

What is Child Grooming

Child grooming is befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child, and sometimes the family, to lower the child's inhibitions with the objective of sexual abuse.^{[1][2]} Child grooming is also regularly used to lure minors into various illicit businesses such as child trafficking, child prostitution, cybersex trafficking,^[3] or the production of child pornography.¹

How to recognize grooming? (Signs)

- Parents need to trust their gut feeling
- Children/Teens become protective of devices
- Children/Teens receive gifts, special privileges, or receiving rides which is unusual

*** Ask your children/Teens to come to you about anything that may make them feel confused, unsure of how to react, or makes them feel uncomfortable or weird. Ask them if they have experienced these feelings with friends, authority figures, or from strangers online.**

6 Steps to Child Grooming

-Target Victim

Look for vulnerabilities, someone with parents who are less involved

-Gain Trust Most important step

Gather information and pay attention to child/teen, then relate themselves to the child/teen

-Filling the need

Establish child/teens needs and voids, fill those needs and voids, offer support and/or material things, uses gifts as test for responses, gifts and test evolves, sometimes this even evolves to encouraging experimenting with substances.

-Isolation

Starts with acquaintances, then friends and distant family, and moves to more important people. Goal is to sever any protective relationship.

-Sexualizing the Relationship

They will start by sexualizing innocent things, anything that they can in any way to normalize the behaviour and then integrate this into the relationship. This is where they work on developing that special relationship to the child/teen in order to take the relationship to the next step.

-Control

Securing the secrecy, usually done with threats. At this point the child/teen starts to become uncomfortable and question motives, however it is now too late. They are embarrassed, scared, think they have done something wrong by participating up to this point, and are also being heavily manipulated so generally just really confused about the relationship, and too young to understand that they are being abused and manipulated.

How to respond to a child opening up is VERY IMPORTANT

-Thoughts of doubt, and disbelief should not be shared with any child or teenager

-You need to stay calm and do not react as much as you can. Strong reaction can encourage child to stop talking, stop participating, and may cause mental trauma.

It is most common for the first person a child/teen will disclose to was a friend, this is problematic as friends generally will keep secrets.

-Talking to your children/teens about how important it is to talk to an adult if a friend tells them a secret about another adult, no matter what it is, and why this is important. Without making a trusted adult aware, their friend could end up in danger, and there could be other children/teens who are also in danger.

***Open communication is very important. If you are not comfortable discussing abuse with your children/teens, chances are, your children/teens will not be comfortable discussing this with you either.**

**Thank you for your support,
People Vs Predators Association (PVP)™**