

Models in image. Intended as illustrative.



# OVERVIEW GUIDE

Helping Organizations Prevent Child Sexual Abuse



# Commit to Kids Program: Training and Tools

Commit to Kids is a step-by-step program that helps child-serving organizations reduce the risk of sexual abuse and create safer environments for children under their care.

The program consists of two components: a printed **Program Kit** and **Online Training**.\*



## The Commit to Kids Program Kit

The printed program consists of a guide, supplementary electronic materials, and templates to help the leadership/management in organizations:

- Highlight their strengths and gaps
- Manage risk
- Create/augment a Code of Conduct and policies and procedures
- Review and strengthen hiring, supervising, and monitoring practices
- Establish reporting procedures for misconduct and sexual abuse concerns
- Train staff about child sexual abuse

### The Program Kit includes:

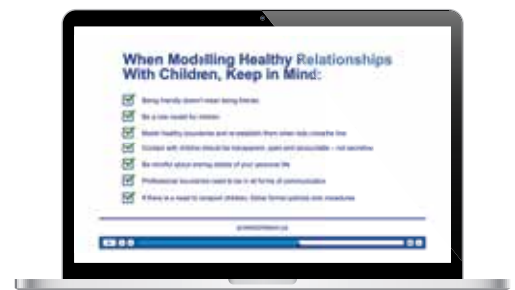
- Commit to Kids Program
- Online video
- Sample policies
- Reporting abuse and inappropriate conduct cards



## Online Professional Development Training

The Online Training is designed for all individuals within an organization who are working with children, either through employment or on a volunteer basis. In the training, employees/volunteers will learn about:

- The issue of child sexual abuse, including prevalence in Canada
- Appropriate boundaries between adults and children
- The grooming process
- Disclosure of sexual abuse
- The impact of sexual abuse
- The importance of adhering to the organization's policies for child protection
- The role each staff member has in ensuring a safe and healthy environment for children



\*The Program Kit and Online Training are ordered separately to provide organizations with flexibility in the number of training slots needed.

# Who Uses Commit to Kids?

Commit to Kids is designed to be adaptable: organizations can use the information and tools in the Program Kit and Online Training and apply them to their own expert knowledge of their sector.

## Examples of organizations using the program:



Community groups, after-school programs, camps



Programs and services for children with special needs



Schools



Non-profit organizations



Daycare facilities



Emergency/temporary child care and children's hospitals



Faith-based organizations



Foster care and residential care facilities



Sport



Recreational programs (dance, music, art, etc.)

# Why Should Child Protection Be a Priority?

Sex offenders and individuals who meet their needs in unhealthy ways through children may seek out child-serving organizations to obtain employment or volunteer positions in order to gain access to and exploit children.

## Research suggests that:



1 in 10 children will be sexually victimized before they turn 18<sup>i</sup>



In the majority of cases, the offender is known to the child<sup>ii</sup>

When management and staff in child-serving organizations better understand the issue of sexual abuse, beyond common duty to report training and criminal record checks, they build their capacity to better protect children in their care.

<sup>i</sup> Afifi, T. et al. (2014). "Child abuse and mental disorders in Canada." *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 186(9), 324–32.

<sup>ii</sup> Cotter, A. and P. Beaupré. (2014). "Police-reported sexual offences against children and youth in Canada, 2012." *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X.



## How Will Commit to Kids Help My Organization?

The Commit to Kids Program helps organizations highlight strengths and gaps in their policies, manage risks, create a child protection Code of Conduct, review hiring, supervising, and monitoring practices, and establish reporting procedures for misconduct and sexual abuse concerns.

The following steps outline the information and tools provided in the Program:

### Step 1 : Assess Your Organization

Getting started involves a review of your organization’s current child protection practices.



This section of the Commit to Kids Program Kit includes a **child protection questionnaire** to highlight current strengths and gaps in your organization for preventing child sexual abuse.

### Step 2: Understand Child Sexual Abuse

To prevent child sexual abuse in organizations, it is necessary to understand what child sexual abuse is, the offending process, disclosures of abuse, and its impact on victims. Without this understanding, organizations will not be able to implement effective prevention measures or identify when sexual abuse is taking place.



This section of the Commit to Kids Program Kit includes **information about grooming, disclosure, offenders and offending behaviour.**

## Step 3: Manage Risk

Child sexual abuse occurs when opportunity exists and organizations fail to pay attention. Environments that are unstructured, lack protocols and supervision, or where people are not vigilant with hiring and supervision practices, present risk.



This section of the Commit to Kids Program Kit provides **risk charts, checklists and a sample risk management plan** to address:

- Organizational culture
- Programs, activities and services
- Physical space and environment
- Hiring
- Supervision
- Reporting of abuse
- Reporting of misconduct
- Suspension and dismissal
- Confidentiality

## Step 4: Create a Code of Conduct to Protect Children

A Code of Conduct to protect children is the most important tool an organization will develop to help establish boundaries between adults or adolescents and children. It is a written overview of the organization's expectations regarding adult interactions with children and holds staff to a high standard in their professional interaction with children.



This section of the Commit to Kids Program Kit has a **sample Code of Conduct** that will help your organization get started on this important document.

## Step 5: Hire the Right People

Hiring the right people is crucial to building a child-safe organization. A well-defined process that includes policies on recruitment, interviewing, screening, and employment offers will help keep high risk individuals from working or volunteering in your organization.

Did you know?

- Criminal record checks do NOT identify arrests that did not result in convictions.
- Criminal record checks do NOT necessarily include convictions from other jurisdictions in Canada.
- Child abuse registry checks do NOT capture every individual who has abused a child, nor are they available in all jurisdictions in Canada.



This section of the Commit to Kids Program Kit provides **examples of best practices and sample templates** that will strengthen job posting, screening, interviews, and reference checks.

## Step 6: Supervise and Monitor

Orientation, supervision, and monitoring are required to keep children safe in your organization. Child sexual abuse is more likely to occur in organizations that do not have these structures adequately in place. Supervision is the key to identifying and correcting inappropriate behaviour, strengthening general work performance, and promoting accountability.



This section of the Commit to Kids Program Kit offers **checklists and best practices** to help organizations strengthen their supervision of new and existing staff.

## Step 7: Reporting and Documentation

Having clear procedures for reporting two different types of incidents, child sexual abuse as well as misconduct, is imperative. Distinguishing between illegal behaviour and inappropriate behaviour, and having a response plan for both, will help protect children in your care.

Is it clear within your organization?

- To whom you would report an inappropriate interaction?
- How to address behaviours that are violations of your organizations' Code of Conduct?
- What you can do at the same time a law enforcement investigation is taking place?



This section of the Commit to Kids Program Kit contains **information and tools**, such as **sample report forms**, that will provide support with what to report, documenting reports, where to report, investigating reports, and communication of concerns and outcomes.

## Step 8: Creating Policies and Procedures

Written policies that outline how major decisions, actions, and activities should take place, as well as those that clearly state what will and will not be permitted, are essential.



This section of the Commit to Kids Program Kit contains the **sample policies** pertaining to:

- **Education and awareness on child sexual abuse and misconduct**
- **Hiring**
- **Orientation and supervision**
- **Reporting and documenting complaints of abuse and misconduct**
- **Suspension and dismissal**
- **Accountability and confidentiality**
- **Program, services, and activities**

## Step 9: Creating a Child Protection Manual

Consolidating everything your organization has learned through the Commit to Kids process results in the creation of a Child Protection Manual: a central document to consult as needed for consistent, robust, and updated responses.



This section of the Commit to Kids Program Kit breaks down the **components of a comprehensive Child Protection Manual**.

## Step 10: Training

Training at all levels of your organization is essential to understand what constitutes risk, the important role each person has in child protection, and understanding what policies, Codes of Conduct, and expectations are in place to help manage child protection from an organization level.



In addition to training staff on the new Child Protection Manual, we recommend all members of your organization take the **Commit to Kids Online Training** which results in a certificate of completion following success on the final knowledge validation test.

**The Online Training takes 2.5 hours to complete and can be done in multiple sessions.**  
**Learn more about group training rates: [protectchildren.ca/onlinetraining](https://protectchildren.ca/onlinetraining)**

### MODULES

1. Introduction
2. Child Sexual Abuse
3. Grooming
4. Disclosure
5. Impact
6. Code of Conduct and Reporting
7. Policies and Procedures
8. Closing

Model in image. Intended as illustrative.

**DISCLAIMER:** The Commit to Kids program is intended to provide assistance to organizations which provide services to children, to help make organizations safer for children and to assist organizations in meeting their obligations to protect children in their care. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE LEGAL ADVICE, and users of the program should not rely on the content for that purpose. Every effort has been made to provide accurate and up-to-date information, but the Commit to Kids program cannot take account of the particular legal obligations which may apply to an organization. You should seek legal advice before taking action which may create liability.

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*Helping families. Protecting children.*

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc. is a national charity dedicated to the personal safety of all children. Our goal is to reduce child victimization by providing programs and services to Canadians.

Learn more about preventing child sexual abuse and Commit to Kids  
[commit2kids.ca](https://commit2kids.ca)

Order your Commit to Kids Program Kit  
[protectchildren.ca/order](https://protectchildren.ca/order)

Start the Commit to Kids Online Training  
[protectchildren.ca/onlinetraining](https://protectchildren.ca/onlinetraining)

Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc.  
615 Academy Road | Winnipeg MB | R3N 0E7  
800-532-9135 | [protectchildren.ca](https://protectchildren.ca)