

Grooming Red Flags



Grooming is when an adult builds a relationship with a child and/or their family to gain trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation. Grooming can happen online or offline. It can involve gifts and/or compliments given as lures, the use of secrecy, isolating the child from others, and gradually making the relationship sexual.

It is also crucial to note, that child sex offenders 'groom' both the child and the family, and that the sexual abuse of children has no social boundaries. These offenders will work very hard to be liked (and even loved) and trusted by the family, in order for you to have no problem in leaving them alone with your child.

The following is a 'grooming' checklist. Keeping in mind, just because a person may tick some or all of these boxes does not mean they are an offender, but you should certainly keep your parent 'radar' switched on and not leave them alone with your child.



Some of these behaviours fall into a 'grey' area, but are still questionable. You might consider asking other parents if they have noticed anything similar. The goal of the conversation is to keep children safe.

DOES THE PERSON:

Engagement & Time Spent

- 1. Seem to prefer children's company to adults' company?
- 2. Spend a lot of their time with children?
- 3. Like to be alone with your child and spend more time with them than other members of the family?
- 4. Capture opportunities to be with your child in private spaces like their bedroom or a cubby?
- 5. Play video/computer games with your child online (most often unsupervised by you)?

Special Treatment & Secrets

- 1. Give your child compliments, or special privileges, and make your child feel special?
- 2. Act as your child's good friend or 'sounding board' especially if there are family arguments or upsets?
- 3. Give your child 'special' presents, gifts, or money — when other children do not receive the same?
- 4. Give your child special treats or treasured items and ask them to keep it a secret?

Physical Contact & Boundaries

- 1. Encourage low-level physical contact with your child via behaviors like tickling, rough and tumble play, carrying the child around on their shoulders, and other games involving touching? (These can gradually progress to more intimate touching.)
- 2. Seem to be unaware or ignore your child's body boundaries — for example, they may fail to ask for your child's consent when that is the norm in your family — going in for hugs, kisses, or other touching — assuming it will be okay?
- 3. Ignore your child when they squirm, wriggle away, or say 'Stop' or 'No'?
- 4. Discount your parenting ideas such as adults having to ask children for hugs and kisses?

Trustworthiness & Reliability

- 1. Appear reliable and trustworthy in their job and present well to families and the community?
- 2. Offer to help out with your child/ren when you are super busy and/or at short notice?

For information and resources on topics on body safety and consent please visit:
www.e2epublishing.info



Written by Jayneen Sanders, author & educator and Professor Kerryann Walsh, School of Early Childhood and Inclusive Education, Creative Industries, Education and Social Justice: Queensland University of Technology