

What is grooming?

Grooming is activity that “prepares” the victim for abuse. It can be directed at both children and adults responsible for them.

Grooming can be confusing. You’ll see things on the lists such as offering understanding or assistance that are good things when done appropriately. We don’t want to discourage people from offering help to people in need. A perpetrator crosses acceptable lines, or boundaries, in *how* he or she offers assistance.

Parents

Grooming can be difficult to distinguish from behaviors that are positive and well-intentioned. Trust yourself. Often you’ll recognize grooming because it *feels wrong to you*.

Perpetrators might:

- Offer understanding
- Offer assistance
- Condition parents to touching and time alone with the child
- Take advantage of people’s assumptions that hugs or other touches are okay.

Young Children

Warning signs include:

- Touching
- Sitting on laps
- Toys and candy
- More focused on kids than adults in a group setting
- Increasing time spent alone with child
- Secrets
- Offering alcohol or drugs

Does it feel wrong to you?

Older Children

Warning signs include:

- Siding with them over parents
- Breaking rules
 - Offer alcohol or drugs
 - Cursing
 - Break curfew
 - Share pornography

The perpetrator is testing the child: *Will the child tell the parents? Will the parents confront?*

- Making minor feel special
- Showering with gifts
- Time alone with child
- Friends on Facebook
- Following on Twitter – private chat
- Other social media

Does it feel wrong to you?

What to do when you suspect grooming

- Report the behavior to the person responsible for children
- If you don’t know who to tell, call MOCSA for advice.
MO 816-531-0233
KS 913-642-0233
- Talk with your child about your suspicions and the inappropriate behavior.

Boundary Violations

Sometimes adults may not understand appropriate boundaries. Talk to them about appropriate boundaries and hold them accountable.

Boundary violations include:

- Spending time alone with a minor
- Giving inappropriate gifts
- Too affectionate
- Taking pictures
 - Too many
 - Not sharing with parents or guardian
 - Photos not used for obvious purpose