



National Plan to Prevent the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children

DEVELOPED BY THE NATIONAL COALITION TO PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION





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National Plan to Prevent the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children

All children deserve childhoods free from all manner of sexual abuse and exploitation. Without this safety, we put our future as a society at risk. Fortunately, when we focus on innovative programming and policies, such as those presented in this plan, we lay the foundation for children’s healthy growth and development into adults capable of having healthy relationships and thus reduce the potential for child sexual abuse and exploitation.

In developing a National Plan to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation, the National Coalition intends to ensure that the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation of children gets needed attention not only in legal venues, but also in the medical, faith, business, media, and civic sectors. The National Coalition supports comprehensive prevention strategies, but the National Plan pays special attention to primary prevention and positive youth development—actions that take place before child sexual abuse or exploitation has been perpetrated—in order to:

- decrease the risk of future perpetration of child sexual abuse and exploitation;
- increase the engagement of effective bystander actions that can aid in the prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation;
- promote norms that support healthy behaviors, images, and messages;
- promote environments and education that support healthy development, relationships, and sexuality;



- collaborate with media, businesses, and policymakers to develop and implement strategies to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation;
- challenge media messages that normalize and promote children as sexual objects; and



- promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships for children in their homes and broader environments to decrease future risk of sexual abuse perpetration.

This National Plan defines the nature and scope of child sexual abuse and exploitation; acknowledges the need to build on the foundation of existing research, advocacy, and treatment; discusses the value of a National Plan; encourages the development of prevention-focused policy; and describes a range of actions that includes individual, community and policy level strategies, to stop the

demand for, and to prevent, child sexual abuse and exploitation.

The goal of this plan is to keep prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation in the forefront of people's thoughts, agendas, and policy discussions in such a powerful way that we ensure all children grow up safe and free from all forms of sexual harm. Further, child sexual abuse and the normalization of such abuse and exploitation for individual or commercial gain, will be socially, economically, politically, and spiritually unacceptable in all of our communities.



Why now?

Sexual abuse and exploitation of children is a major problem shown to affect the health and well-being of individuals, families, communities, and society. Although there has been increased attention to victim services, investigation, prosecution, and incarceration, there is a need for all sectors of society to demonstrate an increased commitment to, and investment in, the primary prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

We know prevention can work. We have made great strides in giving voice to individuals who have survived child sexual abuse and exploitation. We have helped make it easier for victims to disclose and report abuse, and generated increased attention to all manners of child sexual abuse and exploitation. Although studies show that after years of increases, reports of sexual abuse have declined (Finkelhor & Jones, 2006) there continue to be unacceptable numbers of children sexually abused and exploited. Those who work in the field of child sexual abuse and exploitation prevention know that the problem continues at an alarming rate and that much work remains to be done to prevent abuse before it happens.





For example:

- The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) studies show that 25% of females and 16% of males have experienced sexual abuse as children (Dube et al., 2005).
- Child sexual abuse and exploitation often happen in conjunction with other types of abuse and violence (Turner, Finkelhor, & Ormrod, 2010) and result in a wide variety of short- and long-term physical and mental health effects for victims (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 1997, 2007).
- Child sexual abuse can involve a wide number of psychological impacts, including low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Individuals who have been sexually victimized are more likely to have multiple sexual partners, become pregnant as teenagers, and experience sexual assaults as adults (Lalor & McElvaney, 2010).
- Each week, the CyberTipline of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) receives an average of 4,296 reports of child sexual exploitation. Approximately 95% of those are reports about child pornography (NCMEC, 2011).
- It is estimated that 325,000 children per year are currently at risk of becoming victims of commercial child sexual exploitation (prostitution of children) (Estes & Weiner, 2002, 2003, 2005).
- Depending on the study and definition, the average age at which girls first become victims of prostitution is 12–14, and 11–13 for boys (Estes & Weiner, 2002).
- Youth living on the streets for longer than 7–10 days are at greater risk of resorting to or being coerced into “survival sex” (Estes & Weiner, 2003). These children are often abused and neglected in several other ways,



which contributes to long-lasting mental and physical health consequences (Estes & Weiner, 2005).

- In 1996, it was estimated that the cost of child sexual abuse in the United States was \$23 billion annually (Miller, Cohen, & Wiersema, 1996).
- Child sexual abuse impacts healthcare costs across a woman’s lifespan. Healthcare costs are 16% higher for women who experienced child sexual abuse and 36% higher for women who experienced both physical and sexual abuse (Bonomi et al., 2008).



Current technology allows for unprecedented and easy access to sexually exploitive materials and has provided increased opportunities for individuals to commit sexually exploitive acts or sexual offenses.

Research is only beginning to reveal the ways in which this overwhelming flow of exploitive material adversely impacts individual values, family relationships, and gender socialization:

- The production and distribution of abuse images of children is a multi-billion dollar industry (Muir & Hecht, 2005).
- Since 2002, more than 51 million images and videos of pornography depicting children have been reviewed by analysts at NCMEC

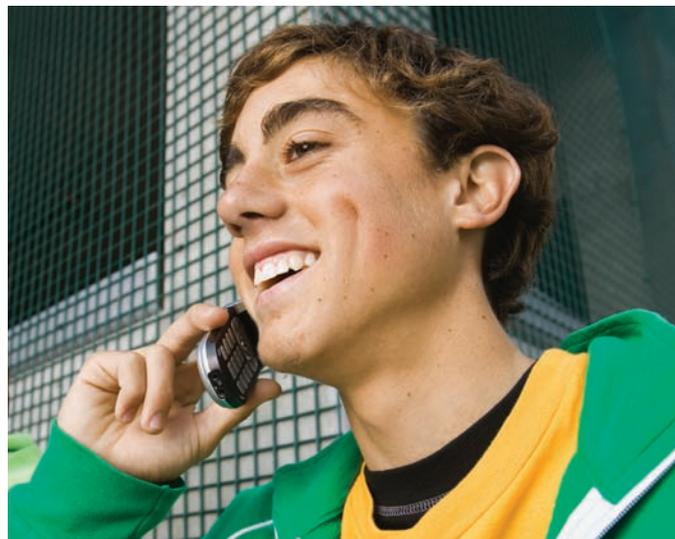
in their attempts to identify individuals who have been victimized (United States House of Representatives, Committee on the Judiciary, 2011).

- In nearly 80% of these pornographic images, the children are sexually abused and further exploited by someone they know and trust. Thirty percent of these offenses are perpetrated by family members (Rabun, 2008).
- One study found that approximately 4% (or 1 in 25) of 10- to 17-year-olds surveyed had been asked to send sexual pictures of themselves to someone on the Internet (Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak, 2007).
- In 2009, about one-third of arrests for internet sex offenses where the victim was identified included images produced by youth i.e. the images were created by minors, depicted



themselves or other minors, and could be labeled as child pornography under applicable criminal statutes (Wolak, Finkelhor, Mitchell & Jones, 2011).

- Evidence has also suggested that the majority of individuals arrested for possession of child pornography (55% in a large national study) are “dual” offenders who have attempted to, or who have perpetrated, the sexual victimization of children (Wolak, Finkelhor, & Mitchell, 2005).
- One study suggests that child pornography-related offenses may be a stronger indicator of pedophilia than sexual molestation offenses against a child (Seto, Cantor, & Blanchard, 2006).
- Repeated exposure to pornography is also a growing problem.
- Legal pornography is a multi-billion dollar a year business and is significantly larger than the illegal child pornography business. There is growing attention to legal pornography as a public health issue (Perrin et al., 2008).
- It is commonly noted that children view pornography for the first time by age 11 (Ropelato, 2007).
- Studies suggest that repeated exposure to especially violent pornography has significant negative impacts on socialization, attitudes, and beliefs (Manning, 2006).
- This onslaught of negative images comes at a time when adolescent brains are still developing—while adolescents are working to establish their values, sexual identities, and relationship skills (Gallese, Fadiga, Fogassi, & Rizzolatti, 1996; Gogtay et al., 2004).
- The harm of child sexual exploitation goes beyond the numbers of reported or even estimated victims. The harm includes the



sexual objectification of children and the treatment of exploitation as normal.

- It is estimated that \$17 billion is spent annually by companies marketing all types of products to children (Linn, 2010).
- Children see an average of 30,000 ads per year (Gantz, Schwartz, Angelini, & Rideout, 2007).
- Exposure to this marketing encourages children to see themselves as commodities, and view sexual objectification as normal (Giroux, 2009).
- Based on a review of more than 300 studies, the American Psychological Association concluded that exposure to sexualized images, lyrics, fashion, role models, and other influences made girls think of and treat their own bodies as sexual objects. The report cites research linking sexualization with eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression or depressed moods in girls and women (American Psychological Association Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls, 2010).



The significance of a National Plan

A National Plan to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation—a plan that promotes healthy development of young people and challenges the sexual toxicity in the environment—is critically needed if parents, adults, communities, and the nation are to succeed in confronting sexually destructive behaviors of individuals and systems that for too long have threatened our children and gone unchallenged.

The successful implementation of this National Plan promises to achieve several key goals, including:

More Childhoods Free from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

A reduction in the perpetration of child sexual abuse and exploitation for personal gratification or financial gain means fewer victims and more children growing up free from sexual trauma and its often devastating physical and mental health consequences.

Stronger and More Fully Engaged Communities

By mobilizing local elected officials, citizens,

professionals, policymakers, and the media to implement elements of this National Plan, communities can take action to 1) prevent child sexual abuse in our homes and neighborhoods and 2) end the demand for children to be treated as sexual commodities and for products and markets that sexually exploit children.

Focused Attention on the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

The National Plan provides a platform that helps empower people to speak up against and confront all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation and to highlight the importance of prevention.

Increased Funding For the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

A Minnesota report shows that the costs of sexual violence, including crimes committed against children, are 3.3 times as much as the costs of alcohol-impaired driving in the state. The costs of sexual violence break down to \$1,540 per resident; half of these result from child sexual abuse. Yet there are no state funds for prevention and limited federal dollars to do anything to prevent child sexual abuse (Minnesota Department of Health, 2007).

Promotion of Better Awareness-to-Action

Expanding evidence-informed prevention and education programs in communities will help citizens gain the knowledge, skills, and motivation they need to promote conditions and environments that foster safe, stable, nurturing relationships, and, thereby, the healthy development of children and



youth, which will allow them to thrive. Promotion of better awareness-to-action will also help change the common belief that nothing can be done to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation, and it will encourage people to speak up when they see harmful actions.

Stronger Social Movements

A National Plan aids in the development of a broad-based movement to help ensure the social change needed for public safety, public health, and social justice to protect all children against all types of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Significant Decreases in Short- and Long-Term Health Care Costs

Many studies show the links between victimization from child sexual abuse and a wide array of long- and short-term physical and mental health problems. A reduction in child sexual abuse and exploitation will lead to a reduction in those health care costs.

Acknowledgement of child sexual abuse & exploitation as a Public Health Problem

The National Plan promotes awareness that the perpetration of child sexual abuse and exploitation is the result of a combination of individual, relationship, community and societal factors—all of which need to be addressed to effectively prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation. A public health model addresses all of these factors and involves identifying the risks and protective factors related to victimization and perpetration, as well as discovering evidence-based intervention strategies to help those who have been abused, those who have perpetrated sexual abuse and both the victim's and perpetrator's families and communities (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2004). As a public health problem, child sexual abuse and exploitation is not a problem that can, or should, be addressed only through the criminal justice sanctions or social services intervention after an offense has happened.





How we can accomplish the goals of prevention: Six action areas

Currently, many of our systems and sexual abuse and exploitation prevention resources are focused on short-term responses that are initiated after perpetration has occurred. While these services are invaluable, primary prevention requires a broader, more inclusive strategy that makes use of knowledge acquired from multiple disciplines and resources. The following action steps promote a plan to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation and includes individual, community, and policy-level strategies.

I. RESEARCH

Goal: Promote the use of research to guide prevention practice and to serve as a catalyst for social change.

STEPS TO PROMOTE RESEARCH

- Use research and case trends to help understand the range of motivations for perpetration as well as the various links between types of abuse and exploitation.

- Use research to help determine the factors sustaining the demand for sexual exploitation and sexually exploitive materials.
- Advocate for more research to advance the understanding of the problem and effective prevention practices.
- Translate research into effective prevention tools and positive development practices, and disseminate those tools and practices.

II. PUBLIC AWARENESS

Goal: Increase public awareness of effective child sexual abuse and exploitation prevention strategies.

STEPS TO INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Frame prevention and positive developmental messages in ways that increase understanding of effective prevention strategies, provide positive developmental approaches that may help avoid the problems, and motivate actions that will be more effective in leading to the social changes needed to support prevention.
- Disseminate well-developed and tested messages through mass and social media as well as through other creative technology, personal networks, and spheres of influence.
- Increase effective educational efforts, including those that promote social justice as well as healthy environments, relationships, and sexuality.



III. END THE DEMAND

Goal: Identify and reduce the factors that fuel the demand for children to be sexually exploited and/or abused and the conditions that create an environment where so many individuals are willing and able to cause or to profit from the sexual harm of children.

STEPS TO END THE DEMAND

- Educate the general public and professionals in the field about the demand for the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, and help them see the powerful role prevention can play in countering demand and lessening the normalization of sexual harm.
- Identify and develop community leaders who can play a key role in helping others see how the

demand for sexual abuse and exploitation increases when people are treated as sexual objects and commodities.

- Support the efforts to redefine children who are prostituted as “victims of commercial sexual exploitation” and to hold those who buy and sell them accountable.
- End the demand by identifying and speaking up against the hyper-sexualized treatment of children and other sexual harm committed against them.
- Partner with more business, civic, and community leaders who are willing to hold businesses that promote or profit from the sexual abuse and exploitation of children accountable for their actions.
- Support efforts to engage boys and men in reaching out to and educating other males in prevention.



IV. POLICIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

Goal: Encourage the development and implementation of local, state, and national policies, practices, norms, and beliefs that advance the primary prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation and that strengthen comprehensive prevention measures.

STEPS TO ENHANCE PRACTICES AND POLICY

- Identify and advance specific policies and practices that, according to research or best practices, prevent all types of sexual harm to children.
- Promote prevention programs that are evidence-based and adapted to the needs of various communities, organizations, agencies, and institutions.
- Disseminate information about productive policies and practices that can be emulated.
- Advocate for research- and best practices-based treatment services for individuals at risk to perpetrate sexual abuse.

V. COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

Goal: Promote creative multidisciplinary and grassroots collaborations to align resources that will foster successful prevention initiatives.

STEPS TO ENCOURAGE COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

- Promote local, state, and national coordination among organizations working to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation. Reach out to community leaders and potential partners, including industry, media, faith-based groups, and the arts.
- Build relationships with individuals and organizations in related areas such as interpersonal violence, health care and promotion, children's rights, and social justice.
- Actively advocate for prevention funding, programs, policies, and practices.



- Inspire and engage a wide range of “Prevention Champions” who can serve as influential voices within communities.
- Increase the number of local, state, and national leaders who can advance comprehensive, culturally relevant, and effective prevention efforts.
- Increase the range and numbers of individuals and organizations involved in the movement to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation.

VI. FUNDING

Goal: Increase the dollars invested in prevention and positive development in proportion to the harm done and the costs of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

STEPS TO INCREASE AND ADVOCATE FOR FUNDING

- Advocate for funding increases in both the private and public sectors to expand prevention and positive development research, prevention-focused policy development, collaboration, and awareness-to-action efforts. These dollars would be in addition to funding used to advocate for and treat victims and to assess, treat, and monitor those who have offended.
- Include financial support for prevention in legislative measures that focus on sex crime punishment, prosecution and interdiction.





Actions to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation

WHAT YOU CAN DO AS AN INDIVIDUAL

- Promote adult and community responsibility for prevention so that children’s risks for being victims or for victimizing others are reduced or eliminated.
- Educate adults, youth, and children about the harm caused by treating others as sexual objects to be used, bought, or sold, whether in-person or through Internet and cellular technologies.
- Provide the clear and consistent message that sexually inappropriate, coercive, abusive, or exploitive behavior is harmful and wrong.
- Encourage everyone to speak up against incidents or messages that normalize sexual harm, abuse, or exploitation.
- Speak against messages that portray children in





ways that suggest they possess the same sexual interests as adults or are sexual objects for adults' use or abuse.

- Advocate and support research to investigate the factors that contribute to adults' sexual interest in children.
- Visit our website (www.preventtogether.org) for the Coalition's Prevention Fact Sheets.
- Recognize that by identifying and speaking up against the hyper-sexualized treatment of children and other sexual harm to children, you help end the demand.
- Look for examples of clothes, toys, music, entertainment, and other media that contribute to the sexual objectification of children. When you find them, write letters to the editor, to company presidents, and to others who may have an impact on changing those products or messages. You can demand the change for children.
- Talk with others in all your spheres of influence (e.g., faith groups, professional organizations, civic organizations, family, community) about why so many adults see children as sexual objects and why so many adolescents and children see themselves similarly.
- When you are aware of businesses profiting from the sexual objectification, abuse, or exploitation of children, demand they stop before you give them your business. Visit <http://demandthechange.wordpress.com>
- Understand and monitor the technologies that children are using.
- Develop relationships with your local, state, and federal representatives and educate them about child sexual abuse and exploitation. Offer them suggestions about the kinds of laws they can develop to counter the sexual harm of children.
- Send the Coalition examples of successful



prevention policy actions you have developed and implemented so that they can be shared with others.

- Use Facebook, YouTube, and other social media outlets to build awareness, express support, and encourage active involvement in the issue.
- Contact organizations already working to end child sexual abuse and exploitation and offer your support.
- Suggest ways they can invite other youth and adults to have a role in a community plan to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation.



Actions to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY



- Encourage all organizations serving children and youth to incorporate trainings about child sexual abuse and exploitation, and its prevention, into ongoing, regular in-service education for all staff and volunteers, including older youth who supervise younger children in these settings.
- Support the availability and high quality of treatment and advocacy services for child and adolescent victims, as well as collaboration among agencies and the integration of prevention services within those agencies.
- Learn to identify children with sexual behavior problems and refer them for early assessment and treatment.
- Participate in research-based prevention programs that address how to minimize individual and community risk factors associated with sexual abuse and exploitation and how to build protective qualities in children and their environments.
- Develop and share talking points and/or PowerPoint or YouTube presentations on ways to help counter normalization of sexual harm.
- Assess those programs your organization has developed to prevent/increase awareness of sexual abuse and exploitation to determine which are supported by evidence and which require additional evaluation and development in order to bolster effectiveness.



- Assess the effectiveness of current partnerships and identify any new partners you would like to engage in the prevention effort and movement.
- Create or reestablish partnerships that will result in the effective implementation of child sexual abuse and exploitation prevention strategies.
- Reach out to at least two “Prevention Champions” who can create a spark for local prevention efforts.
- Engage parents and community partners to share information, gather input, and build support for prevention efforts. For example,
 - start a “Community Café.”
- Enhance your and your staff’s grant-writing and fund-raising skills by seeking out free or low-cost trainings provided in your community. Also, contact non-profit business mentoring organizations (e.g., local retired business alliance members) for assistance.
- Invite speakers to parent meetings and send home materials that highlight the seriousness and prevalence of the problem and that suggest steps that can be taken to prevent it.



Actions to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation

POLICY-LEVEL ACTIONS

- Direct more resources into prevention programs and positive child development efforts.
- Support policies and practices that address the links among current norms, behaviors, and practices that lead to child sexual abuse, exploitation, and maltreatment.
- Keep child sexual abuse and exploitation visible in related policy reforms such as those that address health disparities and sex offender management.
- Support the development of evidence-based policies and laws that work to end the demand for the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, including: materials that sexually exploit children, commercial opportunities that profit from creating and disseminating such materials, and the ability of sexually abusive or exploitative groups and networks to operate and share materials that sexually exploit children.
- Advocate for specialized assessments and treatment for those with sexual behavior problems as an adjunct to criminal justice approaches and as a way to reduce recidivism among offenders.
- Encourage risk-based assessments to inform the best management of those who have sexually offended.
- Advocate for federal and state funding priorities that support research in this area.





- Encourage the incorporation of program evaluation research into all prevention and positive development initiatives.
- Encourage the development of research initiatives that increase our understanding of the factors supporting the sexual abuse and exploitation of children so that these factors can be targeted in future prevention efforts.
- Work within your state to designate funding for primary prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation. For instance, create a “Five Percent to Prevent” campaign to convince policymakers to dedicate a portion of the state budget to prevention, or work towards a “check off” box on state tax forms or a license plate tax that would be dedicated to child sexual abuse and exploitation prevention.
- Participate in processes within federal funding agencies to develop funding priorities. All major federal funding agencies (e.g., National Institute of Mental Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute of Justice) seek input on their priorities. Respond and advocate for funding for child sexual abuse and exploitation prevention and positive development initiatives.
- Develop event planning policies for counties and organizations whereby only hotels that neither profit from pornography nor promote sexually oriented business may be considered for conference and meeting space.
- Prioritize policy work in your prevention efforts. Assist your organization and community in the development of practices and policies that counter the demand for, and the normalization of, sexual harm and the sexual objectification of children; prevent perpetration of sexual harm; and engage bystanders in prevention.
- Meet with local and state decision-makers to educate them about the importance of funding prevention and positive development efforts. Help them understand that no public health crisis has ever been controlled by simply treating the victims and perpetrators after the fact. It is only when prevention is adequately funded that problems of this nature can be eradicated.



Plan prepared by the National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

The organizations and individuals listed here are or were part of the National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation and have endorsed the general concepts underlying this plan. As with all documents covering a broad area, it is important to recognize that the degree of commitment to particular items in this plan may vary from organization to organization. Participation in the development of the National Plan should not be assumed to represent a specific agency's official position, policy, or endorsement. The National Plan does, however, represent the input of all representatives and their commitment to advance the Plan in ways that fit within their missions and the larger Coalition goals.

- **Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers.** Representative: Maia Christopher**
- **Boy Scouts of America.** Representative: Michael V. Johnson
- **California Coalition Against Sexual Assault/Prevention Connection.** Representative: David Lee
- **Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood Nonprofit Center.** Representatives: Josh Golin & Diane Levin
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Representative: Sandra Alexander*
- **ConnectSafely.org.** Representative: Larry Magid
- **Darkness to Light.** Representative: Jolie Logan
- **ECPAT-USA.** Representative: Carol Smolenski
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- **Enough is Enough.** Representatives: Donna Rice Hughes & Alan Fischer
- **Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces.** Representative: Chuck Arnold
- **Mayo Clinic Child and Family Advocacy Program.** Representative: Kory Schmitt
- **Ms. Foundation for Women.** Representative: Monique Hoeflinger
- **National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds.** Representative: Teresa Rafael
- **National Alliance to End Sexual Violence.** Representative: Lydia Guy Ortiz



- **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.** Representative: Michelle Collins*
- **National Child Protection Training Center.** Representative: Victor Vieth
- **National Children's Advocacy Center.** Representatives: Deborah Callins** & Chris Newlin
- **National Sexual Violence Resource Center.** Representative: Karen Baker*
- **Polaris Project.** Representative: Mary Ellison
- **Prevent Child Abuse America.** Representative: Jim Hmurovich*
- **Prevent Child Abuse Vermont.** Representative: Linda Johnson
- **Prevention Institute.** Representatives: Larry Cohen & Annie Lyles
- **The Salvation Army National Headquarters.** Representative: Lisa Thompson
- **Search Institute.** Representative: Terri Sullivan
- **Stop It Now!** Representatives: Deborah Donovan Rice & James Hafner
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- Julie Patrick, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

While the individuals listed below are no longer active participants in the Prevention Coalition, their efforts and the time they volunteered greatly contributed to the development and progress of the group.

- Mary Ackerman
- Trisha Folds Bennett
- Jeelu Billimoria
- Gail Burns-Smith
- Jennifer Fisher
- Joe Laramie
- Lisa Fujie Parks
- John Patterson

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Glossary

Child sexual exploitation (CSE): Practices by which a person achieves sexual gratification, financial gain, or advancement through the abuse and/or misuse of the child's sexuality.

Demand: Practices that encourage commercial and/or personal gain from the sexual abuse or exploitation of children. Examples of these practices include but are not limited to:

- The depiction of children as sexual objects to be abused or exploited, such as in pornography or hyper-sexualized mainstream media images.
- Messages, images, and practices that promote, encourage, or shape sexual arousal toward children.
- Social norms that create barriers to effective bystander intervention in sexual abuse and objectification of children because such behavior is normalized and thereby viewed as harmless or even beneficial.
- The cultural and social norms that hold children accountable for what happens to them instead of holding accountable those who abuse or exploit them.
- Sex and human beings dealt with as a commodity, for example, where some people are allowed to buy or sell others for sex.
- Gender norms that perpetuate expectations that girls are to see themselves, and to be seen,



for their worth as sexual objects and that teach boys that they are entitled to view girls in this way.

Normalization: The process by which an idea, concept, or behavior becomes an accepted part of societal culture. Once this occurs, something that was once clearly understood as abhorrent or harmful becomes considered “just the way it is.” With more barriers removed and further normalization, the idea, concept, or behavior becomes viewed as beneficial or even preferential—the thing to have, the way to be, the expected behavior (Anderson & Cooper, 2006).

Policy: A course of action or inaction, chosen by a society, its structures, and its members, to address

a given problem or interrelated set of problems. Policies are determined and implemented at a number of levels: governmental (legislative, federal, state, local, administrative, and legal); institutional (commercial, civic, organizational, etc.); social; and cultural.

Positive development: The mix of positive opportunities, supports, resources, and relationships made available to children and youth by their parents, other adults, peers, socializing institutions such as schools, and communities, which increase the likelihood that children and youth are healthy, caring, and responsible (Mannes, 2008).

Sexual objects: Any person who is regarded as an object for sexual gratification and use.





About the 2012 edition

A special thanks to the following coalition members who were instrumental in revising this national plan from the 2008 edition:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Sandra Alexander (co-chair)
- Jetta Bernier
- Deborah Callins
- Maia Christopher (co-chair)
- Jim Hmurovich
- Monique Hoeflinger
- Keith Kaufman
- Teresa Rafael
- Pat Stanislaski
- Patty Wetterling

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