



About Human Trafficking - Newsletter #3

Child Sex Trafficking

Child sex trafficking in the U.S. involves both citizens and non-citizens under age 18. Many people think sex trafficking occurs overseas, or involves non-citizens in the U.S. However, the Department of Justice found that of 389 confirmed human trafficking incidents between 2008-2010, 83% of the victims were U.S. citizens. When child sex trafficking involves a U.S. citizen under age 18, it is often referred to as domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST).



Within 48 hours of running away, a young person is likely to be solicited for prostitution or another form of commercial sexual exploitation.

The sexual exploitation or servitude of children is inexcusable. The resulting harm to children, which often continues into adulthood, can involve physical and psychological trauma, substance abuse, health problems, pregnancy, alienation, and even death.

What is the relationship between Child Sex Trafficking and Child Welfare Systems?

Child abuse in the U.S. has traditionally been defined as abuse against a child by a parent, caregiver or guardian. Since child trafficking victims are involved with, or in the control of, a pimp or trafficker and not a caregiver or guardian, child trafficking victims have generally not benefitted from child welfare services.

Some states, including California, Connecticut and Florida, have developed, and are continuing to develop, new child welfare practices in response to child trafficking. New Jersey is learning from these and other states as we develop our own practice response. While future newsletters will focus on this further, a link between a child falling victim to trafficking and having had previous contact with the child welfare system seems to exist.

- In Los Angeles, 77% of the youth charged with prostitution had prior contact with the child welfare system.
- It is estimated that 70%-90% of those involved in commercial sexual exploitation have histories of child

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sexual abuse.

- It is estimated that 100,000-300,000 children and youth are at risk annually in the U.S. The average age for the entry of girls into the sex industry is 12-14 years of age, for boys and transgender youth it is 11-13 years of age.

Statistics from the Congressional Forum on Children at the Intersection of Child Welfare and Domestic Trafficking, May 16, 2013.

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