

# Grooming Awareness Checklist for Parents

## What is Grooming?

Grooming is when a predator builds trust with a child (and often the family) to exploit them. It happens slowly, often by people the child already knows.

## Common Grooming Steps

- Targeting a vulnerable child (lonely, shy, or craving attention).
- Gaining trust with friendship, gifts, or favors.
- Isolating the child from protective adults.
- Creating secrecy (“this is our special secret”).
- Desensitizing with touch or inappropriate conversation.
- Exploiting through abuse or manipulation.

## Warning Signs in Children

- Sudden secrecy about friends, online activity, or new relationships.
- Unexplained gifts, money, or devices.
- Withdrawal, anxiety, or mood swings.
- Talking in ways that seem too mature for their age.

## Warning Signs in Adults

- Excessive interest in one child.
- Attempts to bypass parents’ authority or presence.
- Encourages secrecy or guilt to silence a child.

## Online Grooming

- Predators often pose as kids online.
- They move fast: start chatting, build trust, move to private messaging, and request photos or in-person meetings.

## What Kids Need to Hear

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

## Why Andrew’s Law Matters

Andrew’s Law closes loopholes by ending plea bargains for predators who groom, traffic, or exploit children. It ensures they face full accountability and keeps them away from places meant for kids.