

04 Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)

The Issue

Each year between 100,000 and 300,000 children are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation in the United States.⁵ Life for these children is often filled with violence, sexual harm, and emotional trauma. Children who run away from home or are homeless are at increased risk. Runaway youth will most likely be approached to sell sex within 48 hours of being on the street.⁶ The majority of individuals in the sex trade were recruited as children, and the consequences to their lives are devastating.

Demand Change

Everyday Actions

1. If you suspect someone is a victim of CSEC, contact the CyberTipline, which is a reporting mechanism for cases of child sexual exploitation, including child pornography, online enticement of children for sex acts, molestation of children, sex tourism of children, child victims of prostitution, and unsolicited obscene material sent to a child. Reports may be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week at www.cybertipline.com or by calling 1-800-843-5678.

Raise Awareness

2. Educate yourself about the national public awareness campaign, Project Safe Childhood, and partner with this campaign to educate your communities: www.justice.gov/pse/.

Volunteer

3. Host clothing and supply drives for victims of child sexual exploitation in your community through agencies

that serve them, such as The Dreamcatcher Foundation: www.thedreamcatcherfoundation.org.

4. Identify an organization working with prostituted youth and raise funds to help support their work. Additionally, advocate to have specialized, gender-appropriate programs to provide care, recovery, and rehabilitation for CSEC victims added to existing programs for homeless youth in shelters.

Advocate for Change

5. Contact your legislator and urge her or him to work toward the ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, including the optional *Protocol on the Sale of Children*. Download the advocacy kit at: <http://childrightscampaign.org/images/documents/Toolkit.pdf>.
6. Lobby to have law enforcement refocus activities on adult perpetrators of sex crimes against children: the pimps, traffickers, and offenders who buy sex. Learn more at www.enddemandillinois.org.
7. Create coalitions of local small businesses, chambers of commerce, better business bureaus, and political leadership to work together to develop solutions to the problem of sexual exploitation of youth, such as creating training and job programs.⁷
8. Lobby for law enforcement and health care professionals to hold trainings on CSEC victim

recognition and the protocols for connecting them with legal, medical, and social services.

9. Ensure that schools have curricula that highlight the harms of CSEC, teach how to identify potential pimps and traffickers, and explain the role young men can play in ending sexual exploitation. Additionally, ensure teachers are trained on how to identify if a child might be a victim of commercial sexual exploitation. Examples of curricula are those provided by CAASE, www.caase.org; the Tell Your Friends curriculum provided by Fair Girls, www.fairgirls.org; and My Life My Choice, www.fightingexploitation.org.

Keep Learning

10. Keep learning about the issue and about ways to get involved by viewing the resources under the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) section in the index.

⁵Estes, R. & Weiner, N.A. (2001). *The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children In The U.S., Canada and Mexico*. University of Pennsylvania.

⁶National Runaway Switchboard. www.1800runaway.org

⁷ Report of the Canada-United States Consultation In Preparation For World Congress III Against Sexual Exploitation of Children.