



# Department of Justice

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## 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; 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 & Exploited Children; and state and local law enforcement officials in each U.S. Attorney's district.

### ***Project Safe Childhood Is Working***

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.

#### *Enforcement:*

In U.S. Attorneys' Offices, 2,118 indictments were filed in fiscal year 2007 against 2,218 defendants. This represents a 27.8 percent increase over fiscal year 2006 (1,657 cases filed against 1,760 defendants). We currently project that the number of federal prosecutions in FY 2008 will be higher than in FY 2007.

In fiscal year 2007, the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) program, a national network of 59 regional task forces funded by the Department of Justice that investigate computer-facilitated child sexual exploitation, resulted in more than 2,350 arrests.

As of Sept. 14, 2008, a total of 1,661 victims of child pornography crimes have been identified and many rescued, 911 of which since the launch of PSC, through enhanced law enforcement coordination and the efforts of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's (NCMEC).

During fiscal year 2007, the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, in partnership with the FBI, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the United States Postal Inspection Service,

developed and coordinated six nationwide investigations targeting the production, distribution, receipt, and possession of child pornography by more than 7,000 individuals residing in the United States. Many of these leads are prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Offices throughout the nation.

*Public Education and Awareness:*

*In 2007, the Department of Justice together with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and the Ad Council launched the Online Sexual Exploitation public service advertising campaign designed to educate teenage girls about the potential dangers of posting and sharing personal information online.*

*The Department 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.*

*Since launching in 2004, the Online Sexual Exploitation campaign has garnered over \$188 million in donated media support, and the toll-free number, 1-800-THE-LOST, has received more than 225,000 calls.*

*Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Forces:*

- *In 1998, the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (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 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 National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. These referrals typically come from Internet Service Providers. The Cybertipline has received over 500,000 tips and complaints since 1998.*
  - *ICAC task forces regularly conduct undercover operations across the country netting individuals bent on enticing and traveling to meet with 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 \$17 million 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.

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.

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