

**The Crime Victims Center is
A New York State Certified Rape Crisis Center**

Contact Us:

(631) 689-2672 Toll Free 1-888-ASK-PFML

www.crimevictimscenter.org

Important Telephone Numbers:

The Crime Victims Center
(516) 542-0404 1 (888) ASK-PFML

New York State Child Abuse Hotline
1 (800) 342-3720

New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services,
Sex Offender Registry
1 (800) 262-3257 (To verify a named person with an identifier only)

**Sex Offender Registration Tips
SORT Program**

Report registered sex offenders potentially failing to comply with state and federal registration laws; registrants violating conditions of probation or parole or registrants who are in positions of trust with children:

**(631) 689-2672
(888) ASK-PFML**



CRIME VICTIMS CENTER
Empowering Victims & Crime Prevention
Laura A. Ahearn, Esq., LMSW
Executive Director

The Crime Victims Center

www.CrimeVictimsCenter.org

**(631) 689-2672
1 (888) ASK-PFML**

**A New York State
Guide for Members of
Our Community**

**Understanding
Megan's Law &
Sex Offender Notifications**

**Sex Offender Registration Tips
(SORT Program)**

& Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

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A Message From The Parents For Megan's Law Director

With the heinous sexual assaults and murders of many women and children federal and state lawmakers gave its citizens Megan's Law, a valuable national tool which provides us the opportunity to be proactive by taking necessary precautions to protect ourselves and our children from the realistic threat of known registered sex offenders. The June 2006 passage of the Adam Walsh Child Protection Act will serve to further strengthen New York State's Sex Offender Registration Act through more stringent registration and notification provisions and stricter penalties for registrants who fail to register locally and across the nation.

The Parents for Megan's Law National Helpline and the Sex Offender Registration Tips Programs (SORT) offer the community an opportunity to be informed about resident sex offenders and to report registrants who are potentially failing to comply with state and federal registration laws, registrants violating conditions of probation or parole or registrants who are in positions of trust with vulnerable populations. Call our Helpline at (631) 689-2672 or (888) ASK-PFML.

Megan's Law alone is not going to eliminate sexual abuse. Reducing the prevalence of sexual abuse starts with prevention education and includes a combination of Megan's Laws' notifications (with up to date information), stiffer sentencing, residency and employment restriction laws, civil commitment laws, life-time registration and supervision, registration for juvenile offenders committing aggravated offenses and effective sex offender treatment programs.

Most people are under the false impression that sexual abuse occurs most often with strangers. This is simply not the case. Thoroughly read our sexual abuse prevention section which provides detailed information on how to protect your children from falling prey to child sexual abuse and how to protect yourself against sexual victimization. Visit our website for Internet safety tips, child sexual abuse prevention, adult rape prevention and violent crime prevention tips from our Crime Victims Center. Did you know that all innocent victims of violent crime may be entitled to crime victim compensation? Call our Helpline for assistance with reimbursement for medical, counseling and other expenses related to crime.

Laura A. Ahearn, Esq, L. M.S.W.
Executive Director

Q. We Recently Received A Sex Offender Notification, What Should We Tell Our Young Child?

A. Laura Ahearn developed the Apple Of My Eye Childhood Sexual Abuse Prevention Program © which can help you to protect your child from a sexual predator. All children regardless of the amount of love and attention they receive at home are prone to the devious and cunning tricks sex offenders use to access children. Most childhood sexual abuse happens with someone a child has an established relationship with, so talk to your children about certain people who they know that may try to "trick" them into certain "situations" or "actions". They may try to touch them in their bathing suit areas or ask them to do things that make them feel uncomfortable. You may show them the photograph of the offender and explain that this is a person you do not want them to talk to, and if this person tries to talk to them, they should run away and let you or a trusted adult know. Thoroughly review all of the tricks we've identified, and help your children to understand that these certain actions and situations will make them feel uncomfortable, and they should tell an adult immediately if they occur.

Establish, maintain and teach your children about healthy boundaries. Boundaries are the limits we establish or that we may have already established by virtue of the nature of each individual relationship we have or our children have with others. For example, Coach M has a role and it is to teach a child a certain sport. Teacher M has a role as well and it is to instruct children in academic matters. Any activity outside of the realm of the boundary established must be carefully evaluated and discussed with an adult. The blurring of boundaries is often what sex offenders who groom children rely upon so please be aware of those boundaries at all times. One way to do this is to ask yourself why. Why does our family friend A, Coach B, Teacher C, Pastor D, Volunteer E or Doctor Z want to be alone with my child? Why should my child be receiving special treatment? Why is this person more interested in my child than me?

Go to the www.parentsformeganslaw.org site for prevention tips.

Megan's Law

Incarcerated pedophiles tell us to be suspicious if someone seems more interested in your children than you. One convicted offender said that "parents are so naive-they're worried about strangers and should be worried about their brother-in-law. They just don't realize how devious we can be." Another offender told parents that they should "know that we will use any way we can to get to children."

Always monitor your children while they are on the internet and stress the importance of never giving out their name and address..

Q. Are There Any Red Flags That I Can Watch Out For?

A. Yes. The following is a listing of characteristics which on their own may not indicate a problem but accompanied with other red flags may indicate a problem:

- Someone Who Wants To Spend More Time With Your Child Than You
- Someone Who Manages To Get Time Alone With Or Attempts To Be Alone With Your Child Or Other Children
- Someone Who Insists On Hugging, Touching, Kissing, Tickling, Wrestling With or Holding A Child Even When A Child Doesn't Want This Affection
- Someone Who Is Overly Interested In The Sexuality of A Child or Teen And Asks Either The Parent or Child Questions
- Someone Who Relates Extremely Well To Children and Spends Most of His or Her Time With Them and Has Little Interest In Spending Time With Individuals Their Own Age
- Someone Who Has Few or No Boundaries And Does Not Respect The Limits of Their Role In Their Relationship With Children
- Someone Who Regularly Offers To Babysit, Help Out or Takes Children On Overnight Outings Alone
- Someone Who Buys Expensive Gifts or Gives Children Money For No Reason
- Someone Who Frequently Walks In On Children/Teens In The Bathroom or In The Locker Room While Showering or Changing
- Someone Who Goes To Parks, Beaches or Public Places Where Children Congregate and Spends Large Amounts of Time Staring or Taking Photos of Children For No Apparent Reason.
Be Wary of Someone Trying to Take Photos of Your Child Without Your Consent.
- Someone Who Inappropriately Makes Comments About the Way Your Child Looks

The parents of 7-year-old Megan Kanka of New Jersey were not aware that their neighbor was a twice-convicted sex offender until he was charged with the brutal rape and murder of their daughter. Nor were the parents of 4-year-old My Ly Nghiem of Binghamton, New York aware that a three-time convicted sex offender lived and worked in their building until he was charged with the rape and murder of their daughter. These crimes coupled with many other heinous crimes against adults and children, prompted the passage of federal and state laws mandating the release of information necessary to protect the public from sex offenders. All 50 states and U.S. Territories were encouraged to meet federal standards and in New York this was accomplished with the passage of The Sex Offender Registration Act of 1996, more commonly known as Megan's Law.

New York's version of Megan's Law establishes registration and notification provisions and requires the classification of convicted sex offenders using a three-tier system. The law establishes three levels of notification which increase as the offenders' predicted risk to the community increases. Prior to an offender's release, a level of notification recommendation is made to the sentencing court: level 1 (low risk), level 2 (moderate risk) or level 3 (high risk). The risk level assigned establishes the level of notification which then determines the amount of information law enforcement is authorized to release using various types of community notification. The type of notification implemented is based upon a further evaluation that the offender poses to the community. Register for the Parents for Megan's Law Sex Offender Email Alert Program at no cost to be alerted each time a registrant moves into zip codes which you have preselected. If you would like to report a sex offender failing to register or failing to comply with restrictions or conditions of supervision, please call us at the **1-888-ASK-PFML**.

In New York State, the law also established an 800 number (1-800-262-3257) where you can call to determine whether a named person is a convicted sex offender. The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services also maintains an Online registry of Level 2 and Level 3 registered sex offenders which you can access at www.criminaljustice.state.ny.us.

Registered sex offenders have committed crimes against either children or adults. Megan's Law provides residents with information so that they can take necessary precautions to protect themselves and their children from the realistic danger posed by the presence of registered sex offenders. Any information you receive about a registered sex offender must be used responsibly. Be aware that harassing or committing any type of vigilante activity against any individual registered, not only undermines the tremendous effort undertaken to bring you this information, but is a crime.

Commonly Asked Questions About Megan's Law

Q. How Can Megan's Law Help?

A. Megan's Law can help individuals in communities to be proactive by taking necessary precautions to protect themselves and their children from known resident sex offenders. The law also assists law enforcement agencies by providing detailed information regarding previously convicted sex offenders to be utilized for investigative purposes.

Q. Is Megan's Law Alone Going To Eliminate Sex Crimes and Sexually Motivated Abductions?

A. No. Megan's Law alone is not going to eliminate sex crimes or sexually motivated abductions committed against women and children. Reducing the prevalence of sex crimes and sexually motivated abductions can be effectively accomplished with a combination of Megan's Laws' notifications, stiffer sentencing, effective sex offender treatment programs, civil commitment laws, life-time supervision and the implementation of up-to-date sexual abuse and abduction prevention educational programs.

Q. What Types Of Sex Offenses and Sexually Violent Offenses Require Someone To Register Under New York State's Version of Megan's Law?

A. The offenses include predatory sexual assault against a child, rape and sodomy in the first, second and third degree, aggravated sexual abuse in the first, second, third and fourth degree, course of sexual conduct against a child in the first and second degree, sexual abuse in the first and second degree, incest, facilitating a sex offense with a controlled substance, sexual misconduct, use, promotion or possession of a sexual performance of a child, disseminating indecent material to minors in the first degree, persistent sexual abuse, forcible touching and sexual abuse in the first, second and third degree, unlawful imprisonment in the first and second degree, certain instances of kidnapping in the first and second degree, patronizing a prostitute in the first, second and third degree, and promoting prostitution in the first degree (under 11) and second degree, certain federal exploitation offenses and unlawful surveillance in the first & second degree. **Call our Helpline at 1 (888) ASK-PFML for updates.**

Children, from a motive perspective, nonfamily abductions can be divided into six broad categories:

- **Non-traditional** - Very young children abducted predominately by a woman to fill a perceived void in the offender's life.
- **Ransom** - Children abducted to obtain financial benefit from the victim's family.
- **Profit** - Children abducted to obtain financial benefit.
- **Sexual** - Children abducted primarily for the sexual gratification of the offender.
- **Killing** - Children abducted to be killed. For some offenders the act of killing itself brings arousal and/or gratification.
- **Miscellaneous Criminal** - Children abducted for a variety of criminal reasons which might include stealing a vehicle with a child in it, or taking a child as a hostage in an escape attempt.

National Center also reports that the vast majority of sexually motivated child abductors release their victims alive and sometimes even return them to the vicinity of their homes.

Q. What Can I DO To Help Prevent My Child From Being Sexually Abused Or Abducted?

A. Define, Defend and Act. Clearly define the roles of the people in your child's life. Defend the boundaries in those roles and take action when a boundary has been violated. Educate yourself and your children as to the "tricks" predators use to access and sexually abuse children. "Stranger Danger" child prevention education is outdated and does not address the reality that most children have an established relationship with the abuser or abductor. Talk to your children about certain people who they know that may try to "trick" them into certain "situations" or actions". They may try to touch them in bathing suit areas and may ask them to do things that may make them uncomfortable. Children must know that they can say no and tell an adult immediately when it happens. **Always ask yourself why.** Why does our family friend A, Coach B, Teacher C, Clergy D, Volunteer E, or Doctor Z want to be alone with my child? Why should my child be receiving special treatment? Why is this person more interested in my child than me? Read our book, and go to www.parentsformeganslaw.org for child and adult sexual abuse prevention tips

Pet Trick

Similar to the assistance trick, the offender may ask a child to help find his lost or hurt dog. They may carry props such as a photo of a dog, cat, bunny or even a pet's leash.

Teaching Trick

Assistance is offered to a family to help teach a child a sport or how to play a musical instrument, often without cost.

Threat Trick

Children may be threatened into participation in sexual activity and further threatened to keep silent. Once the abuse has taken place they may threaten harm to their pets or family or may threaten to expose the child either to their parents or to their friends. The offender may also threaten the abused child into recruiting other children.

Costume Trick

Most volunteers who dress up as clowns, cartoon characters or as Santa Claus during the holiday season are not pedophiles attempting to access children for the purposes of exploitation. However, you should always be aware that there are pedophiles who would do anything to access children.

Q. How Common Is Childhood Abduction?

- A. According to the National Center For Missing and Exploited Children, each year 3,600 to 4,200 nonfamily abductions occur. Of the 4,200 only 300 were strangers to the child. Most nonfamily abductions occur with someone the child has some form of a relationship with. The average victim of abduction and murder is an approximately 11-year-old-girl, who is described as a "low risk," "normal" kid from a middle class neighborhood with a stable family relationship who has initial contact with an abductor within a quarter mile of her home.

Q. Why Are Children Abducted?

- A. Family abductions are typically related to custody issues. According to the National Center For Missing & Exploited

Q. How Is A Sex Offender's Risk Level Determined?

- A. In New York State sex offenders are assigned a risk level using a Risk Assessment Instrument. Risk level recommendations are made to the sentencing court. Factors being evaluated include the offender's current offense, criminal history, post-offense behavior and planned release environment. The risk assessment instrument assigns numerical values to each risk factor - e.g. 20 points if there were two victims; 30 points if there were three or more victims. The presumptive risk level is then calculated by adding the points the offender scores in each category. Guidelines also contain four overrides that automatically result in a presumptive risk assessment of level 3.

Call PFML at 1 (888) ASK-PFML for a copy.

Q. How Can I Access Specific Information About A Registered Sex Offender?

- Register online for our Sex Offender Email Alert Program and you will receive an email alert each time a Level 1, 2 or Level 3 moves into your community. Contact us for more information. (Level 1 information is only available for Nassau and Suffolk Counties.)
- The NY State sex offender registry and email alert program is also available on the Internet. Register for their program as well. You can access it by going to our site at www.parentsformeganslaw.org
- New York's version of Megan's Law established an 800 number to call to verify registration of a named person only if you have certain identifying information such as an exact address, date of birth, drivers license identification number, or other information which will achieve positive identification. Call (1-800-262-3257). Five inquiries per call can be made or you can fax a list of names to (518) 485-5805. Information will be available on Level 1, 2 and 3 offenders.
- You may be notified door to door by your local police department.
- A local entity that serves vulnerable populations may be notified by the police and may make you aware. Vulnerable entities may include a public or private school, a day care center, a preschool or a nursing home.

Q. What Is An Entity With Vulnerable Populations?

- A. Law enforcement is authorized (required in Nassau and Suffolk County for Level 2 and 3 offenders) to disseminate relevant information to any entity with vulnerable populations related to the nature of the offense committed by such sex offender. For example, if a high risk level 3 sex offender convicted for a sex crime committed against 7-year-old children while babysitting moves into your community, the following organizations or individuals might be determined to be entities with vulnerable populations and hence be notified: the superintendent of schools within that school district, daycare centers and preschools, youth sports and community organizations, houses of worship or any other organization or individual deemed to be vulnerable as it relates to the nature of the offense committed by the sex offender.

Q. What Information Is Available on the Internet Sex Offender Registry?

- A. The New York State Sex Offender Registry is accessible by logging onto <http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/nsor/>. The Parents for Megan's Law New York portion of the registry located at www.parentsformeganslaw.org includes the address and photograph of level 2 and level 3 sex offenders (and Level 1 offenders notified about in Nassau and Suffolk County) along with the following information if available: name, physical description, age and distinctive markings such as tattoos, and background information including the sex offender's crime of conviction, type of victim targeted, the name and address of any institution of higher education at which the sex offender is enrolled, attends, is employed or resides, employment address, special conditions imposed on the offender, the offender mode of operation and the description of the offense.

Q. How Can I Look At The Internet site?

- A. To access the Internet site go to www.parentsformeganslaw.org our registry and links to sex offender registries across the nation. Be sure to visit the prevention education areas of the website.

Hero Trick /Special Privileges Trick (Coach/Teacher/Person In A Position Of Authority)

Children are often impressed with those individuals they look up to such as those in a position of authority like a coach, teacher or older cousin. They may endure abuse to maintain a relationship where they are receiving special privileges for fear of losing those privileges.

"I Know You" Trick

Do not write your child's name on the outside of any of their clothing or items they use outside of their home such as umbrellas or lunch boxes. This gives the offender an opportunity to make your child feel as though they know them.

Internet Trick

The internet is a preying ground for sex offenders trying to lure victims. Offenders will try to get specific information from your child without directly asking for it. They may ask if your child plays on sports teams which would eventually lead to a discussion of where your child played these games. Ultimately, they want to try to set up a meeting. Predators on the internet may also transmit pornography to your child.

Job Trick

Young children may be offered high pay for jobs inside a neighbor's home where they may be sexually abused. Promises of high paying jobs easily influence young adults into meeting individuals in questionable places for interviews where they may be sexually abused.

Legitimacy Trick

There are a few organizations that promote sexual relations with children and attempt to legitimize this activity. Those offenders may attempt to convince a child that sex with an adult is a legitimate activity.

Outing Trick

Offender is continually attempting to take a child out alone for special trips like camping or outings and insists that no one else attend.

Assistance Trick (cont.)

One convicted offender stated that he liked to hang around kiddie hamburger restaurant bathrooms. He would abuse young boys under the guise of helping them with their zippers.

Watch out for someone who is more interested in your child than you. There is a reason.

Authority Trick

Many of us have taught our children to respect authority without realizing that individuals who target our children take advantage of their position such as a teacher, coach, religious or club leader.

Desensitize Trick

Offenders may continually talk to children about sex or use pornography to demonstrate sexual acts. They may arouse a child's curiosity by leaving sexual material and aids around where they may see them.

Drug & Alcohol Trick

Drugs or alcohol can be used to incapacitate a child making them highly vulnerable to sexual abuse.

Emergency Trick

Crisis can be confusing for young children and offenders count on that so they orchestrate an emergency to lure children.

Fame Trick

Promises are made to make the child a movie star and the predator will try to get a child to pose for photos.

Friendship Trick

Older children may bribe a younger child (or same age) by saying that they will not be their friend anymore unless they participate in a sexual act.

Games Trick

Body contact games such as wrestling are played where touching genitalia is part of the rules.

Q. Can I Verify If An Employee, Job Applicant, Child Care Giver, Babysitter or Volunteer Is A Registered Sex Offender?

A. Yes. You may call the state 800 number to determine if any **named** person is registered. New York's version of Megan's Law established an 800 number to call to verify registration (800) 262-3257. You must have certain identifying information such as an exact address, date of birth, drivers license or identification number, or other information which will achieve positive identification. Five inquiries per call can be made or you can register your youth organization allowing you to search 20 inquiries per call. You can also fax a list of names to (518) 485-5805. Information is available for Level 1, 2 and 3 offenders.

Q. Are Schools Or Other Vulnerable Entities Authorized To Disclose Or Further Disseminate All Of The Information They Receive From Law Enforcement After Being Notified Of A Resident Sex Offender?

A. According to the law, "any entity receiving information on a sex offender may disclose or further disseminate such information at it's discretion". If you are not receiving all of the information as described in this guide check with your school's superintendent or other person in charge of your facility. Parents For Megan's Law has developed a New York State Model School Board Megan's Law Dissemination Policy, with accompanying Regulations and Sample Letters, which is being implemented in whole or in part across the state and nation. Call our Helpline (631) 689-2672 for a duplicate or if you need advocacy assistance.

Q. If An Organization Serves Vulnerable Populations, Like A School, Will They Automatically Be Notified Of A Resident Sex Offender?

A. No, not necessarily. It is imperative that you register for our email alert program and New York States Program. Check with your local law enforcement agency to apply for vulnerable entity status. Call our **Helpline at 1 (888) ASK-PFML** for assistance.

Q. What Specific Information About Sex Offenders Is Available To The Public?

A. That depends upon the risk level assigned. The risk level assigned determines the level of notification authorized.

For sex offenders classified as level 1 (low risk) or level 2 (moderate risk), law enforcement is notified and if it is determined that the offender poses a risk to public safety, the following information may be disseminated to entities (individuals or organizations) with vulnerable populations:

- the offender’s approximate address based on zip code
- the name and address of any institution of higher education which the offender is enrolled, employed, attends or resides
- a photograph
- background information including the offender’s crime of conviction, mode of operation, type of victim targeted, and a description of special conditions imposed on the offender.

If the risk of reoffense is high, a level 3 (high risk) designation is made. The following information may be disseminated:

- the offender’s exact address
- the address of the offender’s place of employment
- the name and address of any institution of higher education which the offender is enrolled, employed, attends or resides
- a photograph
- background information including the offender’s crime of conviction, mode of operation, type of victim targeted, and a description of special conditions imposed on the offender.

Suffolk and Nassau County Police are required to notify the community regarding the presence of Level 2 and Level 3 registered sex offenders. They maintain discretion to notify the community regarding the presence of Level 1 sex offenders. Additionally, information on level 1, 2 and 3 offenders is provided on the Internet registries located at www.parentsformeganslaw.org and via Parents for Megan’s Law email alert. Refer to the chart on the following page for an overview of how information may be released by risk level.

Q. What Are The Tricks That Predators Use To Target Children?

A. Most childhood sexual abuse, up to 90% occurs with someone a child has an established and trusting relationship with, whether known or not by the parent. Teaching your children about stranger danger is outdated and does not address the reality that most children know and trust those who abuse them. Sexual Predators are smart, extremely cunning and may be well respected members of the community. The **tricks** used on children are used individually or in various combinations:

The Apple Of My Eye Trick

Named after our Executive Director Laura Ahearn’s childhood sexual abuse prevention program and book. This trick is top on her list for the most insidious of all tricks because predators use the same innocent vulnerability we strive to protect in our children for purposes of methodically gaining their trust by giving special attention to them so they can eventually sexually abuse them. All children want love, attention and affection and want to be the apple of someone’s eye. This is why they are particularly vulnerable to those who are experts at grooming them to lead to their eventual sexual abuse.

Accidental Touching Trick

Children are often unaware that an accidental touching may be intentional or may be an offender attempting to touch closer to genitalia the next time.

Affection and Attention Trick

All children want love and attention - this is why they are particularly vulnerable to those who are experts at grooming them to lead to their eventual sexual abuse.

Assistance Trick

Offenders may ask a child for help with directions or carrying packages. Another type of assistance may be an offender who senses a role he might play by assisting a family with children. His assistance might be needed for babysitting or for driving a child to activities.

Q. Are All Child Molesters The Same?

A. No. According to Kenneth Lanning, an FBI Supervisory Agent, child molesters can be divided into two groups. The situational molester is not a true pedophile because he doesn't prefer having sex with children but instead turns to them for any number of reasons including stress, boredom, curiosity or because he is sexually or morally indiscriminate. The preferential child molester is considered the true pedophile because he prefers having sex with children and actually seeks them out. He is sexually attracted to children and has the potential to molest large numbers of victims.

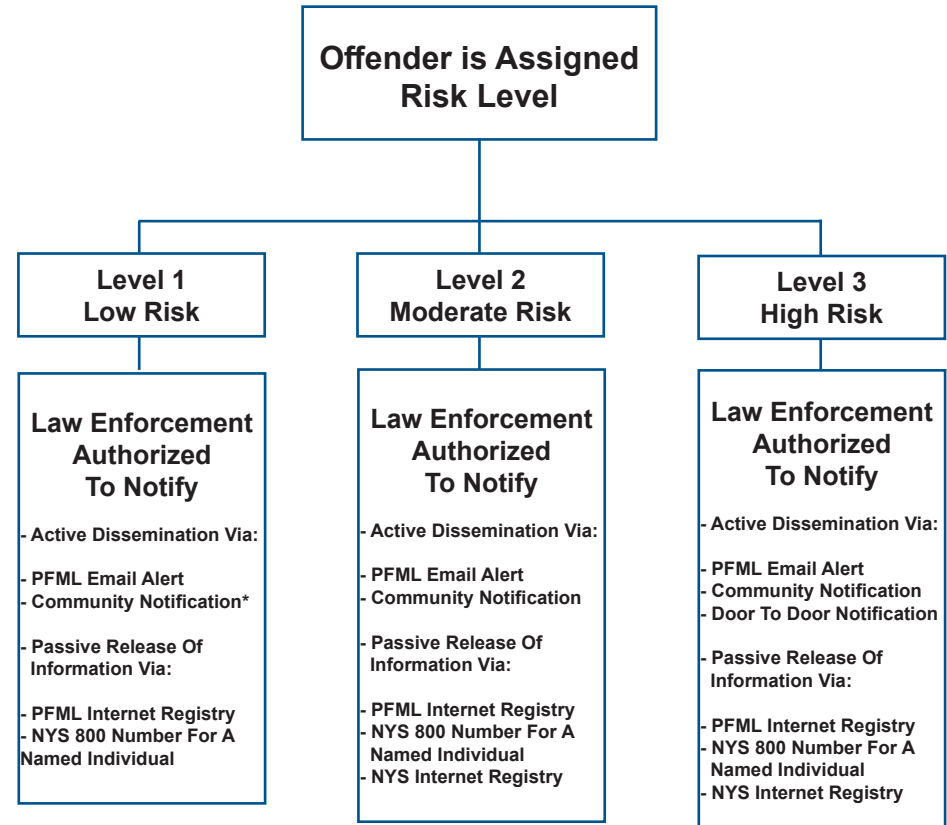
Q. Are There Different Types Of Pedophiles?

A. Yes. According to Lanning, there are three major patterns of behavior that emerge with true pedophiles - seduction, introverted and sadistic. The seducer uses a process known as "grooming" which leads to the eventual sexual abuse of a child. According to Seth Goldstein in The Sexual Exploitation of Children, once offenders target children they will track them down and methodically approach the child to begin the process of seducing him or her. Over a long period of time while gaining the child's trust and even the trust of the family, a seducer will shower them with gifts and attention all the while waiting for the right moment to abuse the child. The seducer will often wait until the victim is willing to trade sexual acts for attention or other benefits they may have previously received from the offender.

According to Lanning, the introverted pedophile lacks the interpersonal skills necessary to seduce a child so they will usually molest strangers or young children. This type of pedophile may marry a woman and have his own children because he does not have the skills to seduce others. He would most likely molest his children from the time they are infants.

Sadistic Molesters do not appear to be in large numbers according to Lanning. This is the type of pedophile who inflicts pain on child victims and typically use lures or force to gain access to children.

Overview Of How Information May Be Released By Risk Level



New York State's version of Megan's Law authorizes law enforcement to disseminate information for those offenders designated level 1, level 2 or level 3. The process of release of information begins with the assignment of the risk of reoffense level which further determines the level (or amount) of information local law enforcement is authorized to release to the community about a known convicted sex offender. You can receive information via the PFML and NYS email alert program or it can be disseminated to you via community notification or door-to-door notification. Community notification is accomplished when law enforcement actively notifies those entities which are determined to serve populations vulnerable to a particular resident sex offender. Those entities may be schools, nursing homes, youth organizations, etc. Door-to-door notification is accomplished by law enforcement actively walking door to door and notifying neighbors of the presence of a resident sex offender. Register for the email alert programs and receive notifications for sex offenders residing within participating law enforcement jurisdictions.

* The law does not permit law enforcement to release the exact street address for level 1 offenders.

Q. Why Is The Role Of Our Schools And Community Organizations Critical To The Success Of Megan’s Law in New York State?

A. Megan’s Law in New York State authorizes local law enforcement agencies to provide descriptions and the whereabouts of registered sex offenders to entities with vulnerable populations. Those responsible for the care of our children and vulnerable populations are now afforded the opportunity to help to better protect them by providing an informed community. Fortunately, New York State’s version of Megan’s Law authorizes the community to disseminate at its discretion. We must strive to achieve a **“Community Approach”** to uniformity in dissemination of sex offender notifications across New York State.

Q. What Does A “Community Approach” To Megan’s Law Mean?

A. A Community Approach to Megan’s Law means that we work together to ensure the uniform, vigorous and responsible dissemination of Megan’s Law notifications and that we also inform parents about childhood sex abuse prevention and the lures that sex offenders use to attract children. Megan’s Law authorizes law enforcement to release information into communities about known sex offenders who may pose a risk to public safety. Law enforcement is neither authorized, staffed nor funded to reach every potential vulnerable population in all of our communities across New York State.

When a sex offender notification is implemented, of an offender, for example, who targets children, law enforcement may notify a limited number of neighbors and may notify organizations such as schools or child care centers. Once released to the school or child care center it is imperative that parents/guardians, caretakers and residents in the community be made aware of the notification. Law enforcement and Public Schools now collaborate with PFML to register community members for the Sex Offender Email Alert Program which ensures that notifications are disseminated further. Please refer to the following chart.

Q. What Do Sex Offenders Targeting Our Children Count On?

A. As a society we vehemently condemn child molestation but when someone we know in our community is accused, individuals take sides often refusing to believe that a well respected person or a “pillar of the community” could commit this type of a crime. We call this phenomena “The Great Community Divide”and this is what offenders count on.

The true seducer type pedophile is extremely good at what he does, often putting himself in a position in his community where he has easy access to children. He will often work hard (sometimes for years) to gain the trust of parents while at the same time be sexually abusing their children. If an allegation is made against such a person by a child, it is often too emotionally difficult for families who trusted and allowed the accused into their home, to believe that he could commit such an act. The betrayal is so great that many families will not only deny the possibility of such a crime occurring but will blame and defame the children making the allegation. Offenders count on this.

Q. Who Sexually Abuses Children?

A. Males are reported to be the abusers in up to 95% of cases reported. According to Dr. Gene Abel in a National Institute of Mental Health Study, offenders begin molesting by age 15. Profiles from the FBI academy and The National Center For Missing and Exploited Children report that 3/4 of sexual predators are younger than 35 and 80% are of normal intelligence. A U.S. Department of Justice report of incarcerated violent offenders found that 70% of those serving time for violent crimes against children were white. Perpetrators come from all ethnic and socioeconomic classes in our society. Most childhood sexual abuse, up to 90% occurs with someone a child has an established and trusting relationship with, whether known or not by the parent. Approximately 30% of that 90% are relatives. Offenders who commit sex crimes in their family will abuse more than one of their children and more than half will also commit sex crimes outside of their family.

Sex Abuse & Abduction Prevention

Q. How Common Is Childhood Sexual Abuse?

A. In the United States, studies report that up to one girl in three or four has been sexually abused by age 18 and one boy in four to 10 has been sexually abused. These statistics do not accurately reflect the actual number of sexual abuse occurrences because

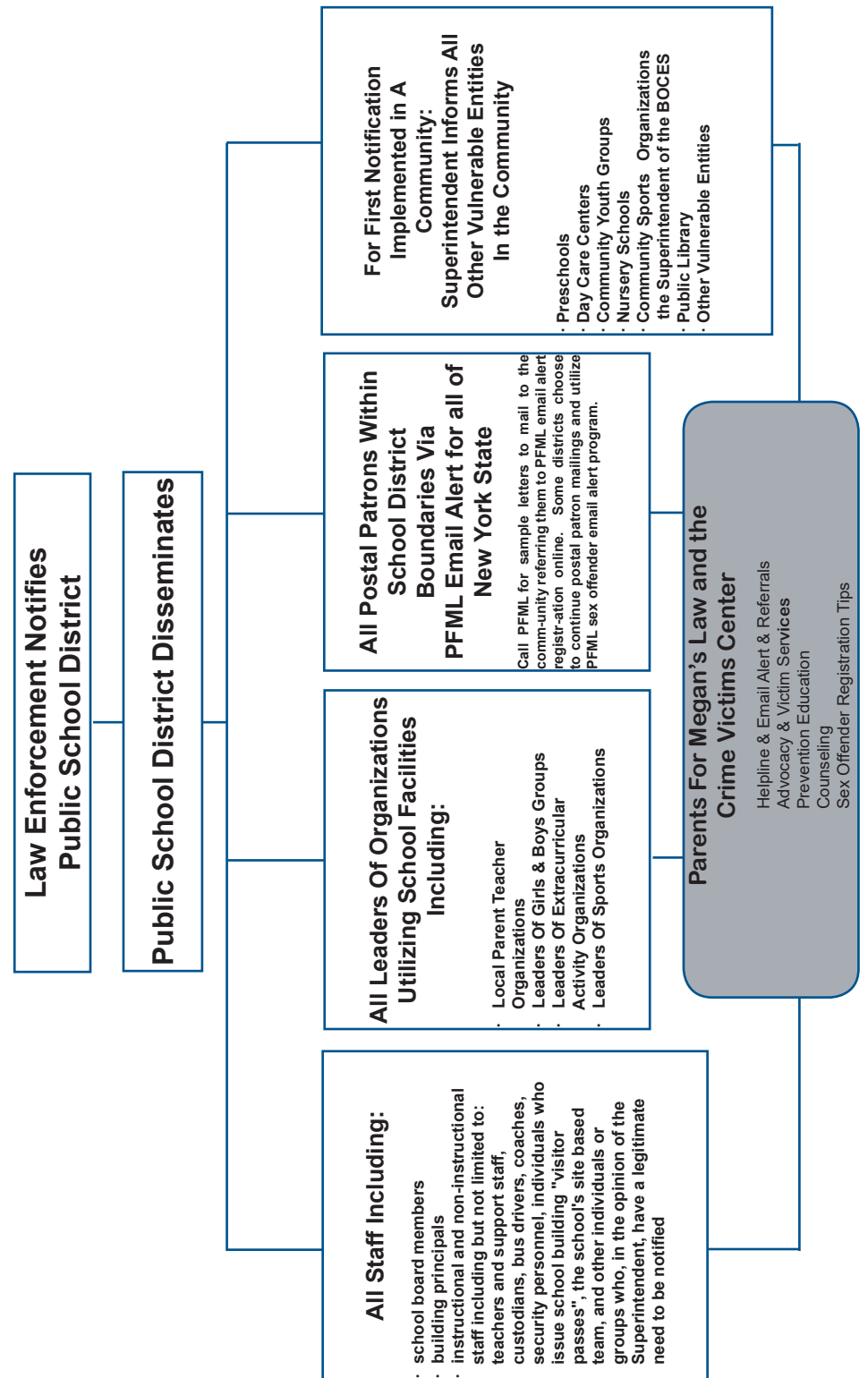
most abuse goes unreported. According to the FBI only 1% to 10% is ever disclosed and according to a study conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health, the average molester of girls will victimize fifty girls before being caught and convicted and the average molester of boys will have victimized 150 boys before being caught and convicted. Further, the typical pedophile commits an average of 117 sexual crimes during his lifetime (280 for those molesting boys). The most vulnerable age for sexual abuse is between 7 and 13 years. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reports that 54% of sexually abused children are victimized before the age of 7 and 84% before the age of 12.

Q. Is Most Childhood Sexual Abuse Committed By Strangers?

A. **No.** Strangers are not the most common perpetrators of sexual abuse. Most children are sexually abused by someone related or known to them, often in a position of trust or authority. Studies indicate that no more than 10% to 30% of sex offenders were strangers, meaning that up to 90% of children sexually abused had some type of relationship with their abuser.

Children are abused most often by someone that they know such as a relative, the best liked coach, the pillar of the community, pediatrician, teacher, scout leader or religious leader. Sexual predators work very hard to look and act like you and me which is what makes them so dangerous.

Book a childhood sexual abuse prevention workshop for children or adults at your school organization, call **(888) ASK-PFML**



Q. What Can I Do To Assist In My Community?

- A. Thoroughly read this guide, having an understanding of the law will assist you and your community in your effort to achieve vigorous, uniform and responsible dissemination of sex offender notifications in your community. Encourage your school to participate in the PFML Sex Offender Alert Program and to adopt the PFML Model School Board Megan's Law Dissemination Policy, make informational brochures available and call or refer individuals to the Megan's Law Helpline for questions, concerns or advocacy assistance.

Be a part of the solution and contribute your time to become a Parents For Megan's Law volunteer - call (631) 689-2672.

Q. What Are My Responsibilities Under Megan's Law?

- A. Lawmakers and advocates have worked and continue to work vigorously to bring sex offender notification information to our communities. As they honor a commitment to continue to bring this information to us, so too must we honor a commitment to use the information responsibly.

Knowledge of the presence of a known sex offender offers the opportunity to take necessary safeguards for yourself and your children. Most childhood sexual abuse (up to 90%) and adult rape occurs between someone the victim has an established relationship with. Familiarize yourself with the tricks that sex offenders use to lure our children. Keep in mind that irresponsible use of Megan's Law information not only undermines the effort to bring you this information but can jeopardize future notifications and may be a crime.

Call Our Helpline To Report Registered Sex Offenders Out of Compliance:

1 (888) ASK-PFML

Preventing Childhood Sexual Abuse

Most Childhood Sexual Abuse Occurs
With Someone A Child Has An Established
& Trusting Relationship With

Convicted Sex Offenders Tell Us...
"Parents are so naive-they're worried about
strangers and should be worried about
their brother-in-law.
They just don't realize how
devious we can be."

"Know that we will use any way we can
to get to children."