



# On-Going for Kids

Office for Protection of Children & Youth



May-July 2008

## Summer Safety Tips

Even though the weather forecast doesn't reflect it, summer is quickly approaching. As such, parents and caregivers are all thinking about what summer programs or activities might be best for their children.

At the same time, we as parents and caregivers from time to time forget to ask our children what they might like to participate in for the summer – many of us feel we have to make the decision for them. Whenever possible and is age-appropriate, sit down with your children and ask them what they would like to do this summer. Say that you would like to include their suggestions in your decision making process. Specifically, ask what are their interests - social and educationally - and do they have ideas about what programs they would like to be enrolled in for the summer. You might be very surprised by their ideas and suggestions!!! After listening to your child's ideas ask questions and encourage open dialogue. Share with your child any concerns or suggestions you might have about their ideas but do so in an encouraging manner. Share your ideas about summer programs and activities and explain why you are suggesting them, and encourage feedback.

Once a decision has been made you must do your **homework** regarding the suggested programs and activities. Do not assume that because a program or activity has been sponsored or published that it is *safe and/or appropriate* for your child.

Here are some suggestions before selecting your child's summer program or activity:

- Verify that the facility is licensed by the State of Illinois. Ask the Director to see the facility's license and check the expiration date to ensure it is current;
- Observe all areas of the facility to ensure that there are no safety or health hazards;
- Ask the Director detailed questions regarding the screening of staff. These questions could include;
  - ❑ Ask to review their hiring application. Ask questions about the application if any areas are unfamiliar or critical information is not requested on the application.
  - ❑ Ask if they run a criminal background check on all employees prior to hiring? Is it an online background check or FBI digital fingerprinting?
  - ❑ Do they conduct a Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking Systems (CANTS) check with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services on all employees prior to hiring?
  - ❑ Ask if they request professional references and do they

- contact these references prior to hiring an applicant?
- ❑ What type of experience must staff members have to work for this particular program?
- ❑ What type of certifications must staff members have to work for this particular program?

- Meet all teachers, teacher aides, activity directors, etc, in person and ask questions and observe interactions between them and children.
- Take your child to the facility and let them meet the staff. As you're driving home, ask for your child's opinion about the program and facility.

Similarly, summer will also provide even more time for your child to "surf the net." It is very important that all children understand there are some dangers on line.

Criminals do "surf the net" looking for victims so speak to your child regarding online dangers.

Remind your child of the following:

- Some people online pretend to be someone that they are not.
- Private and family matters should not be talked about online.
- Never give out their personal information online or your personal information. (Example: phone numbers)
- Get permission from you if they wish to give out any personal information online or in person.
- Do not send threatening emails online or post threats on websites, blogs, bulletin boards or any public sites.
- Do not send pictures or video messages of themselves to anyone online or post them on websites, blogs, bulletin boards or any public site.
- Never go to meet anyone they have meet on line.
- Never invite anyone they met on line to your home.

Every experience in your child's life is an opportunity for development and growth, summer activities should be no exception, but there should be time for fun and amusement, as well. Taking the time to insure that the summer program you enroll your child in meets the criteria listed above will help to provide a safe environment for your child to explore and expand their minds, as well as offer you the security that you took the measure to make sure they are safe.

Remember...

**The summer should be FUN but it must also be SAFE!**

Womazetta Jones, M.A.  
Director, Safe Environment Office  
Editor, On-Going for Kids Newsletter

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

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### **Who has to complete a background check?**

All employees, clergy and volunteers, 18 years of age and older, in parishes and schools that work with children and vulnerable adults, are to complete a criminal background check prior to beginning service in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

### **Who has to submit to a digital fingerprint background check?**

A state law was passed in May 2007 requiring all school employees hired after July 1, 2007, to complete a digital fingerprint check. In addition, for the Archdiocese of Chicago, these individuals must also complete the online application for a background check. (eApps).

### **Where do I go to complete an online background check?**

Logon to the archdiocese website at [www.archchicago.org](http://www.archchicago.org) Scroll down to the Protecting Children box. Click on the box and a drop-down menu will appear. Click on Background Screening to complete an online background check. Your parish or school can provide you with the confidential access code.

### **Where do I go to find locations and directions for digital fingerprinting?**

Logon to the archdiocese website at [www.archchicago.org](http://www.archchicago.org) Scroll down to the Protecting Children box. Click on the box and a drop-down menu will appear. Click on Fingerprinting. You can also find locations for digital fingerprinting at [www.accuratebiometrics.com](http://www.accuratebiometrics.com).

### **Who has to attend a Virtus/Protecting God's Children for Adults training session?**

All employees, clergy and volunteers, 18 years of age and older, shall attend Virtus training. A copy of the Virtus Attendance Certificate is kept locally at the site of employment, ministry or service. Some, but not all, of the people who are to attend: teachers, priests, youth ministers, catechists, scout leaders, ushers, deacons, parents who go on field trips, student teachers, lunchroom helpers, all employees in parishes and schools, coaches.

### **How do I know where the Virtus/Protecting**

### **God's Children for Adults training sessions are being held and is registration required?**

Yes, it is required that everyone pre-register for Virtus training. Logon to the archdiocesan website at [www.archchicago.org](http://www.archchicago.org). Scroll down to the Protecting Children box. Click on the box and a drop-down menu will appear. Click on Virtus. You must pre-register online and choose a training session.

### **Who is expected to read the Virtus/Protecting God's Children for Adults training bulletins after attending the Virtus training?**

Anyone who works with children is expected to read the monthly bulletins. The bulletins provide ongoing education about how to protect children.

### **What is the CANTS form and who completes this form?**

CANTS is the Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System database maintained by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). The CANTS check provides information on any person 18 years of age and older who has an indicated case/s of child abuse and or neglect against them in Illinois. All employees, clergy and volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults shall complete the CANTS form. Completed CANTS forms are to be sent to DCFS by the parish and or school. A copy of the completed CANTS form is kept locally at the site of employment, ministry or service.

### **Who is to read the Code of Conduct and sign the Acknowledgement Form?**

All employees and clergy of the Archdiocese of Chicago, 18 years of age and older, are to read and sign the Code of Conduct. All volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults are also are to read and sign the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct is available on the archdiocesan website at [www.archchicago.org](http://www.archchicago.org) in the Protecting Children section. The signed copy of the Acknowledgement Form is kept locally at the site of employment, ministry or service.

### **What is a site administrator/safety coordinator?**

A site administrator/safety coordinator is

the person designated by the pastor or principal from their parish and school, respectively, who maintains the online databases for background checks and Virtus training. The database lists who in their parish/school has registered online and attended a Virtus training session and who has completed a background check. The site administrator/safety coordinator does not have access to the background check itself.

### **What is site administrator training?**

Additional training regarding the background check database system, fingerprinting, and training for access to the Virtus database.

Pre-Registration is required. To register please email Sarah Stevens at [sstevens@archchicago.org](mailto:sstevens@archchicago.org)

### **What is mandated reporter training?**

Mandated reporter training informs participants about the Abuse and Neglect Child Reporting Act, 1975 (ANCRA). ANCRA mandates people in certain professions to report child abuse such as: educators, medical professionals, social service workers, law enforcement personnel and members of the clergy. This law also sets forward the definitions of sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, the role of DCFS and much more.

### **Who should attend mandated reporter training?**

All employees, clergy and volunteers who work with children shall attend Mandated Reporter training. Pre-Registration is required. To register please email Sarah Stevens at [sstevens@archchicago.org](mailto:sstevens@archchicago.org)

### **When and where do I attend mandated reporter training?**

Mandated reporter training will be ongoing for the next two years. Trainings will be held in all six vicariates. Training sessions are listed in this newsletter, sent in the pastor electronic batch mail and will also be listed on the Children Matter Network [www.childrenmatternetwork.org](http://www.childrenmatternetwork.org).

Pre-Registration is required. To register please email Sarah Stevens at [sstevens@archchicago.org](mailto:sstevens@archchicago.org)

*Womazetta Jones, M.A.,  
Director, Safe Environment Office  
Editor, On-Going for Kids Newsletter*

## Upcoming Trainings and Events

### [Virtus /Protecting Gods Children Adult Training](#)

New sessions posted weekly. To view schedule go to [www.archchicago.org](http://www.archchicago.org) and access the Virtus link under Protecting Children. Mandatory for all employees and clergy and all volunteers who work with children.

### [Site Administrator Training](#)

Vicariate VI- June 19, 2008  
9:00am-11:30am, St. Sabina, Chicago

Vicariate IV- July 25, 2008  
9:00am-11:30am,  
St. Francis of Rome, Cicero

Pre-Registration is required for site administrators training. You must register within 7 days of the training selected. Please email Sarah Stevens at [sstevens@archchicago.org](mailto:ssstevens@archchicago.org)

### [Mandated Reporter Training](#)

Vicariate VI- June 19, 2008  
1pm-3:30pm, St. Sabina, Chicago

Vicariate IV- July 25, 2008  
1pm-3:30pm,  
St. Francis of Rome, Cicero

Pre-Registration is required for mandated reporter training. You must register within 7 days of the training selected. Please email Sarah Stevens at [sstevens@archchicago.org](mailto:ssstevens@archchicago.org)

### [Virtus Facilitators Training](#)

June 20-21, 2008  
September 19-20, 2008

For more information contact  
Carolyn Perz, 312-751-5388

# Office of Assistance Ministry

The Office of Assistance Ministry always welcomes opportunities such as this to spread the word about its unique services. The focus of Assistance Ministry is primarily on the emotional and spiritual wellbeing and healing of victim-survivors of sexual abuse by church personnel of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Our mission--to provide pastoral outreach within a setting of compassion, acceptance, privacy and respect--takes on many forms in the way of services.

Most recently, the Office of Assistance Ministry hosted a Healing Weekend at Techny Towers for Victim-Survivors. The purpose of the weekend was to bring together adults who, as children, had been sexually abused by priests. They had opportunities to share their experiences with one another, to provide mutual support, to facilitate forward-movement, and to help with the healing of spirit. It was intentionally scheduled for April to coincide with Prevent Child Abuse Awareness Month and the Easter Season's theme of new life.

The weekend was directed by a team of lay facilitators with varied experiences in the field of sexual abuse of minors by clerics. Cardinal George and Jimmy Lago (Chancellor for the Archdiocese of Chicago) spent time answering questions and addressing concerns from the men and women in attendance. At the conclusion, participants expressed much appreciation for the weekend experience.

The Healing Weekend is one of several services provided by the Office of Assistance Ministry. Other resources available through the Office include referrals to therapists and spiritual counselors specially trained in helping victim-survivors of sexual abuse, as well as their family members. Services and assistance are provided in a caring and compassionate manner. In all cases, respect for the privacy of those who seek assistance is honored.

Assistance Ministry serves:

- Individuals who, as minors, were sexually abused by ordained or lay personnel of the Archdiocese of Chicago.
- Secondary Victims of sexual abuse, such as:
  - ✓ Families of those sexually abused by ordained or lay personnel of the Archdiocese of Chicago.
  - ✓ Pastoral staffs of those parishes affected by the sexual misconduct of church personnel.
  - ✓ Parish communities affected by the sexual misconduct of ordained or lay personnel of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Beginning this May, a twelve-week support group for men and women who have been sexually abused as minors will be sponsored by the Office of Assistance Ministry. Each group will be led by a licensed professional with experience working with people in vulnerable situations who want to move forward and take charge of their lives. A family member, friend or stranger may have perpetrated the abuse. Participation in the group is not limited to those who were sexually abused as minors by a priest or deacon. Whatever form the outreach may take, the singular objective of the Office of Assistance Ministry is to promote healing and wholeness for all victim-survivors of sexual abuse by church personnel of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

For more information about the Office of Assistance Ministry, please visit the Archdiocese of Chicago's website at [www.archchicago.org](http://www.archchicago.org), call (312-751-8267), or e-mail ([assistmin@archchicago.org](mailto:assistmin@archchicago.org)).

Matt Hunnicutt, Director, Office of Assistance Ministry  
Mayra Flores, Assistant Director, Office of Assistance Ministry

## Children Matter Network

is a partnership created to protect the dignity of children  
[www.childrenmatternetwork.org](http://www.childrenmatternetwork.org)

### The Children Matter Network...and You!

Because you are reading this article, it is clear that Children Matter to you too!

Whether you are a parent, educator, pastor, religious education leader, youth minister, or parish volunteer (or perhaps a combination of any of these), you have children who matter to you in your life, and the Children Matter Network is here to support you by providing information as you guide them and as they flourish and grow.

Sadly everyday, we hear of children being hurt or killed through street violence, family violence, peer violence and random violence. We share in the profound grief of any child being hurt, and our prayers go out to their loved ones.

These are moments of feeling helpless and perhaps hopeless for us all. Sometimes there are feelings of anger – anger for the violation and perhaps loss of a precious child - anger about the direction of our culture and how its negative aspects can impact our children. With so much violence against our children, it becomes easy to get discouraged about their future. However, it strengthens our resolve to help you.

Perhaps, the reality may be that while we cannot control “it all”, we are certainly not helpless. What we can try to influence is how to help our children develop the resiliency they will need in their day-to-day lives, which in turn, helps keep them as safe and happy as possible.

The information we provide at [www.childrenmatternetwork.org](http://www.childrenmatternetwork.org) is designed to help adults who care about children ensures those children are getting their “emotional and spiritual vitamins”. As we try to ensure our children are eating their fruits and vegetables, we also want to ensure they are in a family, school and peer environment, which “feeds” them emotionally and spiritually.

Check out the website for information on “Growing Children Into Their Best”. This feature describes different aspects of how to help children feel they belong in their environments as well as their need to experience their own positive power and esteem in their lives. We know that the more “emotional and spiritual vitamins” we can provide, the stronger their “immunity” will be when they are faced with daily choices – such as who to be friends with, and how to respond to challenging situations in their lives.

This summer, we will be focusing on the need for “fun” and how important it is towards “Growing Children Into Their Best.”

Let us know how we can support you - the most important people in your children's world. It is through caring for yourself and getting the supports you need that the children in your life get the care and support they need in their growth. Let's continue to work together.

*Patricia Zacharias, Mayra Flores, Womazetta Jones*

### To report allegations of child abuse directly to civil authorities contact:

*Illinois Department of Children and Family Services*

In Illinois call 1-800-25-ABUSE or 1-800-252-2873;  
Outside of Illinois call 217-524-2606;  
TTY 1-800-358-5117

**Cook County States Attorney's Office**  
contact, *Shauna Boliker*, Chief of the Sex Crimes Division,  
1-773-869-6492;

**Lake County States Attorney's Office**  
contact, *Patricia Fix*, Chief of the Felony Trial Division  
1-847-377-3000;

To report allegations of sexual abuse of minors by a Priest or Deacon, lay employee, and/or volunteer to the Archdiocese of Chicago contact,  
*Leah McCluskey*, 1-312-751-5205 or 1-800-994-6200.

Comments or questions concerning  
*On-Going for Kids* newsletter?  
Contact Womazetta Jones at 312-751-5238

### Archdiocese of Chicago Office for the Protection of Children and Youth

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#### Office of Assistance Ministry

Director, Matt Hunnicutt  
312-751-8267 or 1-866-517-4528  
Assistant Director, Mayra Flores, 312-751-8256

#### Safe Environment Office

Director, Womazetta Jones, 312-751-5238

#### Office for Child Abuse Investigations and Review

Director, Leah McCluskey, 312-751-5205  
or 1-800-994-6200  
Assistant Director, Patricia Zacharias, 312-867-8793

Office Manager, Carolyn Perz, 312-751-5388

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