

Red Flags for Child Sexual Abuse

Red Flags in Adult Behaviors

- Invade personal space/privacy
- Ignore social norms
- Initiate touching
- Has overly close relationships
- Spend free time with kids/teens
- Give unexplained gifts/money
- Share secrets
- Play private games
- Overlook wrong behavior
- Give drugs, alcohol or porn
- Talk or act in a sexual way
- Act sexually with an adult near child

Red Flags in Youth Behaviors

- Talk or act in a sexual way
- Express sexual interest in younger children
- Often tries to be alone with another child
- Show favoritism/tell secrets to younger children
- Insist on physical contact with other children
- Doesn't accept "no" for an answer
- Sexually harass or sexually aggressive
- Give drugs, alcohol or pornographic material
- Unwilling to acknowledge or stop behaviors

Grooming Process

It may be helpful to think of the CSA offender as being a highly capable con-artist, experienced at tricking everyone around into believing they are an outstanding citizen with only the child's best interests at heart. Despite their ability to create this persona, a recognizable pattern of behaviors often makes it possible to identify perpetrators before abuse ensues. Knowing the stages of the grooming process is key to identifying CSA before it starts.

1. **Identifying the Child** - Perpetrators look for vulnerable children to target.
2. **Establishing Trust** - An offender works to build trust with a child and those connected to the child.
3. **Desensitizing the Child** - The perpetrator works to get the child comfortable with being touched.
4. **Creating Opportunity** - The offender will create an opportunity to be alone with the child.
5. **Initiating Abuse** - Once the offender is confident that sufficient grooming occurred, abuse will begin.
6. **Controlling the Child** - Most abusers use controlling means to keep a child from disclosing abuse.