



Office of Child Protection Services: A Guide for Parishes, Schools and Programs

The Office of Child Protection Services was created by the Archdiocese of Washington in March 2003 to coordinate and oversee archdiocesan child protection efforts. The office is responsible for victim services and the implementation and enforcement of the Child Protection Policy. The office works closely with parishes and schools, as well as with other archdiocesan offices, such as the Office of Human Resources, the Catholic Schools Office and the Office of Religious Education.

Marcia Zvara, MSW, LCSW-C, has served as the Director of the Office of Child Protection Services since 2003. She is assisted by Denise Smith, administrative assistant.

When Abuse is Suspected: Reporting and Assistance

Any suspected abuse, or question about possible abuse, must be reported to Marcia Zvara. She will provide assistance, help contact the appropriate civil authorities and ensure anyone harmed receives pastoral care and other services.

To make a report or to discuss a situation involving suspected physical or sexual abuse or neglect, please contact Marcia (Marcy) Zvara, director of child protection services, at mzvara@adw.org or 301-853-5328.

Parish Compliance

The archdiocese established a system of local child protection compliance coordinators in 2007. Pastors designate a coordinator for the parish and school. The coordinators are responsible for monitoring and ensuring that adults who have substantial contact with children are fully compliant with the Child Protection Policy and for ensuring volunteers and staff are informed on how to become compliant. Anyone who is not fully compliant may NOT volunteer or work with children. To be eligible to work or volunteer with children, a potential employee or volunteer who will have substantial contact with children must complete an application, attend an archdiocesan-sponsored awareness workshop, complete an acknowledgement form found in the archdiocesan Child Protection Policy and receive a positive result from a criminal background check. Questions should be directed to the Office of Child Protection Services.

Training

An important component of complying with the policy is attending a child abuse awareness and prevention workshop, called Protecting God's Children for Adults. Twenty facilitators arrange and provide these sessions, which have been attended by over 35,000 employees and volunteers since August 2003. A parish, school or agency may arrange a workshop by contacting Denise Smith, dsmith@adw.org or 301-853-5328.