR VALUES

We unite around the following beliefs and values:

- **Christ Centered** – We are a praying Christian community who are convinced that Jesus' grace and power can bring transformation to individuals and communities.
- **Collaborative Community** – We are better when we join together our thinking, plans, resources, and expertise.
- **Dignity** – We treat people with dignity and respect, and recognize each person has the ability and right to lead their own life.
- **Excellence** – We believe that our focused work and ministry should exemplify good practice and professionalism as well as the heart of Jesus.
- **Safety** – We seek to be safe people and to keep all people in our care safe and free from exploitation.

OUR FOCUS AREAS

EFN is focused on issues of modern day slavery, human trafficking, prostitution, commercial exploitation and within that, sexual exploitation. Whilst many other issues intersect with these, we choose not to provide official statements or stances on other areas as our members represent a wide variety of views on these issues.



TRAFFICKING IS A PROBLEM...

- Trafficking is a **HUMAN** problem
- Trafficking is a **PERVASIVE** problem
- Trafficking is a **HIDDEN** problem
- Trafficking is a **ORGANISED** problem
- Trafficking is a **PROFITABLE** problem
- Trafficking is a **FEMALE** problem
- Trafficking is a **MALE** problem
- Trafficking is a **COMPLICATED** problem
- Trafficking is a **OUR** problem

The 'Why' behind putting this material together

Globally, it is estimated that up to **1 BILLION children aged 2-17 years**, have experienced trafficking, physical, sexual or emotional violence, abuse or neglect between 2019 and 2020.

More than one in three victims of confirmed trafficking (34%) were children, mostly girls [2] – a percentage that has more than tripled over the past 15 years. In some low-income regions, around half of victims are children. Girls are mainly trafficked for sexual exploitation (72%) while boys are mostly trafficked to work (66%).

Millions of women, children and men worldwide are out of work, out of school and without social support in the continuing COVID-19 crisis, leaving them at greater risk of human trafficking. We need targeted action to stop criminal traffickers from taking advantage of the pandemic to exploit the vulnerable.

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed child traffickers indoors and online in Europe, making it harder to track down the criminal gangs forcing their victims into prostitution, drug smuggling or into forced labour.

Yet even before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were 50,000 confirmed human trafficking victims in 2018 across the world [3], a number that is likely to have risen on the back of the COVID crisis that has pushed an additional 142 million children and adolescents into poverty in 2020 [4]. At the peak of the pandemic, some 1.6 billion children were out of school, increasing the risk of them falling victim to trafficking or sexual exploitation, forced marriages or early pregnancies [4].

According to Europol [5], technology has expanded the capacity of criminal networks, both in the countries of origin and in those of transit and destination. Through technology, they can use encrypted communications, avoid direct interaction with recruited victims, avoid coming across police, and have access to of GPS-based apps.

One quarter of suspected or identified trafficking victims in Europe are children and the main goal of human traffickers is sexual exploitation.

This heinous system of human trafficking that is so strong and ruthlessly focused primarily on girls and young women, but including more and more boys, is able to adapt and modify its work to stay hidden, making it even more necessary for us collectively to enhance cooperation with the countries of origin and transit, in order to strengthen the fight against trafficking as an international and transnational crime.

Our greatest asset in the fight against trafficking is collaborating as collective members of our communities. But the only way you will be effective in helping to end human trafficking is by being able to identify the signs and patterns of trafficker abuse so that we can report them.

Victims can be difficult to identify, and you could even have a victim in your own home. Unfortunately, without accurate knowledge of human trafficking, people perish.

In today's day and age, parents need to be informed, equipped and actively involved in setting a high standard of love in their homes, talking to their children about sexual abuse, talking to their children about sex trafficking and discussing the dangers of social media.

Many of the team involved in putting this booklet together have experienced parents lack of knowledge and understanding of the threats and problems that put their children at risk. Greater awareness leads to better prevention. Better prevention helps keep our children safe.

[1] Followed by South Asia (3,447), Sub-Saharan Africa (2,833), North America (2,370), East Asia and the Pacific (1,845), Central and Southeast Europe (459) and other regions.

[2] Of the 50,000 victims in court cases between 2016-2018 including 16,217 were minors (9,127 girls, 7,090 boys). UNODC, Global Report 2020 on Trafficking in Persons: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/data-and-analysis/glotip.html>

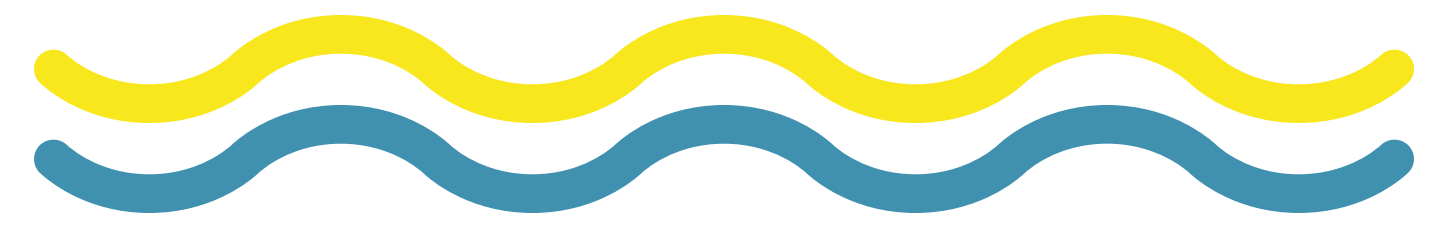
[3] UNODC, Global Report 2020 on Trafficking in Persons: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/data-and-analysis/glotip.html>

[4] According to estimates in Save the Children's The Global Girlhood Report 2020, due to the economic impact of COVID-19, some 500,000 more girls in the world could be forced into marriage. In addition, it could lead to one million more early pregnancies, the main cause of death for girls between 15 and 19 years old, and 2 million more cases of female genital mutilation in the next 10 years, especially among girls under 14. See: <https://www.savethechildren.it/cosa-facciamo/pubblicazioni/global-girlhood-report-2020>

[5] EUROPOL Operations Directorate, The challenges of countering human trafficking in the digital era Report 2020.

How to Talk to Children

By Peta-Ann Small



Children nowadays are more than ever, interested in what's going on in the world.

They want to know about things like abortion and LGBTQ+ rights and whether black lives matter. They want to watch the news and read books, and have a tendency to ask really tough questions, and you know what...?

This creates a tension in the hearts of us as parents between our children's desire to educate themselves and our knowledge of what's out there. We all know the darkness that the news / social media brings, that the world brings, and would love to protect their precious, innocent little heart just a little longer.

But the hard truth for us right now is that our kids will be learning it somewhere, right?

So the question for us needs to be, who is going to frame the conversation for them? Who will tackle the tough topics with our children? Is it going to be us or their friends, or their friends' parents, or their school?

As parents, we want to be the ones framing the political landscape for them. Even more so as Christian parents, in particular, we had better take an interest in talking about the hard and dark things. Because our kids will ask the questions. And if we don't answer, they will find someone who will.

So what should we do? How do we know what's appropriate and at what age? How do we even start the conversation?

Frame the conversation

In my humble (and unprofessional) opinion, the days of "what's appropriate" have come to an end. Our children have unrestricted access to information. If they have a question, they will find an answer, regardless of whether it's "age appropriate." Do we want our children googling Sex? Trafficking?

Sometimes, we may need to water down the conversation to ensure it's age appropriate, but we need to make it a policy that our first question back to them should be "What does the Bible say about that?"

This question is vital because they will soon start thinking for themselves. If we spoon-feed them all the answers, telling them what we think on all the issues, we will have done our kids a disservice when they reach the "my parents don't know anything" stage in life.

Also important to note: our own opinions are flawed, they change with new information, new research, new voices.

The very best thing we can do when our kids ask about a social issue, sexual questions, pornography is direct them back to Scripture—not to avoid the conversation, but to assure them that the answer is based in the truth and to show them how to use Scripture to form convictions.

Revisit the topic

When our kids come home asking tough questions, the first thing we want to know is whether they are serious about the discussion, or are they just asking a question in passing?

Do they want to know what we think, or do they want to tell us what they think? Sometimes we are quick to spew information back at them when they really aren't that interested. This leaves us frustrated and the kids annoyed, and the last thing we want is to deter them from coming to us to ask questions or making comments about what they think. Even if these conversations are in passing, it's a window into their hearts.

When tackling a particularly tough topic, you might want to revisit it and ask them if you can schedule a time to do so. Grab a soft drink or ice cream. Sit on the grass or take them on a walk. This gives you time not only to decide what to say, but also to pray and ask God to go before you. After all, if there is any time we need him to go before us, it is in these kinds of conversations.

And, if you don't have the answer, be honest!

Sharing our own struggles is one of the most transparent and impactful things we can do for our kids, especially in the hard things.

TALKING TO KIDS: TRAFFICKING & TOUGH TOPICS

How to Talk to Children continued ...

Listen well

Finally, in tackling tough topics with our kids, James tells us to “let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God” ([James 1:19-20](#)).

Our children want little more than to feel seen and heard, not just in the world, but especially in their homes. They want to know that their opinion matters and their questions matter.

So, above all, even when it's hard, listen. Even when you don't have the answers, even when you have to water down the conversation, even when you don't like what you're hearing—listen.

The ability to listen to others respectfully and with kindness is not something we see a lot of in the world, but we can absolutely model this for our kids when they come to us for a discussion.

Observe Well

If we want to know how our children are feeling, rather than just the details, observe their behaviour. You'll soon see if your child is uncomfortable with the topic or not.

Don't Over React

Of course show concern, but we need to make sure we don't over react. Children shut down if our reactions are too much. If you show alarm or anxiety on your face, your child might not want to share with you again, thinking it makes you too upset. Take advantage of regular moments you do have together, like car rides, walking to school in the morning and bedtime for casual, low-pressure chats. Consider sharing a few details from your own day to encourage conversation—it shouldn't feel like a one-sided interrogation.

Teach your children to trust their gut: It's easy to ignore the signs, so it's important to teach your children to trust their instincts. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Help them watch out for their friends too. It's often much easier to spot the signs of sex trafficking with a friend.

Explain healthy relationships: Survivors have often said that not knowing the characteristics of a healthy relationship made them vulnerable to being lured into trafficking. We also know that victims often get recruited by someone they know, either a boyfriend, friend or acquaintance.

Talk with your children about consent, safety, setting boundaries and the signs of a healthy relationship such as:

- o Respect
- o Honesty
- o Trust
- o Equality
- o Open communication

We can absolutely show them respect while asking for respect. We can absolutely demonstrate how to disagree while listening to a different opinion. We can absolutely have the tough conversations, especially about issues like sex, pornography, trafficking

There is much I would rather have done with my children, other than talking about these topics, or any other current event, really, but we as parents have to decide that this is too important to push to the side.

These conversations will frame their worldview. If we shut them down, I wonder how they might not value our opinions in the future.

Remember, we are never alone, Jesus' promise to us was that He would be with us always - We can handle the hard parenting "stuff" and we can tackle tough topics with our kids!



Why Parents Need to Know about Trafficking

Human trafficking may seem like an unusual topic to bring up with a child. The subject matter can be frightening, particularly for younger children and parents may naturally be uncomfortable starting the conversation.

The best way to be vigilant and protect our family and friends is by learning the signs and indicators of trafficking and by candidly talking about the possible risks with our children. Having open, honest discussions about this will go a long way. If our children encounter an uncomfortable or potentially dangerous situation/person, ensure they have access to a safe adult to report it to.

Increasingly, traffickers are turning to online message boards, social media websites, private messaging chat apps, shopping centres, and other public places to recruit victims. Traffickers often connect with children online and begin the process of grooming and luring. They look for vulnerabilities or holes in a young person's life and try to fill them.

- Do they have low self-esteem? Traffickers will compliment them and tell them they are good-looking. Do they feel unloved and alone? Traffickers will pose as doting boyfriends and make false promises.
- Traffickers and other predators are using Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and Tik-Tok to have direct access to children

There are even instances of **peer to peer recruitment** happening in high schools. Frank discussions around this issue for both male and female children is important. Traffickers will sometimes use older girls to recruit other females by befriending them and then turning them over to a pimp.

It's important for parents to be able to recognize the warning signs and talk about the luring tactics that these criminals use with their children.

Signs that your child could be trafficked include:

- An older boyfriend in their lives who is controlling;
- Frequently visiting places that are unusual for their age group to attend, such as hotels or motels, clubs etc.
- Dressing more provocatively; Staying out late or all night;
- Hanging out with new friends who are older than them;
- Ignoring childhood friends and family members;
- Drinking or using drugs;
- Skipping school, skipping meals, not showering or stops changing clothes;
- Exhibiting anxious behaviour, lack of sleep, depression;
- Ignoring rules and instructions at school or at home,
- Lying or unable to recall events in their lives;
- Carrying false ID, one or more cell phone(s);
- Has expensive or new clothes, shoes or jewelry of unknown origin;
- Spending more money and possessing expensive gifts from a new friend or boyfriend;
- Talking about a modelling or other job contracts waiting in another town or city;
- Becoming more secretive about spending time online or on their cell phone; and
- Becoming frightened of being online or on mobile phone/cell phone/telephone.

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Statistics

Trafficking in Persons

40+ million people

are in slavery today



Human trafficking happens everywhere

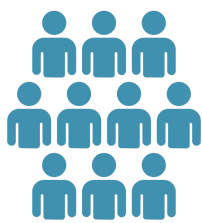
71%

of victims are female

1 in 4

victims are children

European Modern Slavery Risk Factors



estimated population of Europe & central Asia (2021)

747 747 400

worldpopulationreview.com



Estimated number of people in Europe living in Modern Slavery

3 590 000

worldpopulationreview.com



Average regional vulnerability score (at risk to being trafficked) per 100 people

28/100

Global Slavery Inde 2018



Global Supply Chains



Many products found in high-street stores can be traced back to slave labour, including coffee, chocolate, sugar, precious metals, seafood and textiles

Global Supply Chains



Trafficking Facts

WHAT IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING?

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery and is defined by the U.S. Department of State as “the act of recruiting, harbouring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labour or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion.”² As an educator or parent, you can prepare to start the conversation by making sure your own understanding of human trafficking is accurate and complete.

Sex trafficking is not the only kind of human trafficking.

Children may not be aware that multiple forms of trafficking exist:

- Sex trafficking
- Bonded labour
- Child soldiers
- Forced labour (such as involuntary domestic servitude)

They may also not understand how the need for money factors heavily into why people are trafficked. By making children aware of the different forms of trafficking and the economics of each, adults better prepare them to recognize and avoid potentially dangerous scenarios. Human trafficking happens in industries that we interact with on a weekly, if not daily, basis. Some of these work places are expected, such as:

- Illicit massage and spa businesses
- Hotel- and motel-based sex
- Residence-based commercial sex
- Pornography

However, labour trafficking also occurs in places we might not expect:

- Summer camps
- Nursing homes
- Construction sites of private homes
- Lumberyards and sawmills
- Community swimming pools
- Tourism - hotel and motel cleaners and entertainers
- Farms / Agriculture
- Dance troupes
- Travelling sales crews
- Restaurant and food services

Human trafficking happens domestically, not just abroad or across borders. In reality, human trafficking can happen with little or no movement at all. People can be trafficked within their hometowns, and children can be trafficked while living under their parents' roofs.

So, how do you talk to children about human trafficking? Keep reading to find out more, including helpful ideas!

0-2 years



0 - 2 Years

Having a 0-2 year old infant or a toddler in the family can be all-consuming. They depend on their caregivers for almost everything, and they are changing almost daily. Caregivers need to continually adjust and learn from kids as they discover new things about themselves, their family, and the world around them. In these early years, mothers, fathers, and other parenting adults can set patterns for deep attachment, trust, and a strong relationship through the ways they interact with their child, how they respond to their child's behavior, and how they introduce their infant and toddler to the world around them.

*Children are a gift from the Lord;
they are a reward from him.*

Psalm 127:3 NLT

Intellectual Milestones

- Infants and toddlers **learn by exploring** with their hands and mouth. They bang, throw, drop, shake, and put items in their mouths.
- **Talking begins with babbling**, which leads to gradually learning to say and respond to simple words and phrases.
- By age 2, a child typically will have a **vocabulary of 50 words**. As they learn to speak, they'll use two- and three word sentences, like "More juice," "Me want cookie," and "Up, up."

Parent Response

- Give kids access to **safe, everyday objects** that they can play with and, over time, learn to use. This can include spoons, plastic cups, combs, and age appropriate toys.
- Regularly **read aloud** with your child. Encourage them to interact with picture books.
- **"Think out loud"** when you're with your baby or toddler (using appropriate language!). They absorb words when they hear them.

Emotional Milestones

- Children **smile and giggle** when they want more of something. They turn their head, shut their eyes, or cry when they want less of something.
- **Crying is the primary means of communication** when infants' and toddlers' needs are not being met. It is not a sign of misbehavior or manipulation.
- Young children learn to **manage their emotions** through the ways parenting adults and others **respond to them positively**, are dependable, and show that they enjoy being together

Parent Response

- **Be as consistent as possible** in how you respond to your child's needs in positive ways. They will learn they can trust and depend on you to meet their needs.
- **Help children calm down** by meeting their needs (food, sleep, changing a diaper), removing them from a stressful situation, or comforting them.
- If you're experiencing **depression, major stress**, or other issues that interfere with being present with your child, seek help from a professional. Ask others to be there for you and your child, too.

Physical Milestones

- Children will first learn to **hold their head up**. Little by little, they will learn to roll and to sit (usually by six months).
- Usually by 24 months, children learn to creep, then crawl, pull themselves up, walk while holding onto furniture, stand, and then **walk two or three steps without help**.
- At 24 months, children can begin to run, kick a ball, and **walk up and down stairs** (while holding onto someone's hand).
- Young children may **catch a lot of viruses or infections** that go around. As they do, they build up their body's ability to fight off infections in the future.

Parent Response

- Provide a **safe environment** where infants and toddlers can explore and build their motor skills.
- Follow health care providers' recommendations on **regular check-ups**, immunizations, and nutrition.
- Provide toys and other safe objects that **challenge children to develop their muscles** and motor skills. Focus on the toys or objects they're interested in, even if they aren't the latest fads

Social Milestones

- Young children learn to use **smiles, cries, and other expressions to build connections** with parents and others, guiding them to what the child wants or needs. Positive responses reinforce growth.
- Young children **imitate facial expressions** and even develop a smile by three months.
- Infants and toddlers respond to changes in other people's behaviors, facial expressions, and emotions. They learn to **interact as others respond appropriately** to what they do.
- Toddlers will **play in parallel**—near another child, but not with that child.

Parent Response

- **Turn off electronics** so you can really enjoy giggles, eye contact, laughing together, echoing their sounds, and talking to them about what's happening.
- Find ways to regularly **give your child your undivided attention**. (This can be difficult when you're so busy taking care of everything.)
- **Introduce your child to other people**, but don't overwhelm them by expecting them to be passed around and admired (unless they like it). Respond to their cues so they learn that relationships can be enjoyable and safe, not overwhelming.

Spiritual Milestones

- Infants and toddlers express **wonder, joy, and sadness** about what they see and experience. They live in the moment. These can plant the seeds for nurturing their spirituality.
- Through their attachments to parenting adults and others, infants **learn that they can trust the world around them**. This lays the foundation for being open to goodness, sacredness, and the divine (if that's part of the family's culture).

Parent Response

- Respond **positively to their wonder about the world**. Let them help you rediscover your own wonder about things you may not have noticed in a while.
- Introduce them to **music, rituals, sights, stories, sounds, and objects** that are important to your family's spiritual practices or religious traditions.
- Participate as a family in rituals and practices that **engage the five senses**.

Tackling the Trafficking Topic

Children between ages 0 and 2 are not ready for explicit conversations about human trafficking, but educators and parents can begin helping children develop an understanding of their own inherent worth and the value of every human life.

Warm and Responsive Interactions

Children at this stage need a lot of care, and how that care is given does matter. Make sure that those who care for the infant or toddler do so gently, responsively to the cues being given (such as crying), and lovingly (plenty of cuddles and smiles).

Building Self-Esteem

Let children decide between safe, infant / toddler-friendly options, like which toy to play with or which healthy food option to eat. Let them explore their environment, but be ready to respond if they need you. For example, a toddler might be fascinated by an ant but frightened when the ant crawls on their foot. Be ready to reassure them if they need you to let them know it's OK.

Learning to Value Others

Coach children through new social situations. Toddlers might find it hard to share and take turns because they're learning who they are and what's theirs. So you can say, 'It's my turn to have the red block now. Great sharing – well done!'

Developing the Practice of Conversation

For infants, the adult will need to do the talking with plenty of facial expressions. Talk about what is happening or what happened that day. Make sure to respond to facial and other non-verbal cues that are given. With toddlers, help them review the events of the day, asking them simple questions that discuss not only events but also emotions.

Respect and Care for Our Bodies

Infants become increasingly aware of their surroundings and their own bodies; as toddlers they also start to become aware of others' bodies. Use this time as an opportunity to help children understand that we should care for our bodies and treat them with respect. Other people's bodies deserve our respect, too. This includes allowing children to have privacy within safe standards when going to the bathroom and bathing; children should not feel shame about their bodies and their related desires.

Toddlers also begin to notice the body differences between girls and boys. They will begin to be curious and maybe want to explore through touch. Use this time to explain that they can't touch other people's bodies without permission, and that only safe adults can touch their bodies with permission. Make sure to elaborate on who are safe adults and what types of touch are safe and unsafe and that other children should never touch them in an unsafe way.

3-5 years



3 - 5 Years

As toddlers become preschoolers, they begin expressing more and more of **their own personalities**. They have distinct tastes, they are developing language to **express themselves** (Sometimes in embarrassing ways!), and they are learning to navigate a bigger world. They make friends and begin connecting with more adults beyond the family.

Like every age, preschool age is an important time for children's development in which fathers, mothers, other caregivers, extended family, and many other people guide the child as they develop all parts of themselves. When we have a better sense of how they're developing, we're better able to **respond and support them in positive ways**.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Matthew 19:14 NIV

Intellectual Milestones

- **Imaginary play** is a big part of intellectual development for preschoolers.
- Children begin to **name colors and understand simple counting**. They gradually begin to understand the concept of time.
- **Building a strong vocabulary** in early childhood is a critical foundation for learning. At age 3, preschoolers typically know about 300 words. That expands to 1,500 words by age 4, and to 2,500 words by age 5.
- As preschoolers get older, they'll want more and more independence. That's best accomplished by maintaining a **firm structure and giving them a limited number of choices** so they begin learning to make good decisions.

Parent Response

- **Read books aloud every day.** Use the reading guides to discover some high-quality, enjoyable picture books on family relationships.
- Stimulate language development by talking together and **asking open-ended questions** about things that interest them.
- **Limit screen time** (mobile phones, video games, computers, TVs) so that they develop a broad range of interests and ways of learning and interacting.
- Make **art and music** part of your time together, cultivating creativity that stimulates interest, imagination, and learning.
- Give kids increasing **responsibility for taking care of themselves** and helping at home—with your support and guidance. They can decide which clothes to wear to school from among the options you offer.

Emotional Milestones

- Preschoolers are beginning to **understand what they are feeling**, but they aren't really able to manage the emotions. They may giggle uncontrollably at awkward times.
- **Moods can change dramatically** from minute to minute as preschoolers learn how to manage their emotions.
- Preschool age kids **move easily between fantasy and reality**. Imaginary monsters are as frightening to them as a real threat.
- **Fantasy play** can include pretend violence (including online games). Interest in fantasy violence and weapons can be normal at this age; it's not necessarily a cause for alarm.

Parent Response

- **Avoid dismissing, joking about, or shaming children** for their emotions. (This can lead to stuffing emotions inside.) Instead, help them learn to express and manage their emotions in healthy ways.
- Teach children **strategies for dealing with strong emotions** (such as taking deep breaths, taking a break, or counting to 10).
- **Limit screen time** (mobile phones, video games, computers, TVs) so that they develop a broad range of interests and ways of learning and interacting.
- If your child's fantasy play includes weapons or violence, **don't become overly concerned** (unless it's extreme). Rather, use it as a chance to help them start learning the difference between fantasy and reality.
- See a doctor if your child is extremely or **chronically aggressive or fearful**.

Physical Milestones

- **Hopping, climbing, swinging, and doing somersaults** begin at this stage. By age 5, many kids can stand on one foot for 10 seconds or more.
- Children can **draw a person** with up to four body parts by age 5. They draw circles and begin to learn how to **copy a square and some capital letters**. They learn how to use scissors.
- **Kids often become frustrated** with wanting to do something physically and not being able to do it yet. Thus, they have lots of falls and mishaps.

Social Milestones

- Preschoolers shift from “parallel play” to **playing together**. Often their play focuses more on imagination than toys or games. Imaginary play is one way they “try on” adult roles.
- Preschool age children are learning to **cooperate, solve problems, share**, and take turns with others their own age. In the process, they sometimes have to work through conflicts!
- Preschoolers begin to understand that other people have feelings, and they begin to **express empathy and care** to friends and family.
- During these years, children also learn about and **experience prejudice and discrimination** due to race, gender, and age, often from observing adults.
- Preschoolers need to **learn how to deal with conflict** and how to solve problems while also managing their emotions and controlling their impulses.

Parent Response

- As much as possible, give your child chances to **run, climb, play games** with friends, and do other activities that build large motor skills.
- **Play together:** Catch, tag, dolls, making sand castles, running, riding bikes—whatever you both enjoy.
- Encourage children to **practice small motor skills** using safety scissors, building blocks, dice, coloring, and other art projects.
- **Limit screen time.** Consider a rule of 30 minutes of active play for every 30 minutes on a screen (or whatever works for your family).

Parent Response

- **Imaginary play is an important way children practice** for the “real world.” Having imaginary friends is not a sign that your child is lonely.
- As children are sorting out their relationships with friends, they **sometimes hurt each other**. Much of that is a normal part of growing up, but watch to be sure some kids are not ganging up or picking on others.
- More and more, your child will want to **spend time with other children**. Remember, though, that you are still the “home base” that they return to and need as they learn to build other relationships.
- Be particularly intentional in reinforcing **positive views of people who are different** from you and your family. Talk about prejudice and discrimination when you experience or see it so that your child understands that it is not okay.



Spiritual Milestones

- Preschoolers have active imaginations as they experience things they can't see or touch. **They can become enamored by stories** and symbols of faith and spirituality.
- Young children can **ask a lot of creative questions**: "Why is the sky blue?" "Where does God live?" and "If God created everything, who created God?" They aren't looking for logical or irrefutable answers; they're wanting to have a conversation. Encourage them to use their imaginations to think of possible answers.
- Preschoolers often enjoy **acting out heroic stories from religious and spiritual traditions** (such as they enjoy imaginary play). Use their interest to tell and reinforce the stories that are important to your family.

Parent Response

- **Treat with respect children's questions and thoughts** about spiritual experiences, commitments, and beliefs. Ask questions to clarify their comments, rather than correcting or judging what they say.
- **Don't feel like you have to know the answers** to kids' questions about spirituality or religion. Many times when a young child asks a question, they want to talk about the subject—not get an answer. Ask the question back, and see where the conversation goes.
- If you have family celebrations, include **children in meaningful ways** (such as helping to light candles or singing together). Talk with them about why you do what you do. Ask them about how they experience the rituals.
- **Tell stories and read books or scripture** together that introduce your child to your family's traditions and beliefs.

Tackling the Trafficking Topic

Children ages 3 to 5 are not ready for explicit conversations about human trafficking, but educators and parents can begin helping children develop an understanding of their own inherent worth and the value of every human life. (See "Talking to Kids: Secrets")

Respect and Care for Our Bodies

Children at this stage begin learning to care for themselves. They start brushing their own teeth, dressing, and using the bathroom on their own. Use this time as a continued opportunity to help children understand that we should care for our bodies and treat them with respect. Other people's bodies deserve our respect, too. Explain that our bodies should never be used to get something we want—even if someone offers a prize, candy, or a toy—or in a way that we don't like.

Children are also learning body parts and body autonomy during this time. It is vital that they are taught correct names for body parts! As adults, it is key that we are not embarrassed to name and refer to body parts and functions while also teaching children that these discussions should only occur with safe adults.

Our Right to Personal Space

Make sure children know they always have the right to ask for personal space along with understanding safe and unsafe touch. This should include allowing the child to have autonomy over whether they want to be touched in certain ways. For instance, asking the child permission to tickle them, hug them, etc. This will empower your child to say, "No" to unnecessary and unwanted touch. Likewise, they should respect other people's personal space as well, asking the same questions to others. They should know that if another child or adult makes them or another person feel uncomfortable, then they should tell an adult they trust as soon as possible.

Fairness and Equity

When a child witnesses something unfair happening at play, church, school, etc., talk about what happened and address their feelings. Reiterate that fairness is one of our core values and should never be compromised.

You might say, "It's not fair that John took Miguel's toy truck without asking. And it's okay for you to feel mad or sad about it."

Gently help children understand that sometimes life is unfair, but this does not make cruelty and unkindness okay.

Gender Roles and Stereotypes

As children begin to socialize outside their families, they will start to pick up on the different expectations of girls and boys and of women and men. Help children learn to recognize stereotypes and understand how they affect our relationships and social behaviours. Opening this conversation can help prepare young children to consider more serious questions about gender identity later on.

You might say:

"Mommy likes to cook, but that doesn't mean she has to cook."

"Daddy works hard to make sure our family is comfortable and safe, but even if he loses his job, he is still a good dad."

"If Susan doesn't want to give James a hug, she does not have to just because she's a girl."

6-9 years



6 - 9 Years

As children enter and grow through elementary school, their world and their sense of possibilities expand. They are developing the knowledge and skills that help them be competent in many areas of development. Their sense of the world's possibilities expands—both its opportunities and its dangers. They are also spending much less time, on average, with their parents than they used to.

Each new experience offers opportunities and challenges for connecting with elementary school age kids. On the one hand, parents may feel like their kids are getting big enough to be much more independent. At the same time, they may also want to protect their kids from the risks they worry about. The balancing act for parents is to “have their back” while also giving children opportunities to discover their own voice, power, and potential.

"Whoever embraces one of these children as I do embraces me, and far more than me – God who sent me."

Mark 9:37

Intellectual Milestones

- Children become focused on building their own sense of **being competent**. They want to **learn new things** that build their self-confidence during elementary school.
- They **learn to read**, and many enjoy reading “chapter books” on their own.
- Their **attention span grows**. They ask more complex questions, and they want more detailed answers.
- They will often take up **hobbies or collecting things** during these years.

Parent Response

- Help kids focus on feeling good about **getting better at things**, not just in comparison to others.
- **Read together**. When children can read themselves, let them read to you. (And even then, they will enjoy being read to.) Talk about books you read.
- **Explore the arts together**, from drawing and painting to music and drama. Find what your child really enjoys.
- Visit **parks, museums, cultural and historical sites, libraries**, and other interesting places together.
- When you're doing errands and activities, **count things and read words** so they begin to connect these skills to real life.

Emotional Milestones

- Younger elementary school-age children cannot yet put themselves in other people's shoes, so they **often act self-centered**. As they grow, they become more empathetic and see things from other people's perspectives
- Sometimes children **sulk, pout, and worry**. They are still figuring out how to manage their emotions.
- Children tend to **have their feelings easily hurt**. They also tend to assume that people who hurt them “did it on purpose.”

Parent Response

- Help children learn to **recognize and describe their own emotions**. Pay attention to their body language, behavior, and words. Give them practice in talking about their emotions without correcting them.
- Work with your kids to help **manage their feelings well**, not just stuff them inside. This might involve taking a break, writing about them, counting to 10, or practicing deep breathing.
- **Set an example** of managing emotions well. When you slip up, model apologizing and making amends.

Physical Milestones

- Kids develop **strong and smooth motor skills**, but their coordination and fine motor skills vary considerably. This can affect their writing, how they dress, and how they perform chores and other tasks.
- Children like (and need) to move. Many become **restless and wiggle** if they sit for too long, which is why school can be difficult for some children.
- There are great **differences in height, weight, and build** among children during these years. These are affected by genetics as well as lifestyle. These differences can lead to **socially awkward situations and teasing**.

Parent Response

- Support your child in **getting involved in sports or other activities** that they enjoy.
- **Limit screen time**, balancing it with physical exercise, outdoor play, and other activities.
- Talk honestly and respectfully with your kids about **their changing bodies**, their sexuality, and their gender. Help them be comfortable with who they are as they change, even if it's different from other kids their age.
- Give children more and more **responsibility for their own health habits**, including healthy food choices and hygiene.
- **Never make fun of children** for being awkward, clumsy, or developing at different rates than others. Use differences to emphasize the importance of respecting everyone.
- If children have trouble with **weight control**, talk with your doctor. Childhood weight issues may indicate other factors that need to be addressed.

Social Milestones

- Elementary school age kids begin to pay more attention to those around them. They **compare themselves to others** and try to fit in.
- School-age children get **more selective in choosing friends**, and they make judgments about other people. At age 6 or 7, kids tend to do best with one friend, but by age 8 or 9 they may have several best friends.
- Kids may have a **keener interest in differences between boys and girls**. School-age children often want to play only with friends of the same gender. These dynamics can be challenging for children who are struggling with gender identity.
- Children become aware of other people's **stereotypes, biases, and rejection** due to race, gender, age, weight, and other factors, particularly when they experience the bias. Adults play an important role in helping them interpret these issues so that they do not internalize negative biases about themselves or others.

Parent Response

- **Talk about friends and friendships**, encouraging your child to interact with a wide range of other kids.
- Support your child in participating in social activities in **many different settings with different people from different backgrounds**.
- As they interact with others be aware that questions may arise about differences, **keep communication open** about these differences and other questions that they may have.
- As they begin to understand or experience biases, children may want to pull back from activities. Reinforcing the importance of **positive relations across differences** is often more effective than overly negative messages about discrimination and bias at this age. Help children learn to respect themselves and others. Talking with teachers and others about consistent and repeated messages about being respectful of all can help set a positive environment, as children are still very open to learning from adults.

Spiritual Milestones

- Because elementary school age children are concrete in their thinking, they begin to internalize spiritual concepts and experiences through **storytelling, rituals, and activities**, such as lighting candles, sharing music, using actions, or holding icons.
- Elementary school children often **ask big questions**, such as “If God made everything, who made God?” or “Where do you go when you die?” These questions are normal parts of their developing intellectual capacities.
- Children may be **curious about their friends’ traditions** and rituals that are different from your family’s. Conversations with adults about these differences play a big role in how respectful children become regarding religious, spiritual, and cultural differences.

Parent Response

- **Read stories, share music, or create art** together that reflects religious or spiritual themes that are important to your family. This includes their participation in church with reading words while singing, etc.
- If you are part of a religious or spiritual community, **encourage your child to be involved** in the rituals, such as lighting candles or opening sacred texts.
- Make conversations about spiritual matters a **normal part of your conversations**. You don’t have to know all the answers; sometimes it’s best to explore ideas together and, perhaps, research questions together.
- Spend time regularly with other parents and families who **share your spiritual beliefs, practices, and priorities**. Create opportunities for your child to build friendships with other kids who share your family’s values and traditions. Likewise, explore together through conversation and experience others’ traditions and beliefs in order to create a healthy view of differences.

Tackling the Trafficking Topic

Children between ages 6 and 9 have more world experience and abilities to better express themselves than younger children. They are also more likely to be exposed to upsetting news and online content that is violent or inappropriate. Provide a safe place for kids in this age group to discuss these things and affirm them for coming to you with questions.

Respect and Care for Our Bodies

Respect for everyone's bodies and their differences should continued to be taught. This includes continuing to reinforce correct names for body parts. Likewise, reinforcement of personal space and safe and unsafe touch is important, making sure that children understand these rules apply to both adults and other children, and empowering them to tell a trusted adult when they or someone else's body is not being respected.

Notions of work

Between ages 6 and 12, children begin to understand work as something adults do during the week in exchange for money, which helps them pay for things their families need: food, school supplies, clothes, and their homes.

When children come to visit you at work, or when they ask about your job, consider introducing the concept of forced labour. Explain that many people in the world don’t get to choose their jobs. Many times they are forced to work without being paid fairly, and they may even work in unsafe conditions.

Allowance

If the children you parent or teach receive an allowance, start teaching them about fair compensation. You could open the conversation with, “You’re a kid, and you get 5 Euro each week. But do you think it’s fair for an adult to earn 5 Euro per week?”

Explain that some people work for very little money. Highlight the importance of being diligent and doing research about the clothes and food we consume in order to make sure the people behind them are being treated fairly.

Internet Safety

As children begin to use the internet for school and entertainment, make sure that you are having open and direct conversations about expectations and healthy age-appropriate awareness of dangers. While making sure that adequate protection and safety measures are in place for their internet usage, also make sure to talk about why not everything on the internet is appropriate and safe. Ensure that conversations do not blame or shame while being honest and not dismissive in order to keep communication open; encourage them to come to you with questions before looking for answers online.

10-14 years



These years are a pivotal time when young people begin to **discover who they are and their place in the world**. With a growing ability to see the consequences of different actions, tweens and young teens are more able to think like adults, but they don't have the experience and judgment needed to act like adults. Strong support can help them **develop the confidence** they need to make positive choices as they sort out who they are and how they fit with others

"Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."

Colossians 3:21 NKJV

Intellectual Milestones

- Young teens become more and **more independent**. They cultivate their own interests, preferences, and beliefs, including choices about friends, sports, interests, and school.
- How they think begins to shift from how a child thinks to **how an adult thinks**. This includes having more advanced reasoning skills (such as thinking through hypothetical situations) and an ability to think abstractly (or think about things they can't see).
- They begin to have their **own thoughts and opinions** on many topics—including things they have always accepted, such as family rules.
- As they develop advanced reasoning skills, they may want to **argue**, question authority, or challenge society's standards. It's how they practice these new, unfamiliar skills.
- They often develop a stronger **sense of right and wrong**, including a deep sense of justice or injustice they experience or see around them.
- Youth of color may become particularly conscious of their **racial or cultural identity and heritage**. They may become highly critical of bias and prejudice they see and experience.
- Some young teens also gain awareness of their **sexual orientation and/or gender identity**. If they identify as sexual or gender minorities (LGBTQ+), they may face additional challenges to feel like they have support and fit into their family, school, and community.

Parent Response

- **Listen to your kids** as they explore and test their new thinking abilities—even if they say things you disagree with or don't like. Take their opinions seriously.
- **Don't shut down or ridicule their ideas**, which hurts their self-confidence and openness to you. Instead, ask follow-up questions and ideas that push them to think even more deeply.
- Continue to focus on the **importance of school and learning**. Even if you can't help with the more-complex topics they are learning as they get older, your interest and questions reinforce the importance of learning.
- **Encourage curiosity and critical thinking** about the world around them. Talk about tough issues in the news and follow up on things they are interested in.
- **Share power** with your child, allowing them to have input and make decisions when it's appropriate.
- **Allow disagreements**. They are an important part of a young person figuring out who they are that's different from their parent(s). You'll often discover that you learn new things about each other when you talk about your different perspectives on priorities, values, and issues in the world.
- If your kids are part of an ethnic or cultural minority group, provide opportunities for them to connect with others to help them **develop pride in their own identity and culture**.
- If your child identifies with a sexual or gender minority community, **connect them with others who share their identity** and can help them learn to navigate relationships and the world around them, which may not be welcoming.

Emotional Milestones

- As kids go through puberty, they can experience **roller-coaster emotions**. They may quickly swing from being happy to being sad or from feeling smart to feeling dumb.
- Many kids become emotionally sensitive. They can be **easily offended or hurt**.
- Kids are likely to **focus on themselves**, shifting between being overconfident to being unsure of themselves.
- The changes in their bodies, how they think, their friends, and the world around them (such as new schools) can **create a lot of stress** for some young teens.

Parent Response

- **Be patient and gentle** with kids, as they experience strong emotions that can quickly change.
- Because kids this age have **strong emotions**, they tend to either “love” school or “hate” it. If your child happens to “hate” school, help her identify parts that are more enjoyable—even if it’s recess, gym, and lunch.
- Some kids will **give you the silent treatment** when they become angry—or if they don’t get their way. Give them time to regroup, and find ways to reconnect and talk again.

Physical Milestones

- **Puberty typically begins** during these years. Boys’ voices deepen, and most grow facial and pubic hair. Most girls start their period, and grow pubic hair and breasts.
- With **growth spurts** can come clumsiness and a lack of coordination. When you grow several inches taller in a few months, it inevitably affects your sense of balance and coordination!
- This is the age when kids need to pay more attention to **personal hygiene**, which may include using deodorant for the first time or bathing more frequently. Some spend hours in the bathroom. Others may refuse to bathe or change clothes.
- Kids typically become **aware of their own sexuality** and the sexuality of their peers during these years. They may become highly curious or very private. They do best when these parts of development are viewed as normal and healthy, not the subjects of teasing or shame.

Parent Response

- **Be warm and accepting** of your child as they grow and develop, recognizing they may need you to show your care in new ways as they get older. This is particularly important for kids who may develop faster or slower than their peers, or who identify as LGBTQ+.
- Encourage your child to **be physically active**, particularly if they don’t excel athletically. Experiment with various individual and team sports and activities to find one that they enjoy and will keep them fit. Or they may find that household tasks or physical work are more rewarding for them.
- **Talk honestly and openly** (but privately) with your teen about issues they’re facing in their physical and sexual development. Assure them that the changes are normal. If you’re unsure, get help from a trusted healthcare professional.
- Work hard to continue having **regular family meals** together, even as activities get busier. Try to eat healthy foods, and take time to talk with each other.

Social Milestones

- Some young teenagers bristle at **physical affection from mothers and fathers**. They can seem rude and short-tempered.
- Many kids form **cliques and tight-knit groups**. They are very aware of who's in what group—though they may not know where they fit. Those who are not part of these tight-knit groups can experience a deep sense of isolation and rejection.
- **Peers have more and more influence**, both positively and negatively. Kids want to fit in, so they may do things with others they would never do alone.
- Some young teens may face pressure (or be curious) to use **alcohol, tobacco, or drugs**, or to engage in other risky behaviors that adults have made “off limits.”

Parent Response

- **Get to know your teen's friends** while also giving them space to just be with their friends. Many families work to create a space in their home where young teens feel welcomed and comfortable as a way to both give space and keep them safe.
- Encourage your young teen to **balance social activities** (which may be their top priority) with other responsibilities and activities, including school and family responsibilities.
- **Be aware of your kids' schedules. Ask about changes** as they may indicate an issue.
- Talk with your kids often about **what they see and do on social media**. Talk through activities or messages that concern you.
- **Be direct and open** with your young teen about sensitive issues such as sexuality, racism or bias, gender identity, relationships, and substance use.
- As kids work through personal and social issues with you, let them know you are willing to **listen without attacking, blaming, or shaming**, even if you sometimes need to set limits and clarify expectations.
- Be proactive in talking about **your family's values and expectations** regarding alcohol and tobacco use as well as other risky behaviours while also asking your child's views on these topics and if they differ. Talk to other parents or professionals if you have concerns.

Spiritual Milestones

- During these years, many young teens work through **how spirituality and religion are part of their own identities**. For some, this can be difficult; for others, it goes smoothly.
- As young people begin to think abstractly, they often also ask **challenging questions about the world, their place in it, and other big questions** (e.g., Why do bad things happen to good people?). They are often not satisfied with the answers they accepted as children.

Parent Response

- **Keep talking with, asking questions of, and listening to** your kids, even if they say things about spirituality, faith, religion, and values that worry you or you don't agree with.
- **Tell your own story and articulate your own beliefs and questions** (and why you hold them). Young adolescents want to be respected and have honest conversations with parents, and they may be curious about your experiences.
- Continue to **maintain family's spiritual practices, rituals, and commitments** that are important to you. Your child may not seem to be interested, but these practices still help shape their lives.

Tackling the Trafficking Topic

Children & adolescents between ages 10 and 14 have more world experience, abstract thinking skills, and abilities to better express themselves than younger children. They are also more likely to be exposed to upsetting news and online content that is violent or inappropriate. Provide a safe place for kids in this age group to discuss these things and affirm them for coming to you with questions. Adolescents are better prepared to discuss complex issues but may be less willing to open up to an educator or parent, especially about sensitive topics. Broach the subject anyway, knowing that the information you share may keep your children safe and make them advocates for fair labour practices and healthy relationships.

Allowance / Earnings from Chores

If the children you parent or teach receive an allowance or money for completing small tasks, start teaching them about fair compensation. You could open the conversation with, “You’re a kid, and you get 5 Euro each week. But do you think it’s fair for an adult to earn 5 Euro per week?”

Explain that some people work for very little money. Highlight the importance of being diligent and doing research about the clothes and food we consume in order to make sure the people behind them are being treated fairly; make it a practice as a family to do this.

Sexual Education

As they and their peers begin to think about or even begin dating, adolescents need to know that their and others' bodies are not commodities for anyone to use for pleasure or money. Emphasize that sexual relationships should always be explicitly consensual, and that no one should ever have to exchange sexual acts for safety and/or acceptance. At the same time, this is a good time to begin the discussion that sex trafficking does happen.

Labour and Demand

Adolescents may not comprehend the economic side of trafficking, particularly if their only understanding of human trafficking is sex trafficking. As they learn about economics and international trade, educators and parents can open discussions about bonded labour and involuntary domestic servitude.

Technology

Most adolescents have their own electronic devices. Though, there may still be some parental control, it is vital that adolescents be taught increasing self-monitoring and responsibility. There needs to be open conversations about expectations from both the adults and the adolescents along with discussions about issues, such as privacy settings, divulging personal information online, sexting, pornography, etc.

Remember: Be Honest About What You Don’t Know

When your children ask questions that you don’t know how to address, offer to research the answer online with them or find an organization that can provide accurate information.

15-18 years



15 - 18 Years

Through the teenage years, young people are preparing for adult responsibilities and independence. They are sorting through their interests, priorities, friendships, purpose, and other areas of life. Some are caught up in the everyday moments. Others focus on their futures, including work, education after high school, and making a difference in society.

Of course, teenagers may seem to need less practical help to get things done than they used to. Some can drive, and they are developing a wide range of life skills. However, they still need parenting adults—and other adults—who are there for them, guiding them, supporting them, and being with them through good and bad. During these years, they need close—if changing—connections as they continue to discover who they are and their place in the world.

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young. Set an example for the believers in what you say and in how you live. Also set an example in how you love and in what you believe. Show the believers how to be pure.

I Timothy 4:12 NIRV

Intellectual Milestones

- As teenagers get older and think more abstractly, they become **more comfortable with “gray” areas** on topics that seemed “black-and-white” when they were younger.
- During middle adolescence, teens can think and talk abstractly and complexly, but they may not have honed the **skills and habits to plan and follow through** on their ideas. They can easily get distracted and move on to other things.
- Many teens enjoy flexing their critical thinking skills by **talking about big questions** regarding science, racism and justice, purpose, spirituality, politics, and other topics. Some become passionate about issues that matter to them in the world.
- Ethnic identity develops for youth of color during these years. If a **strong sense of ethnic identity** develops, young people are more likely to reject negative, stereotypical views of their culture.
- Some teens use their new intellectual capacities in middle adolescence to **challenge their parents constantly**. Even though this can wear down parents, it helps teens sharpen their thinking and figure out how to think for themselves.

Parent Response

- Take time to **enjoy stimulating, rich conversations** with your teen as they develop their own perspectives and ideas. Learn from them.
- **Talk honestly about the questions, issues, and ideas** that your teen encounters as their world expands—even when you disagree with some of what they see.
- Be **patient with challenging conversations** when your teen pushes the limits. Give yourself breaks, and try not to take so personally the ways they push back or push away—it’s a hard part of growing up for parents.
- **Regularly compliment** your teen for accomplishments and growth.
- **Expect more of your teen** as they develop more skills and become more responsible.
- Expand possibilities for your teen by **introducing them to new ideas, people, places, and experiences** that help them discover new parts of themselves and the world around them.
- **Join your teen when they identify issues and causes** that are important to them. Let them help you renew or update your commitments to social change.

Emotional Milestones

- Though **most teens have relatively stable feelings**, some teens deal with ongoing sadness or depression. Left untreated, this can contribute to problems in school, substance abuse, unsafe sex, and other problems.
- Adolescents are better able to **identify and express their emotions** appropriately. They get better at coping with stress in healthy ways.
- Teens begin to understand that their **feelings and attitudes can change in different situations**. They might recognize that they are shy with some people and more gregarious with others.
- Teens may **yo-yo from enjoying their independence to craving your attention**.

Parent Response

- **Continue to express care and maintain a warm, loving relationship**, which helps them manage the emotions they experience as they grow up.
- Help your teen learn how to recognize and **deal with stress, anger, and sadness**. Managing these effectively will be a skill they can use throughout their lives.
- Try to **be available when your teen is ready for a conversation about stuff they are dealing with**. That time may not come until late in the evening or when you're driving somewhere together.
- If you see **troubling changes** in your teen's emotions (particularly anger, sadness, or depression) that last more than a day or so, **talk specifically with them about your concern**. If it continues, seek help from a health professional.

Physical Milestones

- Teens continue to **mature at different rates**. Some may worry that they aren't maturing physically; some may mature earlier than expected.
- Some teens in middle adolescence **look physically older** than they are. A 15-year-old can be mistaken for a 21-year-old, which can lead to inappropriate adult relationships and activities.
- Most teenagers have **trouble waking up in the morning**. Part of this is because they stay up later., but part of it is biological. Older teenagers tend to shortchange sleep, which can hinder their development.

Parent Response

- **Talk openly and honestly** with your teen about their growth, including the fact that differences in timing are normal. Keeping lines of communication open will make it more likely they seek your help if they encounter difficult situations.
- Help your teen **monitor and manage their health habits**, including sleep, exercise, and eating. They need to take responsibility for these things, but parents can play important roles in helping them solve problems, set goals and priorities, and remember to do things they commit to doing.
- Continue to have open, frank conversations--not lectures--about usage of controlled substances, and their long-lasting effects on their still developing bodies. During these conversations, let your teen express their own opinions without shame and judgement, ensuring that they know while there are consequences to their choices, you love and support them.

Social Milestones

- Though most families experience some tensions as kids gain independence, only about **one in five teens has a high-conflict relationship** with parenting adults. Most can see both the positive and negative aspects of their parents.
- As they get older, teens tend to have **more independence from** and **less conflict with parents**. They typically spend more time with their friends. On average, teens have about four to six close friends.
- Most teens build close friendships with peers who are like them and **share their interests and values**. Those who develop friendships across ethnic differences tend to become less prejudiced over time.
- In middle adolescence, dating becomes common, and **some teens develop intense romantic relationships**. It is not uncommon for teens to start exploring more intimate relationships and even engage in sexual relationships.
- As they get older, teens become **less and less influenced by their peers** on major values and choices. But friends and peers continue to influence clothing styles, music, and fads.

Parent Response

- If your relationship seems strained, **find connections** wherever possible with your teen. If your teen pulls back and you as parents pull back, the connection can become so strained that they eventually snap. As parents, it is important to do what you can to try and prevent this.
- **Get to know your child's friends**, including any romantic partners. Be welcoming, but not over-eager, so they are comfortable being around you.
- Respect your teen's need for privacy while also **being available** when they need help. If they see you as more of a resource (even a tough one) than an enforcer, they are more likely to open up when they are confronting difficult issues in their relationships. Help your teen **practice what to do in difficult social situations**. Having a strategy in mind can help deal with pressures or potentially dangerous situations, such as riding with a drunk driver.
- **Be aware of your kids' schedules. Ask about changes** as they may indicate an issue.

Spiritual Milestones

- Young people **approach their spiritual identity in many different ways**:
 - Some pull back from religious or spiritual activities from their childhood.
 - Others become fervent and deeply committed.
 - Others express curiosity about other people's beliefs and practices.
 - And still, others express little interest in other belief systems.

Each of these options can be ways they are **seeking to "own" their spiritual commitments** and practices, not necessarily an active rejection of what their families value.

Parent Response

- Explore **different spiritual practices and traditions together. Talk about what's attractive**, familiar, confusing, or off-putting to you (while maintaining respect for others). Sometimes these explorations help clarify what is most important to you.
- **Model spiritual practices and commitments** that are important to you. Actions often speak louder than words.
- Teenagers sometimes can ask tough questions. **Be open to their questions** and help them process things that may not make sense to them. You do not need to have the answers to their questions; simply ask more questions.
- It may be scary to consider your teen exploring their own faith, but in reality, this is the most exciting time, when teens start asking tough questions they begin a more authentic and real relationship with Jesus. As parents take solace in the fact that Jesus loves your teen more than you ever could and wants the very best for them, too.

Tackling the Trafficking Topic

Adolescents are better prepared to discuss complex issues but may be less willing to open up to an educator or parent, especially about sensitive topics. Broach the subject anyway, knowing that the information you share may keep your children safe and make them advocates for fair labour practices and healthy relationships.

Sexual education

Continue to reinforce to adolescents that their and others' bodies are not commodities for anyone to use for pleasure or money. Emphasize that sexual relationships should always be explicitly consensual, and no one should ever have to exchange sexual acts for safety and/or acceptance. At the same time, make sure to discuss the reality of sex trafficking.

Labour and demand

Adolescents may not comprehend the economic side of trafficking, particularly if their only understanding of human trafficking is sex trafficking. As they learn about economics and international trade, educators and parents can open discussions about bonded labour and involuntary domestic servitude.

Financial literacy and practices

Adolescents may begin working or have friends who hold jobs while going to school. As they start managing money, teach them how to manage their finances, including reading a paycheck, creating a weekly budget, and saving and giving money. Good habits with money can help adolescents avoid desperate and potentially dangerous financial situations in the future.

Technology

Most adolescents, if not earlier, have their own electronic devices. Though, there may still be some parental control, it is vital that adolescents be taught self-monitoring and responsibility. There needs to be open conversations about expectations from both the adults and the adolescents along with discussions about issues, such as sexting, pornography, etc.

Remember: Be Honest About What You Don't Know

When your children ask questions that you don't know how to address, offer to research the answer online with them or find an organization that can provide accurate information.

Engaging with Children



SEX TRAFFICKING

SEX TRAFFICKING:

When a person is lured, tricked or manipulated to sell their body to make money for someone else.

It can happen to **anyone** regardless of



age



culture



income



orientation



gender



neighbourhood

Traffickers **find** victims through

online schools malls parties libraries bus stops



Victims are often **recruited** by someone they know:

1/3 by males
they considered
to be their **boyfriends**¹

25% through
friends,
often victims themselves¹

Traffickers **lure** victims with **promises of**:



love



lifestyle



security



acceptance



money



attention



gifts



drugs &
alcohol



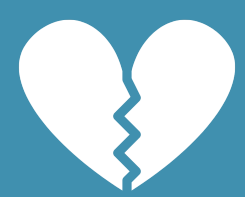
shelter



food

SEX TRAFFICKING

Tell someone you trust ...



If you feel

Like your'e being made to do things
your're not comfortable with

Disrespected or powerless

That you don't have any control

That you don't have a choice or
other options



If you hear things like:

"Don't tell anyone"

"It's our secret"

"You owe me"

"I need you to do something just
this once for our future together"



If you experience things like:

Isolates you from family friends

Buys you lots expensive things

Encourages you to skip school, miss
curfew, try drinking or drugs

Promises you a better life

Encourages you to be secretive
about them and your whereabouts

Know the **signs**. Trust your **instinct**

Key Messages for Kids about Human Trafficking:



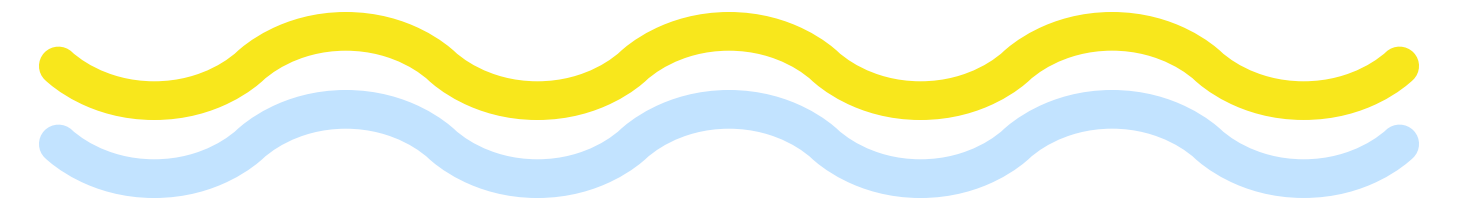
1. Educate yourself on the issue, and learn the signs of a trafficked victim. ([UN Quick Reference Guide](#))
2. Don't accept friend requests from people you don't know on social media and online. Traffickers commonly use sites like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and online gaming to lure their victims.
3. Be aware of how traffickers recruit people, and pay attention to your surroundings.
4. Don't reveal too much about yourself (i.e. your full name, address, school, or living situation) to people you don't know, whether on social media sites or in person, no matter how friendly the person may be.
5. Never agree to meet someone you don't know without first consulting a trusted adult (i.e. parent, teacher, guidance counselor).
6. If you feel uncomfortable or are hesitant about a situation, confide in an adult who you can help you make the best choices.
7. Making a decision to leave a situation or relationship where you feel unsafe or are being harmed or threatened can be hard and scary. If possible, talk to someone you trust, like a friend, family member, counselor, or youth worker.
8. If you are in immediate danger or are being physically harmed, call your location's emergency number / police for help.
9. If running away from home, try to find a safe place to go
10. If you suspect you or a friend are at risk of trafficking, call your local / national hotline. ([EFN National Hotline List](#))

Key Ways that Families, Churches, & Communities Can Counter Human Trafficking:

- Pledge to stand in solidarity with survivors and work for a world where everyone has the freedom to make their own choices about how they live and work.
- Encourage schools to create thoughtful, well-informed campaigns to inform youth about sex and labor trafficking.
- Support survivor-owned or led businesses and businesses that offer meaningful employment opportunities to survivors.
- [Understand the whole story](#) - not only the "signs or indicators" of human trafficking. Context is key to understanding this complex and diverse crime.
- Learn more and share information about [what makes people vulnerable to human trafficking](#).
- Advocate for local and national policies that support healthy families, good jobs, and strong communities as a way to prevent and reduce trafficking.
- Support local, national, and international policies that can prevent or reduce sex and labor trafficking.
- Learn [what products are likely to be produced by forced or child labor](#) (list begins on page 30) - and how they might make their way into your home. As a family, complete "[How Many Slave Work for You?](#)"
- Learn about business policies - such as supply chain practices - that can help prevent trafficking and work with your company / church to implement them.
- Are you an attorney? A truck driver? Or a medical professional? Learn how specific professional skills can be put to use supporting survivors of trafficking in your community.
- Fundraise / donate money, miles, points, and more to anti-trafficking organizations or to organizations that support vulnerable communities, like emergency shelters and food banks. .

Sex Trafficking and the Cycle of Violence

By Stephy Eddy



Sex Trafficking is an extreme form of violence against women that has slowly been normalised and legitimised.

Consumers, traffickers, and society in general accept this form of violence because they have been accepting other types of violence against women.

It starts slowly through “minor acts of violence” towards women: objectifying women (commercials where women bodies are used to sell cars or perfume); patriarchal systems where women are oppressed or lack the same rights in their day to day lives (unequal pay for the same job as a man; minor presence in higher positions--only 36,1% of the UE parliament are women); and grows from there into domestic violence (1 in 4 women have suffered or will suffer domestic violence in their lifetime).

Experts agree that pornography has become the tool to educate on sex, so when men/boys have a desire for sex the way they see it in pornography and women refuse, they go to prostitution because in paying for sex, they feel entitled to whatever they want.

This is the cycle of violence. It starts by legitimising small/minor acts of violence against women that lead to the most extreme way of violence, which is abuse and prostitution/exploitation.

So how can we as parents and educators stop this cycle of violence?

By Naomi Kosek

It requires us to have conversations with our children, both girls and boys about gender equality. Gender equality is the state of equal access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making; and the state of valuing different behaviors, aspirations and needs equally, regardless of gender. This means teaching children that all of the following are unacceptable:

- jokes/teasing, stereotypes, degrading language, and objectification that targets any person or group, including gender.
- harassment and threats, including emotional manipulation of all people, including based upon gender.
- economic control of someone else based upon gender.
- limiting of appropriate emotional expression based upon gender (i.e. Boys don't cry. Girls can't be angry.).

Of course, teaching these lessons requires on-going dialogue and not a lecture. For instance, talk about the commercials that you see whether concerning stereotyping toys for specific genders or selling adult products with sexualized women. In addition, remember we as adults must model the behaviors that we want to encourage.



Key Online Safety Principles for All Age Groups:

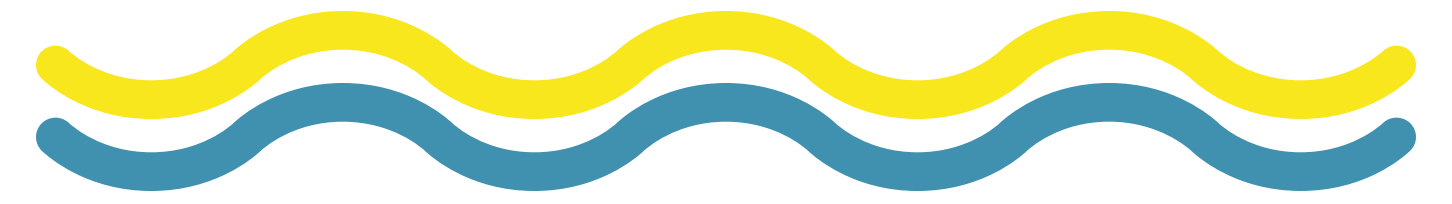
- Keep lines of communication open. This means a two-way dialogue.
- Create a list of age-appropriate Internet rules with your kids. (See Helpful Links below.)
- Set parental controls at the age-appropriate levels and use filtering and monitoring tools as a compliment--not a replacement--for parental supervision. Educate yourself and your child on privacy and safety settings for each device and site used.
- Supervise all Internet-enabled devices and keep devices in a public area of the home.
- Talk to your kids about age-appropriate healthy sexuality in the event that they encounter sexually explicit online pornography at home, school, a friend's house, or the library .
- Encourage your kids to come to you if they encounter anything online that makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened. (Stay calm and don't blame your child; otherwise, they won't turn to you in the future for help when they need it.)
- Teach them not to interact with people online that they don't actually know offline because an online predator or cyberbully can disguise him/herself. Likewise, teach them to not share personal information online (and off) with people that they do not know.
- Check the history file on devices to see which sites your child has accessed. Likewise, monitor your child's social media accounts and what others are commenting and posting about your child.
- Talk to your child and be aware of cyberbullying. Teach them that any online activity meant to intimidate, threaten, tease, or harm them or anyone else is unacceptable and needs to be reported.



Helpful Links for Online Safety:

- General:
 - [Guide to European Apps & Social Media](#)
 - [Online Safety Database of European Resources](#)
 - [Database of European Helplines for Online Info](#)
 - [News & Resources for Parents by Country](#)
 - [How to Protect Kids from Cyber Grooming](#)
 - ["How to Talk to Kids About Pornography"](#)
- Toddler & Pre-School:
 - [Internet Safety for 2-7 year olds](#)
- Young Elementary:
 - [Internet Safety for 8-10 year olds](#)
- Upper Elementary / Middle School / Tweens
 - [Internet Safety for 11-13 year olds](#)
 - [Online Toolkit for Education & Discussion](#)
- Teens:
 - [Internet Safety for 14-18 year olds](#)





Secrets: A Lesson for Children

By Allison Fowler

Secrets

Parents and teachers need to be aware that perpetrators can use certain childlike vocabulary to silence children about the sexual abuse that is being done to them. An example of this is telling the child “This is a secret between you and me. You can’t tell your mommy and daddy.” This may cause the child to not want to share because he or she knows that breaking a secret is not good. Parents and teachers need to encourage children not to keep secrets from adults by reassuring them they can feel safe to do so. Teachers and parents need to express that keeping secrets can be used to hide “bad things” and God wants the “bad things” not to stay hidden. Also, a perpetrator may say that God doesn’t want their mommy or daddy to know about what they did. Teaching the verses below can help point out that is a lie and God wants “bad things” to come to light. Teachers (and parents) can learn how to create an environment that is safe for children. Also, having this as a reminder that God is safe.

Verses that can be used are: Luke 8:17; Luke 12:3 and Job 12:22

Teachers: Sunday school lesson: Discuss why it’s important to tell a parent or an adult if someone makes you keep a secret. Discuss how God doesn’t want things hidden. God especially wants “bad things” to be known in order to help those that are being affected because He loves them. Consider role-playing saying “I don’t keep secrets” and going to tell an adult. Then discuss the verses above and practice saying them. (Verses can be shortened depending on the children's age.)

Role-Playing: Teacher: Says to the child “Don’t tell anyone. It’s our secret.”

Child: Says “I don’t keep secrets.” Runs over and tells a safe adult.

Provide parents with the offender comments below and the verses used to teach the children to not keep secrets but bring "bad things" to light.

Parents: Go over what was taught in the Sunday school lesson and/or your own teaching. Ask the child or children to state in their own words the lesson to be sure that they have understood. Review the verses and why God doesn’t want things hidden.

Offender comments on prevention*: [Parents] Teach their children that they should keep secrets or feel they are to blame if they are abused--"secrecy and blame were my best weapons. Most kids worry that they are to blame for the abuse and that they should keep it a secret." Indeed, parents should emphasize openness and a "no secrets" attitude throughout their children's upbringing.

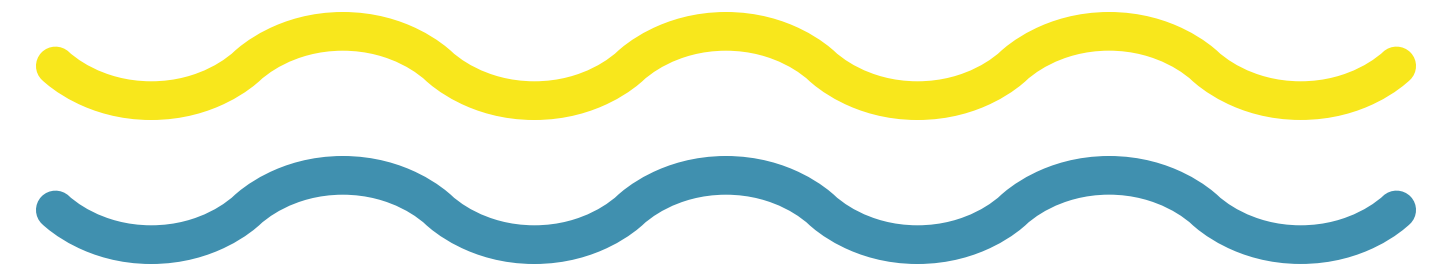
Offenders often test a child's willingness to keep secrets by creating a fun "secret" shared by the child and the offender. Because secrecy is such a vital part of the offenders' strategies, children need to be taught that should anyone ask them to keep a secret, they should automatically reply that they "Don't keep secrets."

Creating a safe place as a trusted adult:

- Say you believe them
- Reassure the child that they did nothing wrong
- Listen and don’t ask leading questions
- Breathe-Don’t panic or seem shocked

*From "Child Sexual Abuse Prevention: What Offenders Tell Us" by Michele Elliott, Kevin Browne, and Jennifer Kilcoyne

Talking Sexting to Teens



[Sexting is sending sexually explicit messages, photos, or videos via cell phone, computer, or any digital device. Sexting includes photos and videos containing nudity or showing simulated sex acts. It also includes text messages that discuss or propose sex acts.]

The first question is when to start talking to your kids about the peril sexting brings. The first discussion should commence before your child even gets a cell phone or any device that's capable of sending a sext (ie. computers, tablets, etc). Once a child receives such a device, they are susceptible to the influences of sexting. To prevent your teen from sexting you should take initiative. After your child has a device, you should frequently have an open discussion on the topic. Frequent and open discussions about sexting will make your child feel comfortable to approach and talk to you about it.

The second question is how to talk to your child about sexting. Sexting is a difficult topic to approach and requires a balancing act. You don't want to appear too judgmental or forceful, but at the same time you want to be firm with where you stand and help them to see the dangers and consequences. To aid in your discussion we have listed a few helpful talking points:

- **What do you think is considered sexting?**
 - Sexting: sending someone sexually explicit photographs or messages, whether verbal or in pictures
- **Is there any harm to sexting?**
 - Can be charged for child pornography (by sending or receiving sexts)
 - Images/messages follow you, you can't delete them once they are sent
 - Sexually objectifies you
 - Images are almost always shared with others besides the receiver
 - Reputation and future opportunities are often at risk.
 - Many stories of children being forced into prostitution or sex trafficking begin with the "pimp" using sexts as a means of coercion to get them to comply with their demands
- **Is sexting worth the attention?**
 - The receiver and those they show it to are likely to lose some respect for you.
 - You become a sexual object instead of a real person.
 - The individual asking will often try to make you feel special but all he/she really wants is a sexually explicit photo. Odds are, if he/she doesn't get it from you they will just try and get it from someone else. As long as they get it, they don't care if it's from you or the next person.
- **Do you have control over a picture/ message once it's sent?**
 - Absolutely not. Nearly every teen who receives a sext ends up sharing it or forwarding to others, and many sexts end up on third party websites. All of this usually occurs without your knowledge or consent.
- **Why do people sext?**
 - Seeking attention/approval
 - Peer pressure
 - Bullying
 - Want to satisfy another

Here are some tips to start the discussion:

- Talk about healthy media choices in general.
- Mention a story you heard in the news about other kids who are engaged in sexting.
- Ask if they know anyone who does this, maybe other kids at school.
- Ask if they have ever been asked to sext.
- Ask your kids about their future goals and then start talking about some hurdles they might encounter that would impede those goals (sexting can impact grades, college acceptance, etc.)
- Have frequent talks about healthy intimacy and boundaries, work sexting into the discussions.

Talking Sexting to Teens cont.



REMEMBER THAT THIS IS NOT A ONE TIME CONVERSATION!

Talking to your kids is the most crucial and effective way to prevent sexting. Genuinely understanding the harms and consequences of sexting will be the best form of prevention. **It's a lot better for your kids to choose not to sext than to force them not to sext.**

However, you can also consider taking actions to monitor your kids' devices. This can be done a number of ways. To get you started, here are three ideas:

1. Check you child's devices at random times. Checking at random times will encourage your kids to not send or receive anything inappropriate because they don't know when you may check their device.
2. Don't let your child go to bed with their devices. When a teen goes to bed they are left behind closed doors for hours. This creates a prime environment for sexting. Don't let that environment be created.
3. Use a program or app that helps you monitor your kid's cell phone and Internet activity.



References:

Unless a source has an author explicitly stated, it was compiled and edited from the sources below:

- Statistics from:
 - <https://www.europeanfreedomnetwork.org/>
 - <https://www.globallslaveryindex.org/2018/findings/highlights/>
 - https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_575479
- Why Talking to Children about Trafficking in Persons Is Important: <https://onlinegrad.baylor.edu/resources/conversations-human-trafficking-children-teens/>
- Milestones & Parent Response: <https://keepconnected.searchinstitute.org/understanding-ages-and-stages/>
- Tackling the Trafficking Topic: <https://www.cchttx.com/about-human-trafficking/talking-kids-about-human-trafficking>
- Key Messages for Kids about Human Trafficking: <https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/how-talk-your-kids-about-trafficking/29733>
- Key Ways that Families, Churches, & Communities Can Counter Human Trafficking:
 - <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/20-Actions-for-2020-by-Polaris.pdf>
 - <https://www.state.gov/20-ways-you-can-help-fight-human-trafficking/>
- Key Online Safety Principles for All Age Groups: <https://internetsafety101.org/agebasedguidelines>
- Talking Sexting to Teens: <https://endsexualexploitation.org/articles/sexting-odds-are-its-in-your-home-now-how-to-talk-about-it/>
- Various resources and knowledge gained through 25 years of Children's Ministry and teaching
- Health Cluster (2020) [Global Humanitarian Response Plan – July Update](#); CARE (2020) [CARE International expresses alarm over lack of funding for GBV in COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) (press release) Published 16 July 2020 [Accessed 13 August 2020]185
- International Rescue Committee (2019) [Where is the money? How the humanitarian system is failing in its commitments to end violence against women and girls.](#)
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