
What Parents Need to Know About Grooming

1. Grooming Exists and Is Common

- Predators don't just "snatch kids off the street." They slowly **earn trust**—with parents and with the child.
- Most grooming happens by someone the child already knows—a **teacher, coach, family friend, or even another relative**.

2. The Steps Predators Use

Parents need to recognize patterns:

1. **Targeting a child** (often vulnerable, shy, lonely, or craving attention).
2. **Gaining trust** (building friendship, buying gifts, offering rides, giving attention).
3. **Isolation** (separating the child from protective adults).
4. **Creating secrecy** ("this is our special secret—don't tell anyone").
5. **Desensitization** (introducing touch, normalizing inappropriate behavior).
6. **Abuse** (exploiting the control built over time).

3. Warning Signs in Children

- Sudden **secrecy** about new relationships, friends, or online activity.
- Unexplained **gifts, money, or devices**.
- Withdrawal, anxiety, or mood swings.
- Talking in ways that are **too mature for their age** (because an adult is influencing them).

4. Warning Signs in Adults

- Excessive interest in a specific child (always volunteering with them, requesting one-on-one time).
- Trying to **bypass parents** ("you can tell me anything," "you don't need to bother your mom about this").
- Using **secrets, flattery, or guilt** to keep a child quiet.

5. Online Grooming is Real

- Predators **pose as kids** on apps, games, and social media.
 - They move fast: first chat → flattery → move to private messaging → push for photos or in-person meetings.
 - Parents need to **know what apps kids use, who they talk to, and how to check privacy settings.**
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6. What Kids Need to Hear From Parents

- “You can tell me anything—without getting in trouble.”
 - “If someone asks you to keep a secret, show me right away.”
 - “No adult should ever ask you for pictures, or to keep things private from me.”
 - “I will always believe you and protect you.”
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7. Why Andrew’s Law Matters

- Laws must **match reality**: grooming is a deliberate, calculated crime, not a “lesser” offense.
- Parents need to know that under Andrew’s Law, predators can’t plea bargain grooming into something minor—they’ll be fully accountable.