

AFTER READING THIS YOU'LL BE
SHOCKED
DISTURBED
& PREPARED

Be armed with information to save your kids
from child sexual exploitation.

Alberta

Information every parent needs to know.

No child chooses a life of sexual exploitation.

Young people involved in sexual exploitation through prostitution come from a variety of backgrounds. Some youth turn to life on the streets to escape problems at home, in school or in their community, and are forced to trade sex for survival needs such as food and shelter. Some fall prey to pimps and recruiters offering drugs and alcohol or promises of quick cash and a glamorous lifestyle. Others suffer from sexual identity confusion or have been victims of physical, sexual or emotional abuse – all have issues associated with low self-esteem.

Over 75 per cent of people working in the sex trade in Canada began working as a child.

“Strolling Away”, Susan McIntyre, PhD

PIMPS AND RECRUITERS

Recruiters are people who seek out and bring youth into prostitution. Pimps are people that live off the earnings of a person being sexually exploited. A pimp can also be a recruiter.

Pimps and recruiters can be anyone, male or female. They may pose as boyfriends or friends and are very manipulative. Youth may be forced to prostitute to pay back drug debts to their dealer.

Once a youth becomes involved in prostitution, it is very difficult for them to leave. They are isolated from family, friends, and community, and frequently have addiction issues. Pimps will use extreme physical violence and scare tactics such as threats to keep them from leaving. Although they want to leave, some youth never make it out alive.

THE LAW

The *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* recognizes that children and youth sexually exploited through prostitution are victims of abuse who need help and protection. The Act allows police and caseworkers to remove sexually exploited children from dangerous situations to ensure their safety and well-being. Under the legislation, children and youth involved in prostitution can access a variety of services including medical assistance, drug and alcohol counselling, psychological services, educational programming, placement resources and life skills support.

FACTS

- Child prostitution is ***sexual abuse***.
- Most people don't realize that many of those being victimized by prostitution are children and youth ***under the age of 18***. Some are even as young as 11.
- Recruiters tend to seek out their victims in shopping malls and schools. Some ***recruiters may even pose as students***.
- Prostitution can happen anywhere, to ***anyone's child***, regardless of social, cultural or economic background.
- Whether you live in a ***big city or in a small town***, chances are boys and girls are being sexually exploited through prostitution in your community.
- You might not see it on the street, but it's there in homes, hotels, truck stops, massage parlours, and escort services. ***Technology such as the Internet, cell phones and pagers, chat lines and telepersonals*** are all increasingly being used as tools in the sexual exploitation of children.

TIPS

Education is your best weapon against sexual exploitation; you can never know too much when it comes to protecting your children.

Always know who your children's friends are and who they are hanging out with.

Your child could be at risk for involvement in prostitution if he or she demonstrates a number of the following attitudes or behaviours:

- **Withdraws from family and/or friends**
- **Secretive and reserved with information about where they have been or with whom**
- **Extreme mood swings, ranging from withdrawn to angry outbursts to very happy**
- **Angry, confrontational or abusive**
- **Protective of a new boyfriend or friend and provides little information when asked about the relationship**
- **Comes home later than usual for unexplained reasons**
- **Hangs around with an older crowd**
- **Wears expensive clothing and/or jewellery they could not possibly afford to buy**
- **Carries a cell phone or pager using blocked or private phone numbers**
- **Carries condoms or other sexual aids**
- **Secretive about Internet sites and contacts**

If you even suspect your child may be at risk of being sexually exploited, trust your instincts and act immediately.

Be aware that those who will take advantage of a child's innocence and live off the avails of prostitution know no boundaries.

**Child Abuse Hotline 1-800-387-KIDS (5437)
www.child.alberta.ca**

If you know of a child or youth who is being sexually exploited, call the Child Abuse Hotline at **1-800-387-KIDS (5437)** or your local police department.

For more information on Alberta's commitment to the protection of sexually exploited children or programs and services in your area, visit the Children's Services' website **www.child.alberta.ca**.

HELP IS AVAILABLE.