

# SAFETY BULLETIN

Spotlight on Peer-to-Peer Abuse | Issue 6

## In the News...

While conducting night rounds, a camp counselor found an 11-year-old boy sitting on the steps outside his cabin. When the counselor instructed him to go back to bed, the camper replied, "My roommates are a bunch of punks." The counselor reminded him not to call other kids names. A week later, camp administrators discovered that several of the campers had been engaging in sexual activities in the cabins.

A local after-school child care program reported that an 8-year-old girl was sexually assaulted in a bathroom stall by a 7-year-old girl with whom she'd been fighting for weeks. The girls' parents had asked the school to separate them but the request was not forwarded to the child care staff.

A 10-year-old special-needs student was sexually assaulted by four of her classmates while the class watched a video. The teacher claimed she didn't notice anything going on because the classroom lights were out and the kids were seated in the back of the room.



## Safety Tips



Here are some steps you can take to reduce the risk that a child in your care will be sexually abused by another child.

1. Kids often don't 'flat out' report sexual activity. Instead, they drop hints. Sometimes you'll have to "read between the lines" or ask follow-up questions. Watch for changes in their behavior that may suggest they aren't comfortable around certain kids or circumstances.
2. When kids share sleeping space, they need extra supervision. Keep sleeping bags or beds separated, keep a night light on, establish rules about kids staying in their own space, and check on them often at random intervals. Don't forget, they can fake sleep!
3. Watch for bullies or for kids who don't get along. You don't know what they've been exposed to or how they settle disputes. Some kids may express their anger in sexual ways or act out things they've seen on TV or witnessed elsewhere.


4. When you have concerns about a child, make sure you share your concerns with your co-workers. That way they benefit from your observations and they can keep an eye out to make sure no one is in danger.
5. Some children are at greater risk to be abused by their peers. Kids with disabilities, those who are shy or different, or children with behavior problems can be targeted.
6. Make it a point to circulate: in classrooms, in playground areas, down corridors. Most incidents of abuse require privacy—your presence takes away privacy.

### Interesting Research... *The Importance of Monitoring!*



A recent study found that when a poster showing someone's eyes was placed in front of an honor-system drink dispenser, employees paid almost three times more money than when the poster showed flowers! To read the study, or to ask about Praesidium's new "Eye Posters," contact us at 800.743.6354.

## Peer-to-Peer Abuse on the Rise



A recent analysis of insurance company incident and claim data showed a 300 percent increase in reports of children engaging in sexual activity or sexually assaulting other children. The U.S. Department of Justice reported in 2000 that 40 percent of offenders of victims under the age of six were themselves juveniles. Settlements for peer-to-peer abuse have reached in the millions of dollars.

These findings harbor dramatic implications for anyone charged with the care of youngsters. No one knows for sure why the alarming increase, but we do know that children are exposed to sexualized content via TV and the Internet at a very early age, and frequently.

The single greatest barrier to preventing peer-to-peer sexual abuse is that staff don't know about it or don't believe it can happen. They need to know that young children can act out spontaneously, or planfully, and escalate from inappropriate language to assault in minutes. Staff shouldn't decide what's "normal" or "age appropriate." Instead, they should just follow a simple rule: **sexual activity of any kind between children and/or youth is not acceptable in any program.**

To learn more about how to prevent sexual activity between minors, send an e-mail to [info@PraesidiumInc.com](mailto:info@PraesidiumInc.com).


## What's New...

### Two Convenient Ways to Train Staff

#### Armatus® Internet-based Training

The Armatus® course, *Preventing Sexual Activity between Young Children*, teaches employees and volunteers how to help prevent peer-to-peer abuse. Teaching points include: how, and where, sexual activity between minors typically occurs, steps to prevent sexual activity between kids, and how to respond if sexual activity between children occurs. With Armatus®, staff can be trained 24/7! [Click here](#) to experience Armatus®.

#### On-site Training Workshop Preventing Peer-to-Peer Abuse



In this three-hour training workshop, a Praesidium facilitator will teach participants how to prevent peer-to-peer abuse in your organization. They learn the types and patterns of child-to-child abuse and how to identify facility characteristics that are more likely to lead to abuse. They are taught how to monitor interactions and how to recognize early warning signs that abuse may be imminent. With on-site training you choose the date, time, and location. For more information, call 800.743.6354 or e-mail [info@PraesidiumInc.com](mailto:info@PraesidiumInc.com).

**About Praesidium** With two decades of experience, Praesidium is the national leader in abuse risk management. We offer a full range of risk management and loss control products and services to help you protect those in your care from abuse and to preserve trust in your organization. Visit [www.PraesidiumInc.com](http://www.PraesidiumInc.com) or call 800.743.6354 for more information.

**Subscribe Today** To subscribe to the Safety Bulletin, a complimentary quarterly publication, please send an e-mail to [info@PraesidiumInc.com](mailto:info@PraesidiumInc.com).

**Forward to a Friend** We encourage you to forward the Safety Bulletin to your friends and colleagues. Together we can keep kids safe.



**PRAESIDIUM**  
Our passion. Your protection.

P.O. Box 202002 Arlington, TX 76006  
817.801.7773  
[www.PraesidiumInc.com](http://www.PraesidiumInc.com)

U.S. Congress has proclaimed **February 5 - 9, 2007**



**National Teen Dating Violence  
Awareness and Prevention Week**

Learn how to help teens form healthy relationships.  
[www.BreaktheCycle.org](http://www.BreaktheCycle.org)

*This Safety Bulletin and the information and suggestions contained herein is provided by Praesidium as a courtesy to its many friends and clients. It is not intended to be legal advice. It is provided "As Is" and without warranty, express or implied. The reader assumes all risk for reliance thereon.*