



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2008
WWW.USDOJ.GOV

OPA
(202) 514-2007
TDD (202) 514-1888

FACT SHEET: PROJECT SAFE CHILDHOOD

Project Safe Childhood

- Project Safe Childhood (PSC) is a Department of Justice initiative launched in 2006 that aims to combat the proliferation of technology-facilitated sexual exploitation crimes against children. The threat of sexual predators soliciting children for physical sexual contact is well-known and serious; the danger of perpetrators who produce, distribute and possess child pornography is equally dramatic and disturbing.
- The Department of Justice is committed to the safety and well-being of every child and has placed a high priority on combating sexual exploitation of minors. Through a network of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and advocacy organizations, PSC coordinates efforts to protect our children by investigating and prosecuting online sexual predators.
- PSC is implemented through a partnership of U.S. Attorneys; the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Department's Criminal Division, Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task forces; federal partners, including the FBI, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the U.S. Marshals Service; advocacy organizations such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; and state and local law enforcement officials.

Public Education and Awareness

- In FY 2007, the Office of Justice Programs' Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) provided \$4 million dollars in grants to further the goals of Project Safe Childhood.
- As part of that effort, OJJDP provided \$ 2.5 million to fund a national public education and awareness campaign. With funding provided through the Self Reliance Foundation, creative project partners included the Hispanic Communications Network, INOBTR (I Know Better), and the Internet Keep Safe Coalition (iKeepSafe).
- This edgy national media campaign features four public service announcements, one three-part Webisode, Web banners, radio ads, as well as movie theater and print materials. Various components of the media campaign can be adapted for continued use

and distribution at local, state and regional levels by law enforcement and other appropriate organizations.

- One PSA encourages parents to become more actively involved in learning about online safety and in supervising their children's online activities. This PSA is available in English and Spanish.
- Another public service announcement targets potential online predators. Low level predators or potential predators are warned that their online actions constitute a serious federal crime and that they will suffer serious lifelong consequences and legal ramifications. This PSA is available in English and Spanish.
- Following the national launch, four regional media events will be held in Seattle, San Diego, St. Louis and Miami. These events will support the television, radio, online and movie theater placement of PSAs in these regions. The events also will feature a human resources campaign with the top 100 employers in each of the four selected cities.
- OJJDP also provided \$1.5 million dollars in funding for five projects at the local, state, or multi-state levels. Funding was awarded to the following organizations: San Diego Police Foundation; Web Wise Kids; Prevent Child Abuse Vermont; Washtenaw Area Council for Children and the Northeast Washington Education Council (ESD 101).
- These projects featured outreach efforts and innovative programming to schools, youth and community organizations, business entities, and various parent groups. These programs provided comprehensive training, curricula and online educational programming designed to assist in providing online safety for children.
- In 2007, the Department of Justice together with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the Ad Council launched a new phase of the Online Sexual Exploitation PSA campaign designed to educate teenage girls about the potential dangers of posting and sharing personal information online. Since launching in 2004, the Online Sexual Exploitation campaign has garnered more than \$188 million in donated media support, and the toll-free number, 1-800-THE-LOST, has received more than 225,000 calls.
- The Department also sponsors a number of resources to help educate parents about how to keep their kids safe on the Internet, including NetSmartz.org, isafe.org and WebWiseKids.org.

Enforcement

- Under PSC, the number of federal child exploitation prosecutions has increased significantly, along with the number of federal, state, and local investigations and convictions, and more and more victims are being identified. PSC's education and awareness efforts complement this focus on enforcement.

- In U.S. Attorneys' Offices, 2,211 indictments were filed in fiscal year 2008 against 2,289 defendants. This represents a 33 percent increase over fiscal year 2006 (1,657 cases filed against 1,760 defendants).
- In fiscal year 2007, the work of the ICAC program, a national network of 59 regional task forces funded by the Department of Justice to investigate computer-facilitated child sexual exploitation, resulted in more than 2,350 arrests.
- As of November 2, 2008, a total of 1,742 victims of child pornography crimes have been identified and many rescued, 992 of them since the launch of PSC, through enhanced law enforcement coordination and the efforts of the NCMEC.
- Since the inception of PSC, the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), in partnership with the FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the United States Postal Inspection Service, has developed and coordinated nine nationwide investigations targeting the production, distribution, receipt, and possession of child pornography by more than 8,000 individuals residing in the United States. This is in addition to the approximately nine national operations, identifying 4300 U.S. targets, undertaken in the years prior to the launch of PSC. Many of these cases are prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Offices throughout the nation, often in conjunction with trial attorneys from CEOS.

Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces

- In 1998, OJJDP recognized the Internet's dangers and the real risk of technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation, and developed the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) task force program. The purpose of ICAC is to help state and local law enforcement agencies acquire the knowledge, equipment and personnel resources they need to prevent, investigate and stop sexual crimes against children.
- There are now 59 ICAC task forces across the country, each composed of federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. These ICACs are on the front line addressing computer facilitated child sexual exploitation through aggressive investigations, prosecutions, computer forensics and community outreach.
- Since the program's inception in 1998, the task forces have reviewed nearly 200,000 complaints, resulting in the arrest of almost 11,000 individuals across the country intent on sexually abusing children. In fiscal year 2007 alone, ICAC investigations led to more than 2,350 arrests and more than 10,500 forensic examinations.
- Once source of complaints reviewed by the ICAC task forces is Cybertipline referrals forwarded from the NCMEC. These referrals typically come from Internet service providers. The Cybertipline has received more than 500,000 tips and complaints since 1998.

- ICAC task forces regularly conduct undercover operations across the country to capture individuals intending to entice and travel to meet those they think are young, vulnerable children.

Continued Support for Project Safe Childhood Efforts

- In fiscal year 2008, state and local law enforcement agencies will receive more than \$17 million to combat Internet crimes against children. The money is administered by OJJDP in support of the ICAC task force program. The ICAC task forces have played a critical role in stopping Internet criminal activity targeting children.
- Week-long regional comprehensive training programs were developed and delivered to PSC teams throughout the country. By year's end, teams from all 93 districts will have attended this training – bringing the total number of federal, state and local prosecutors and investigators trained to more than 650. In addition, the PSC national training conference took place in September 2008 and brought together 1400 attendees.
- The Department of Justice's Office of Justice Program's SMART Office has developed several Web-based tools that are now available to all state, local and tribal governments to assist with the implementation of the Adam Walsh Act. These tools enhance our awareness about the possible presence of sex offenders in our local communities and assist law enforcement in their efforts to manage and track sex offenders.

###

08-XXX