

Kianna Pittman
Amanda Webster
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3 Body Paragraphs

Protecting your children is a huge part of parenting that never ends, but how can you protect them from child predators that look like your everyday normal people? In order to protect your children you must first know what a predator is. In basic understanding a child predator (or predator if you will) , is a person who is legally identified as an adult that seeks mental, emotional, and even sexual benefits from someone who is legally identified as a minor for personal benefits. Another word for this is widely know as paedophilia , but according to Vartapetian and Gillam, Paedophilia is actually someone who is sexually attracted to minors aged 11 and under, Hebephilia refers to someone attracted to children ages 11-13, and Ephebophilia refers to adolescents 14-19 (2). In order to protect our youth from predators we must first properly identify the predators by what they are. This may seem like is making their actions okay but it's not. Properly identifying the type of predator makes it easier to spot their behavior, and prevent future harm of minors.

Predators have certain tactics and behaviors they use to gain access to minors. The first in these tactics is to gain access to the child. Whether it be as a stranger, an acquaintance, or even a member of the family, predators always want to establish great access to a child. The second of these tactics is to gain the child's trust. Most predators create the trust by strategically placing themselves in authoritative positions such as teachers, priests or coaches and they will engaging in relationship-building activities such as dating, buying them gifts and showing them attention and affection (Vartapetian and Gillam, 4). Once Access and trust is gained what's next? Isolation. Predators want to physically and mentally isolate their victims from their support networks such as family, friends, and parents/guardians (4). Once the victim is isolated, the next step is to start grooming, or engaging in sexually explicit conversation to secure the the

cooperation and silence of the victim (Vartapetian and Gillam, 4). From there starts the verbal in leads right physical contact that happens before the sexual activity (4). Another main tactic to keep a child in their grasp is manipulation. While a child may already be very compliant with their abuser things may change, maybe things no longer feel safe, or maybe that child has gained a realization the ongoing relationship is wrong. This is where the manipulation tactics come into play. Manipulation in simple terms is just falsely relaying information or lies with your views to benefit in your favor. In Colin McGinn's *Mind Fucking: A Critique of Mental Manipulation* he states that "If the lie succeeds, you will be wrong about the world and about me; I will have infected you with error at two points (28). This is a crucial tactic predators because from the time kids are born up until early adulthood they're still figuring out the world, themselves, social lives, their sexuality and sexual identities, so it's easy to fill their mind with lies and change their views. Predators also use threats, and gaslighting techniques to keep control over children. If a child is isolated from family, friends and guardians how can you tell if they are being abused?

There will always be signs that a child is being abused, where it's obvious like marks and bruises or not so obvious such as seclusion and secrecy. One think that needs to be taken into account is the after math of abuse and how it effects children, and teenagers. Children may internalize feeling of blame and guilt. Long-term effects of abuse on their self- esteem, sexual identity, relationships, and sense of safety. Negative and adverse effects on children include, but are not limited to increased anxiety, hypervigilance or hyperarousal; anger or aggression; depression, avoidance or withdrawal; inability to trust or have intimacy; promiscuity, hypersexuality, or confused sexual identity; poor concentration, school attendance or achievement; eating or sleeping disturbances, migraines, back or stomach aches; risk alcohol or drug abuse; and max precipitate re-victimization, teen pregnancy, running away, or suicidal ideation and/or attempts (Sears, 15). This is why it is important to identify predators. Children aren't supposed to be worried about how to protect themselves from harmful adults with impure

intentions. They're supposed to be having fun, enjoying their youth, themselves and their identities, shaping their views and their adult image. The can't become better versions of themselves if suicide, teen pregnancy, and have low self self esteem are potential results of abuse.

Works Cited

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