



Protecting  
Children  
It takes a village



**PROTECTING  
CHILDREN  
IS  
EVERYONE'S  
BUSINESS**



ISKCON recognizes that children, for their full and harmonious development, need to be raised in an atmosphere of love, support, guidance and understanding. ISKCON acknowledges that children, when so raised, are likely to play a vital role in the future of our Society. Thus, placing the interests of the children first is not only in the best interest of the children themselves, but also of ISKCON, and society at large.

- ISKCON affirms that children have the need and the right to be protected, nurtured and guided. This includes the right of all children and young people to live in an environment where they are protected from exploitation and abuse, and to actively participate in temple/devotional activities within the ISKCON community.
- These statements reflect the true sentiment of the Governing Body Commission and the values of Gaudiya Vaishnavism that sincere members of ISKCON aspire to embody and teach.



# Why Child Safety Training?

- Estimates show that 90% of sex offenders don't have criminal records and therefore will go undetected without proper training to identify signs of abuse and how to handle reporting of abuse.
- Realize that we are fighting against what seems to be an epidemic of child abuse in this country and throughout the world.
- Experts estimate fewer than 10% of perpetrators are ever criminally prosecuted, due to the passage of time, legal time limits, adults who minimize an abuse outcry, or kids who never tell.

# FACTS

- Child abuse occurs in every class, culture and religion.
- The abuser is likely to be a trusted person in the child's life.
- 1 in 10 children get sexually abused before they turn 18 years old.
- 78% of child abuse is neglect.
- Children need adults who know what to look for and what to do.

# WHAT IS ABUSE?

**Abuse is defined in Maryland law** as "the physical or mental injury of a child by any. parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child, or by any household or family member, under circumstances that indicate that the child's health or welfare is harmed or at substantial risk of being harmed; or sexual abuse of a child, whether physical injuries are sustained or not.



- **Sexual Abuse** is defined as any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a child by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of a child or by any household or family member.





# What is Child **Neglect**?

Under Maryland Law, ***Neglect*** is defined as the failure to give proper care and attention to a child, including leaving the child unattended, by a parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for supervision of the child under circumstances indicating:

- 1) That the child's health or welfare is harmed or placed at substantial risk or harm; or
- 2) Mental injury to the child or substantial risk of mental injury.

# How To Recognize Child Abuse and Neglect?

# Physical Abuse Indicators

- Unexplained bruises or pattern of bruises
- Cuts and burns (Cigarette, liquid to the body)
- Rope marks or burns
- Fractures/broken bones.
- Welts, abrasions.
- Bite marks or puncture wounds
- Chipped Teeth

# Sexual Abuse Indicators

- Difficulty or painful walking
- Injury or reported pain or itching in genital area
- Expressions of sexual knowledge or behavior inappropriate for age
- Sexually suggestive behavior
- Pregnancy under 12 years of age
- Extreme or unusual changes in personality, behavior and or emotions (for e.g. acting out or fear of being in the company of someone the child initially trusted).

# Neglect

- Dirty, unkempt
- Untreated serious medical problems
- Obvious malnourishment
- Listlessness, fatigue.
- Child left unattended or without supervision
- Inadequate clothing for weather

# Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect



Despite the statistics, child abuse and neglect are preventable. State and local governments, community organizations, and private citizens take action every day to protect children.

***You can help, too.***

## ***Nurturing and attachment***

When parents and children feel compassion and warmth for each other, parents are better able to provide positive parenting, as well as support the healthy physical, social, and emotional development of their children



## ***Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development***

Parents who understand developmental milestones and how children grow can provide an environment where children can live up to their potential.



## ***Parental resilience***

Parents who are emotionally resilient have a positive attitude, are creative problem solvers, effectively address challenges, and less often direct anger and frustration toward their children.



# *Social and emotional competence of children*

Parents who instill in their children the ability to positively interact with others, control their behaviors, and communicate their feelings are more likely to raise children who have positive relationships with family, friends, and peers.

***Children without these skills may be at greater risk for abuse.***



# How to respond if someone tells you they have been abused?

- Believe Them – Let Them Talk! Do not over question them.
- Remain Calm. Be Reassuring, like saying “ I am glad you told me, I will do my level best to help you.”
- Assure Them its not their Fault – It is the fault of the person who harmed them.
- Safety of children is priority (Make sure that the child is out of danger of being harmed again).
- Obtain Appropriate help (medical, legal and emotional).



HOW YOU CAN HELP?

- ✓ **Follow this rule strictly on temple campus:** *“Children Under 12 should always be supervised by a designated adult while at the temple”*
- ✓ Children only allowed in temple ashrams with a parent.
- ✓ Two adults present while supervising group of children (You may take turns to babysit kids when the other parent attends the Sunday Open House talk/Sunday service).
- ✓ **Be an active community member:** Remember, it takes a village to raise a child.

# REPORT YOUR CONCERNS

- To report a Past or Present concern of Child Abuse:  
Nationwide: 1-800-4-A-CHILD (Website: [Childhelp.org](http://Childhelp.org)) or call your local Social Services aka Child Protective Services (CPS).
- You can also report to your local ISKCON Child protection Team (CPT) or Child Protection Office, ISKCON North America,  
Phone: 352(575)-0780 Email: [SafeTemple@yahoo.com](mailto:SafeTemple@yahoo.com)

# ISKCON OF DC's CPT Team

- ISKCON OF DC has an active CPT which is committed for ensuring child protection and safety on the temple property.
- We currently have three temple community members in CPT:
  - i. Giri Govardhana Dasa ([giri@iskconofdc.org](mailto:giri@iskconofdc.org))
  - ii. Vraja Radha devi dasi ([vrajaradhadevidasi@gmail.com](mailto:vrajaradhadevidasi@gmail.com))
  - iii. Manoram Krishna Dasa ([mstpaul11@gmail.com](mailto:mstpaul11@gmail.com))
- If you have any questions, concerns over child safety, please feel free to contact our local CPT members.

# The Child Protection Office of ISKCON North America

- ❖ We strive to protect children from abuse and neglect through educational training for both adults and children. Our programs include information on ways to keep children safe, how to identify abuse and neglect and what to do when child abuse occurs.
- ❖ We guide ISKCON centers and schools across North America in child protection policy, as well as assist the ISKCON Central Office of Child Protection.

~It takes a village~

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*“Please also take care  
of the children. They  
are our future hopes...”*

(Srla Prabhupada  
Letter Nov. 7, 1969)





# **5 Point Plan for Child Protection at ISKCON of DC**

1. There is a trained and active Child Protection Team
2. A policy that children must be supervised by a designated adult at all times while on ISKCON property is in place
3. Background checks have been done for all residents, staff, and volunteers who serve in a position of trust
4. Management, CPT members and residents received child protection awareness training that year
5. CPO case decisions are followed