



# A PARENT'S GUIDE TO Human Trafficking

**What is Human Trafficking?** Child trafficking is the enslavement of children by force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of commercial sexual or labor exploitation. Children are trafficked for use in sex industries such as prostitution, pornography, sex tourism and forced marriage. They are also used for domestic work, sweatshop work, migrant farming, begging and armed services.

## Signs a child is possibly being trafficked:

- Knows little about his or her whereabouts
- Works excessively long hours
- Exhibits fear and anxious behavior
- Was hired with false promises
- Has inconsistencies in his or her story

## Signs that a child is being groomed for future trafficking:

- Has new, older friends
- Talks about friends who seem too good to be true
- Spends an increasing amount of time online or on their phone
- Has suddenly changed their appearance, how she dresses, or grooming habits
- Suddenly has items they wouldn't be able to afford, like a cell phone, new clothes, etc.
- Has become withdrawn from the family and more secretive

Human trafficking & commercial exploitation **affects children across racial, ethnic and socioeconomic lines.** It affects every demographic.


## What can you do to help prevent the commercial exploitation of children?

1. Take measures to protect them from all types of abuse.  
**90% of children who are commercially exploited were first sexually abused.**
2. Teach your child about healthy relationships and personal boundaries. **Don't be afraid to talk about child trafficking.** Read a book or watch a film together, such as *Girls Like Us*, by Rachel Lloyd; *Sold*, by Patricia McCormick; *Human Trafficking*, by Thom Winckelmann.
3. **Foster a relationship** that encourages your child to come to you in case of an emergency. Make sure that they will not let fear of "getting in trouble" inhibit their ability to convey concerns about unsafe situations.
4. **Know your child's friends** and who they talk to. Traffickers often build friendly relationships with victims to slowly gain their trust. Educate yourself about this kind of grooming.
5. Establish guidelines for and monitor use of Internet and devices. Child sex trafficking is increasingly facilitated through technology. **Use parental control settings.** Periodically check your child's phone, ask them about names or phone numbers that you do not recognize. Ensure that their social media accounts are private.

**Child sex trafficking is unique in the sense that force, fraud, or coercion do not necessarily have to be present in order to qualify as such.** Because a minor cannot legally consent to sex with an adult, a minor who is induced into commercial sex is a victim of trafficking. Methods used by traffickers may include:

- Threats of violence
- Isolation from friends & family
- Deceiving the individual
- Instilling distrust or fear of law enforcement
- Promising love and gifts
- Creating a dependence of the victim upon the trafficker through financial needs, debt, drugs, the need of a safe place to stay
- Blackmailing with threats of turning in the victim or those in their family who are undocumented, or threatening to expose the youth's past actions or pictures to parents and/or peers

**SCAN**  
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**ALLIES IN PREVENTION**  
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**For more information on preventing the trafficking of children:**

[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)  
[www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)  
[justaskva.org](http://justaskva.org)

**[www.scanva.org/prc](http://www.scanva.org/prc)**