

Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

For Employees and Volunteers who work with Minors

Diocese of Evansville Safe Environment Program

www.evdio.org/youth-protection.html

PROMISE TO
PROTECT



PLEDGE TO
HEAL



A Prayer for Healing, Victims of Abuse

www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/child-and-youth-protection

God of endless love, ever caring, ever strong, always present, always just: You gave your only Son to save us by his blood on the cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace, join to your own suffering the pain of all who have been hurt in body, mind, and spirit by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.

Hear the cries of our brothers and sisters who have been gravely harmed, and the cries of those who love them. Soothe their restless hearts with hope, steady their shaken spirits with faith. Grant them justice for their cause, enlightened by your truth.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal your people's wounds and transform brokenness into wholeness. Grant us the courage and wisdom, humility and grace, to act with justice. Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors. Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Purpose: This presentation is for employees and volunteers that work with minors (a person under 18) in any capacity. It provides an overview of the Diocese of Evansville *Framework for Youth Protection*, information about the meaning of child abuse and neglect, and the laws and policies regarding the reporting of abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse.

Outline

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*
- Diocese of Evansville Safe Environment Program, *Framework for Youth Protection*
- Diocese of Evansville
 - *Best Practices for Adults Who Work With Minors*
 - *Best Practices for Pastoral Conduct*
 - *Diocesan Report and Inform Policy*
- Child Abuse Reporting Laws
 - Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect
- What is Child Abuse?
 - Abuse statistics
 - Physical abuse
 - Neglect
 - Mental/emotional abuse
 - Sexual abuse
- “Grooming” and child sexual abuse
- What can we do to protect children?



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

- The *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* (“*Charter*”) is a comprehensive set of procedures established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in June 2002 for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. The *Charter* also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability, and prevention of future acts of abuse.
- The *Charter* requires dioceses to establish *Safe Environment* programs.
- *Safe Environment* is a term used to refer to a wide assortment of practices that contribute to preventing child abuse of any kind.
- Churches, schools, and youth organizations must ensure that children and youth who worship, study, or participate in activities sponsored by a parish can do so in the safest and most secure setting possible.
- Parents and caretakers have the right to ask these institutions if they meet the requirements of the *Charter* before they allow their children to become involved with them.

Diocese of Evansville Safe Environment Program

Framework for Youth Protection

Diocese of Evansville Safe Environment program contents are described in the *Framework for Youth Protection* (“*Framework*”) Safe Environment program manual.

Framework components include:

- Every parish or cluster and each high school is to appoint a Youth Protection Coordinator who is responsible for implementing the diocesan youth protection policies at the local level.
- Every adult working with youth in any capacity is required to sign on an annual basis the *Best Practices for Pastoral Conduct* form, which specifies the conditions of providing services to the children and youth of our diocese.
- Every adult working with youth in any capacity is required to attend a training session, which includes a presentation of the policies of the *Framework* and addresses such issues as what constitutes child abuse and what actions an adult should take when he or she believes that child abuse may be occurring.
- Any adult (paid and volunteer) who works with youth in any capacity is required to submit to a criminal history background check.

Diocese of Evansville, *Best Practices for Adults Who Work With Minors*

For Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Candidates for Ordination, Pastoral Ministers, Administrators, Staff, and Volunteers

As children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us, the Diocese of Evansville is committed to safeguarding minors, which are persons under eighteen (18) years of age.

Two-deep leadership

Two “approved” adult leaders or one approved leader and a parent or legal guardian of a participant, both of whom must be twenty-one (21) years of age or older, are required for all parish/school sponsored youth activities. The parish/school is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.

“Approved” means that the Pastor/Priest Delegate knows the person and approves him or her, the person has had youth protection training, and the person has submitted to a criminal history background check.

Two-deep leadership includes, but is not limited to, transporting minors in approved transportation vehicles for non-Catholic School youth activities, such as church mission trips. This does not apply to situations where the driver is the parent or legal guardian of all the minors in the transportation vehicle.

No one-on-one contact

One-on-one contact between adults and minors is not permitted. In the rare situations that require personal conferences, the meeting is to be conducted with the knowledge and in view of other adults and minors.

- Note: Professional Mental Health Counselors, who are required to follow the Ethical Code of their professional discipline, State licensing requirements, and State legislation regulating professional conduct, may conduct one-on-one private counseling sessions. The term “Professional Mental Health Counselor,” as used herein, means a person with a master’s degree in a recognized mental health discipline, who is licensed, or supervised by a licensed professional, and is employed by Catholic Charities, Diocese of Evansville or is officially approved by the Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Evansville to provide services on school premises.

No one-on-one contact also applies to digital communication, such as text messages and emails. Adults may not have one-on-one private social media communications or engage in one-on-one in other digital activities with minors. Furthermore, in accordance with the Diocese of Evansville Social Media Policy:

- Before posting pictures of a minor or communicating with a minor electronically (which would include online social media platforms like Facebook as well as email and text messaging), the adult must gain written permission from the minor’s parent or legal guardian. Catholic schools gain this permission by including language in the Parent/Student Handbook which is signed by all parties.
- Parents/legal guardians must have access to everything provided to their children.

Parish/school officials shall also have access to digital communications shared with minors.

Respect of privacy

Adult leaders must respect the privacy of minors and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.

Separate accommodations

When staying overnight, no minor is permitted to sleep in the room of an adult other than his or her own parent or legal guardian. Unless rooming with their own parent or legal guardian, male and female minors shall room separately.

Proper preparation for high adventure activities

Activities with elements of risk should never be undertaken without proper preparation, equipment, clothing, competent supervision, and safety measures.

No secret organizations

The Diocese of Evansville does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of the youth program are open to observation by pastors, parents, legal guardians, and leaders. Even in cases of closed membership (i.e., TEC) parents, legal guardians, and pastors MUST be admitted at any time to observe the program.

Appropriate attire

Proper clothing for activities is required. Modest dress is always required. Guidelines for appropriate attire for a given activity should be written and stated before all youth functions.

Constructive discipline

Discipline used in youth ministry, educational, and catechetical ministry should be constructive and reflect the Church's values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

Hazing is prohibited

Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any activity. Adult leaders must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by youth leaders and ensure that diocesan policies are followed.

No expensive gifts or special privileges

Adults shall not give or accept expensive gifts, or special privileges, to/from minors or their parents/legal guardians without the prior written approval from the Pastor/Priest Delegate.

NOTE: Other Diocese of Evansville departments, such as the Catholic Schools Office, the Office of Catechesis, and the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry may have additional code of conduct requirements for their respective ministries.

Diocese of Evansville, *Best Practices for Pastoral Conduct*

For Bishops, Priests, Deacons, Candidates for Ordination, Pastoral Ministers, Administrators, Staff, and Volunteers

As children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us, the Diocese of Evansville is committed to safeguarding minors, which are persons under eighteen (18) years of age.

As a condition of their providing services to the minors of our diocese, bishops, priests, deacons, candidates for ordination, pastoral ministers, administrators, staff, and volunteers that work with minors in any capacity shall:

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration.
- Immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect of a minor to the Department of Child Services (Indiana DCS Hotline: 1-800-800-5556) or to a local law enforcement agency; then inform the appropriate supervisor.
- Immediately report the suspected sexual abuse of a minor by diocesan personnel to the Department of Child Services or to a local law enforcement agency.
 - If a bishop has (a) performed sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person; (b) forced someone to perform or to submit to sexual acts through violence, threat, or abuse of authority; (c) produced, exhibited, possessed, or distributed child pornography, including by electronic means, or recruited or induced a minor or vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions; or (d) executed actions or omissions intended to interfere with or avoid a civil or Church (canonical) investigation into allegations of sexual abuse committed by a cleric or religious: after reporting to DCS or to a local law enforcement agency, inform the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service (www.reportbishopabuse.org or 1-800-276-1562), which is a third-party reporting service for gathering and relaying such reports to the appropriate Church authorities.
 - If the sexual abuse of a minor involves a priest, deacon, candidate for ordination, pastoral minister, administrator, staff person, or volunteer: after reporting to DCS or to a local law enforcement agency, inform the diocesan victim assistance coordinator (toll-free: 866-200-3004; local: 812-490-9565).

- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of minors.
- Participate fully in the required training sessions for adults working with minors.
- Be subject to a thorough criminal history background check.
- Refrain from smoking or using tobacco, or smoking electronic cigarettes or similar devices (“vaping”), at any time while serving minors in parish, school, or diocesan sponsored functions.
- Refrain from using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while serving minors in parish, school, or diocesan functions.
- Be informed that the diocese’s policies and procedures regarding allegations of sexual abuse of minors is on the diocesan website (www.evdio.org).

The sexual abuse of a minor also includes:

- A vulnerable person is any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offense.
- Child pornography, which is any representation of a minor, regardless of the means used, involved in explicit sexual activities, whether real or simulated, and any representation of sexual organs of minors for primarily sexual purposes.

Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Department of Child Services or to a local law enforcement agency is a Class B Misdemeanor. The only exception to this requirement involves information learned within the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Any action inconsistent with Safe Environment Program policies and procedures may result in the termination of a person’s giving services to minors.

Diocesan Report and Inform Policy

Children are the most important gifts God has entrusted to us. The Diocese of Evansville is committed to safeguarding minors, who are persons under eighteen (18) years of age.

Immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect of a minor to the Department of Child Services (DCS) or to a local law enforcement agency.

- State of Indiana DCS Hotline: 1-800-800-5556
- Local law enforcement: 9-1-1

If a bishop has (a) performed sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person; (b) forced someone to perform or to submit to sexual acts through violence, threat, or abuse of authority; (c) produced, exhibited, possessed, or distributed child pornography, including by electronic means, or recruited or induced a minor or vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions; or (d) executed actions or omissions intended to interfere with or avoid a civil or Church (canonical) investigation into allegations of sexual abuse committed by a cleric or religious: after reporting to DCS or to a local law enforcement agency, inform the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service, which is a third-party reporting service for gathering and relaying such reports to the appropriate Church authorities.

- Make a report online at www.reportbishopabuse.org or call 1-800-276-1562

If the sexual abuse of a minor involves a priest, deacon, candidate for ordination, pastoral minister, administrator, staff person, or volunteer: after reporting to DCS or to a local law enforcement agency, inform the diocesan victim assistance coordinator.

- Toll-free: 866-200-3004
- Local: 812-490-9565

The sexual abuse of a minor also includes:

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Child Abuse Reporting Laws

- Indiana law requires anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect to report it to authorities. Any person who has reason to believe must report.
- You can make a report anytime, day or night, by calling the Department of Child Services/Child Protective Services (hereafter *DCS*) Hotline at (800) 800-5556. If you think a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- If you have any doubts or suspicions about whether or not to report abuse and/or neglect of a child, call the DCS Hotline.



Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

- State law requires DCS to protect the identity of people who report suspicions of abuse or neglect.
- DCS does encourage you to provide your phone number in case they need to contact you later about the case.
- There is immunity for reporters from civil or criminal liability when reporting is done without bad intentions and in good faith.
- Information that is helpful to provide to DCS includes:
 - Child information: name, birth date/age, and address
 - Parent/guardian information: name, address
 - Who you think committed the abuse or neglect
 - What happened to the child
- You may not be able to answer all the questions, and that is ok. Just provide the information that you know. Once again, Indiana law requires anyone who suspects child abuse or neglect to report it to authorities.
- Do not wait for someone else to make the call – your call may be the critical first step in protecting a child.

What is Child Abuse?

- The physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, exploitation, negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 (except in the case of sexual abuse, where age is specified by the child protection law of the State) by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare.
- Types of Child Abuse (these types are further described in the following slides)
 - Physical
 - Neglect
 - Sexual
 - Mental/Emotional

Abuse statistics

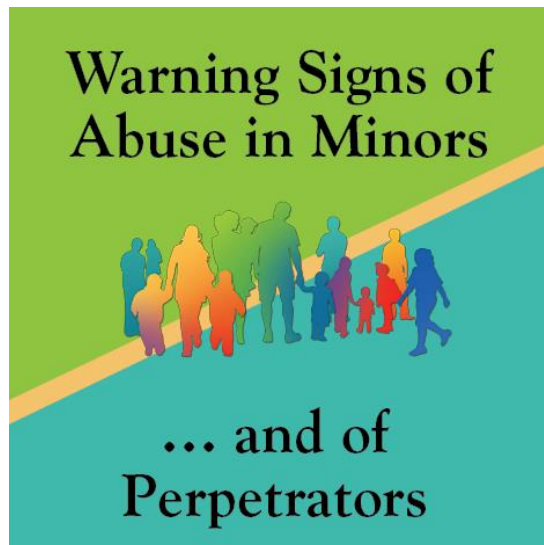
According to a the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Child abuse and neglect are significant public health problems in the United States.
- In 2016, more than 1,750 children died in the United States from abuse and neglect.
- According to child protective services, about 676,000 children were victims of child abuse or neglect in 2016, although this number likely underestimates the true occurrence.
- One in 4 children have experienced abuse or neglect at some point in their lives, and 1 in 7 experienced abuse or neglect in the past year.
- Child abuse and neglect are preventable

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Child Abuse Prevention," www.cdc.gov/features/healthychildren/index.html

Watch for these Warning Signs of Abuse in Minors....

- No longer wants to see a particular person they had been close to
- Declining academic performance
- Tries to hide use of technology
- No longer interested in activities they used to enjoy
- Changes in personality
- Demonstrates aggressive behavior or constantly angry
- Withdraws from family and friends



...and These Warning Signs of Perpetrators

- Tries to get minors alone
- Commits physical and emotional boundary violations
- Keeps secrets with minors
- Allows or encourages minors to break the laws or rules
- Gives lavish gifts to minors
- Has inappropriate or suggestive conversations with minors
- Is overly interested in spending time with minors
- Does not believe the rules apply to them (or, does not follow rules or protocols)
- Takes photos without approval, or asks minors to send them photos

From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Physical abuse

- Infliction of physical injury or allowing another to do so.
 - Striking with a hand, fist, or instrument
 - Throwing
 - Shaking
 - Burning
 - Suffocating
 - Drowning

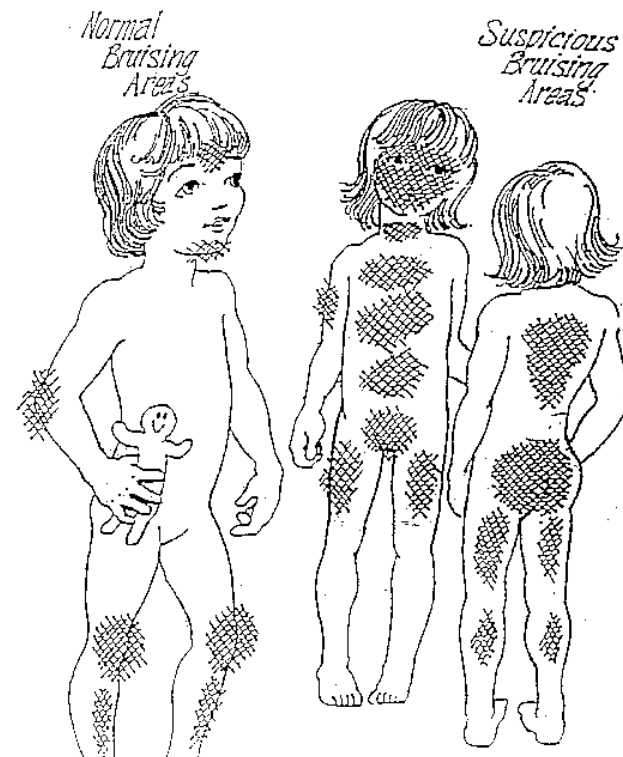
Recognizing physical abuse

Potential physical indicators include:

- Bruises and/or abrasions in suspicious areas, that is, areas of the body that do not easily bruise or rarely come into contact with something that could bruise them (see image to the right of normal and suspicious bruising areas)
- Burns
- Bruises, welts, fractures, abrasions that cannot be explained
- Bruises are rare in infants that do not yet walk with support (“cruising”); bruises in infants younger than 9 months and who are not yet cruising could be indicative of abuse*

Potential behavior indicators include:

- Child verbalizes abuse
- Behavioral extremes, such as extreme fear of parents or caregivers, extreme vigilance or watchfulness, harming pets or other animals, aggressive and/or bullying smaller children, too eager to please, school absenteeism



*See NF Suger, JA Taylor, and KW Feldman, "Bruises in infants and toddlers: those who don't cruise rarely bruise." Puget Sound Pediatric Research Network, 1999 Apr; 153(4): 399-403

Behavior indicators of physical abusers

- Harsh and random disciplinarian
- Describes child in a consistently negative manner
- Defensive, conceals or misleads about child's injuries
- Substance abuser
- Tend to be controlling in social situations

Neglect

Chronic failure to meet basic needs:

- Food, clothing, shelter
- Medical care
- Education
- Adequate supervision

Recognizing neglect

Possible physical indicators

- Constant fatigue
- Hunger and/or emaciation
- Lack of adequate grooming and/or clothing
- Unattended health needs

Potential behavioral indicators

- Begging for or stealing food
- Alcohol or drug use
- Repeated non-completion of homework, poor school attendance
- Reports being left alone

Characteristics of neglectful adults

- Substance abuser
- Exposes child to dangerous living conditions
- Chaotic life style
- Apathetic towards child's welfare

Child mental/emotional abuse

- Mental/emotional harm inflicted by a constant pattern of verbal harassment, threats, and systematic destruction of a child's self-esteem.
- Some examples of this type of child abuse are:
 - Verbal threats of death or serious injury
 - Repeated negative labeling, such as telling a child things like he or she is stupid, no good, ugly, or that you hate him or her
 - Teaching a child harmful behaviors such as lying and stealing

Recognizing mental/emotional abuse

Indicators

- Low self esteem
- Difficulty in forming positive relationships
- Behavioral extremes
- Sleep problems
- Withdrawal
- Anxiety including social anxiety
- Derives pleasure from hurting others

Characteristics of emotional abusers

- Belittling/criticizing
- Habitual lack or randomness of attention, affection, emotional support or supervision
- Threatening child or child's possessions
- Verbal threats of bodily harm
- Cutting child off from natural social expression
- Teaching deviant patterns of behavior, such as lying or stealing
- Exert significant psychological control such as not allowing child to experience particular emotions

Sexual abuse

- Utilization of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or older child in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult.

The sexual abuse of a minor also includes:

- A vulnerable person is any person in a state of infirmity, physical or mental deficiency, or deprivation of personal liberty which, in fact, even occasionally limits their ability to understand or to want or otherwise resist the offense.
- Child pornography, which is any representation of a minor, regardless of the means used, involved in explicit sexual activities, whether real or simulated, and any representation of sexual organs of minors for primarily sexual purposes.

Recognizing sexual abuse

Possible Physical Indicators

- Sexually transmitted disease
- Recurrent bladder or urinary tract infections
- Difficulty walking and sitting
- Pregnancy under 16 years of age
- Foreign matter in genitals
- Bruised or dilated genitals

Potential Behavioral Indicators

- Reports sexual abuse
- Premature knowledge of explicit sex acts or sexual terminology
- Aggressive, overt sexual acting-out behavior (for example, a child forcing another person to do things that are sexual in nature)
- Sleep disorders
- Self-destructive behaviors
- Behavioral extremes

Characteristics of sex abusers

Behavioral indicators of sex abusers

- Extremely protective of family privacy
- Encourages child into prostitution
- Substance abuser
- Tries to get minors alone
- Commits physical and emotional boundary violations
- Keeps secrets with minors
- Allows or encourages minors to break the law or rules
- Gives lavish gifts to minors
- Has inappropriate or suggestive conversations with minors
- Is overly interested in spending time with minors
- Takes photos without approval, or asks minors to send them photos

According to the Indiana Department of Child Services, sexual abuse occurs when any of the following acts are committed:

- Sexual contact with a child including sexual abuse, rape, molestation, seduction, sexual misconduct, public indecency, prostitution, incest, patronizing a child prostitute, promoting child prostitution, sexual trafficking, sexual battery, vicarious sexual gratification, and child solicitation
- Participating in an obscene performance
- Sexual exploitation of a child

“Grooming” and child sexual abuse

“Grooming” refers to a pre-meditated behavior intended to manipulate a potential victim into complying with sexual abuse. In respect to grooming, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ “Ten Points to Create Safe Environments for Children” (www.usccb.org) explains that:

You cannot always predict who will be an abuser

- Experience shows that most abuse is at the hands of someone who has gained the trust of a victim/survivor and his/her family.
- Most abuse also occurs in the family setting. Sometimes, the nicest person in the world is an abuser, and this niceness enables a false sense of trust to be created between abuser and abused.

“Grooming” and child sexual abuse (con’t)

There are behavioral warning signs of child abusers

- Training and education help adults recognizing grooming techniques that are pre-cursors to abuse.
- Some abusers isolate a potential victim by giving him or her undue attention or lavish gifts.
- Another common grooming technique is to allow young people to participate in activities which their parents or guardians would not approve, such as watching pornography, drinking alcohol, using drugs, and excessive touching, which includes wrestling and tickling.
- It is also critical to be wary of age-inappropriate relationships, seen, for example, in the adult who is more comfortable with children than fellow adults.

People can be taught to identify grooming behavior...

- ...which are the actions which abusers take to protect the image that they are kind, generous, caring people, while their intent is to lure a minor into an inappropriate relationship.
- An abuser may develop a relationship with the family to increase his credibility.
- Abusers might show attention to the child by talking to him/her, being friendly, sharing alcohol with a minor and giving the child status by insinuating that the child is their favorite or special person.
- Offenders can be patient and may groom their victim, his or her family, or community for years.

What can we do to protect children?

Parents can help to protect their children by...

- Knowing what sexual abuse is, recognizing its prevalence, and understanding how it occurs.
 - 1 in 10 children experience sexual abuse before their 18th birthday.
 - Over 90% of sexually abused children are abused by someone known by the child or family.
- Minimize opportunity.
 - More than 80% of sexual abuse cases occur in isolated, one-on-one situations.
 - Eliminating or reducing these situations between children and adults, as well as children and other youth, dramatically reduces the risk of sexual abuse.
- Talking to their children in age appropriate ways about our bodies, sex, and boundaries so that children understand what healthy relationships look like.
- Making sure that their children know that they can report inappropriate behavior to them or another trusted adult and that they will be believed.
- Know the signs of abuse to protect children from further harm.
- If the child discloses sexual abuse to you, stay calm, offer support and reassure the child that he/she did nothing wrong and was right in telling you, and promptly report. If you discover or suspect sexual abuse, promptly report.

Prevent Child Abuse Indiana, "Recognizing Abuse and Neglect," www.pcain.org
Darkness to Light, "Empowering adults to prevent child sexual abuse," www.d2l.org



Sources

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