



# What you need to know about **child sex trafficking** and **child labor trafficking**

Child sex and labor trafficking are child abuse. Call **844-CO-4-Kids** if you have concerns that a child is involved in trafficking. If a child is in immediate danger, call **911**.

**IF NOT YOU,  
THEN WHO?**

## What is child trafficking?

There are two types of human trafficking of children – **sex trafficking** and **labor trafficking**.

**Child sex trafficking** occurs when a child engages in commercial sex activity or exchanges sex for something of value. Traffickers can be a family member, another individual responsible for their care and well-being, or a complete stranger.

A person under the age of 18 cannot consent to commercial sex acts or the exchange of sex for something of value. For example, children could be trafficked if...

- They are being paid, provided drugs, food or a place to stay in exchange for sex
- They are provided by a parent, caregiver or complete stranger to another individual in exchange for rent, drugs or other items of value
- Sexually explicit images of themselves are shared for profit

**Child labor trafficking** occurs when a child is forced or coerced to perform involuntary labor or services. Examples include...

- Debt bondage – a cycle of debt that can never be paid down
- Forced panhandling, forced participation in magazine sales schemes, or even being forced to sell drugs

Children are often labor trafficked in agriculture, domestic servitude and restaurant work. However, a child working for a family business **is not always** a case of child labor trafficking.

# Signs of child trafficking

Emotional and physical signs of child sex and child labor trafficking can overlap. They include:

- Items of value, like cash, a cellphone or clothing, that a parent did not purchase
- A relationship with an older or controlling partner
- A history of running away or missing school
- Unexplained injuries, marks or tattoos
- Changes in behavior, such as fear, anxiety, depression, submissiveness, tenseness or nervousness
- Being isolated, having restricted activities or being closely monitored
- Blackmailed by trafficker by using their undocumented status against them (withholding of documents, threats to report to immigration officials)

Traffickers are often known to their victims. Children can be trafficked by family members, romantic partners, friends and employers. Visit [CO4Kids.org/child-trafficking](https://CO4Kids.org/child-trafficking) to learn the signs of child sex and child labor trafficking.

## How do traffickers gain control?

Children are most commonly trafficked by members of their own families or people they have developed close relationships with, such as friends or romantic partners.

### Traffickers prey on vulnerabilities in children and manipulate them into exploitative situations.

#### They exploit young people who have...

- Been marginalized
- Are isolated
- Been rejected by the family
- Run away from home
- Experienced past abuse
- A lack of financial resources

#### To gain control, traffickers make promises about...

- A relationship
- A loving family
- A stable home
- More money
- Independence

## What you can do as a parent

- Pay attention to your kids' social lives in person and online. Monitor your kids' social media. Frequently, young people are groomed for child trafficking over time after meeting people online.
- Do not be afraid to talk to your kids about sexual health, human trafficking and consent. If you don't, someone else will.
- Demonstrate love and healthy relationships. Expressing that you care helps shape a child's self-image, confidence and opinions of future relationships.
- Educate yourself about human trafficking. Take a virtual training through the National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center: <https://nhttac.acf.hhs.gov/soar>.

People who work in more than 40 different professions are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect. If you are a mandatory reporter, you are required by law to share all concerns you have about possible child abuse and neglect. **Learn more about your role on [CO4Kids.org/mandatory-reporting](https://CO4Kids.org/mandatory-reporting)**