INTERNET PREDATORS & SEX TRAFFICKERS 101

*a **quick guide** for parents and educators*

Predators have easy and anonymous access to children online where they can easily conceal their identity and troll for children. They have become bolder in their attempts to lure children into sexually-explicit conversations and in-person meetings, which makes it critical for parents and caregivers to be informed and aware.

What Does an Internet Predator Look Like?

- No one can detect a disguised predator!
- Sexual predators can be anyone: ex., a family member, coach, friend, doctor, teacher, clergy
- Is typically clean cut and outwardly law-abiding
- Uses position in society to throw off suspicion
- Can rise to be a pillar of society while actively pursuing/grooming children
- Often engages in activities/jobs involving children
- Appears trusting to both parents and child
- May pretend to be someone they are not

What Fuels Online Predators?

- Easy and anonymous access to children
- Risky online behavior of youth
- Virtual validation (predators validate and encourage each other's sexual desires for children, exchange child sex abuse material, and trade secrets and tactics to avoid law enforcement)
- Law enforcement challenges
- Easy access to "à la carte" child sex abuse material

The "Grooming" Process

Grooming is the process by which a predator befriends and gains the trust of a child (and sometimes the child's friends and family) in order to take advantage of the child for sexual purposes. Predators can use social media, apps, e-mail, messaging features/texts, chat rooms and video chat to contact, groom and sexually exploit children.

How Does an Internet Predator "Groom" a Child?

- Preys on child's desire for romance, adventure, sexual information, income
- Develops trust and secrecy: manipulates child by listening to and sympathizing with child's problems and insecurities
- Affirms feelings and choices of child
- Exploits natural sexual curiosities of child
- Eases inhibitions by gradually introducing sex into conversations or exposing them to pornography
- Flatters and compliments the child excessively; sends gifts, invests time, money and energy to further relationship
- Develops an online relationship that is romantic and controlling, upon which the child becomes dependent
- Isolation: drives a wedge between the child and his or her parents and friends
- Makes promises of an exciting, stress-free life, tailored to the youth's desire
- May eventually ask for nudes, make threats, and use sexually-explicit images shared by their victims to blackmail them into silence

Conversation Starters

Ask, "Has an online stranger...
- Tried to befriend you? If so, how do you know about this person?"
- Talked to you about sex?"
- Asked you for personal information?"
- Asked you for pictures?
- Sent you pictures?"
- Said anything to make you feel uncomfortable?"
- Offered to send you gifts or money?"

safety & prevention 101
RULES N' TOOLS ®

No child is immune to online threats: Parents are the "first line of defense."

- Know your child's user names and passwords for email and social media.

- Check to see if your child has any hidden apps or accounts.

- Teach your child to never share personally identifiable information (PII) including date of birth, address, full name, school or any image that can be used to identify or track your child down.

- Be alert to warning signs your child may be in contact with an online predator, especially if your child becomes secretive or obsessive about online activities, gets angry when he or she can't get online, receives/makes phone calls from people you do not know or recognize, changes screens or turns off computer when an adult enters a room, withdraws from family and friends, or receives gifts, mail, or packages from someone you do not know.

- Block strangers and use privacy settings on social networking pages.

- Remind your child to NEVER arrange to meet with someone that he/she has only met online, and to come to you if a request for an in-person meeting has been made

- Implement Safety Rules and Software tools ("*Rules 'N Tools®*") on all internet-enabled devices and platforms used by your child. See the **Enough Is Enough®** *"Rules 'N Tools®"* guide at internetsafety101.org/safety-intro

- Essential software tools include setting age-appropriate filters, monitoring and time management software.

- Have your child sign the Have your child sign the **Family Contract for Smart Phones and Digital Devices**

Enough Is Enough® (EIE) Quick Guides are based on EIE's **Internet Safety 101®** Emmy Award-winning multi-media program and website designed to educate, equip and empower parents, educators and other adults with information needed to protect children from internet dangers.

For more information, visit internetsafety101.org and enough.org

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH®
MAKING THE INTERNET SAFER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES