



71% OF PARENTS DON'T FEEL VERY PREPARED TO TALK TO THEIR KIDS ABOUT HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND AVOID SEXUAL ABUSE, NEW STUDY FINDS

During April's National Child Abuse Prevention Month, The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Shines a Light on the Critical Work that Must Still Be Done to Protect Children

New York, NY — (April 19, 2021) — Only 29% of parents with children under 18 reported feeling “very prepared” to talk to them about how to recognize whether someone is taking sexual advantage of them, and about what to do to protect against it, according to the results of a new national survey by **The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children** (The NYSPCC), the world’s first child protection agency.

“Given that April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, now is the perfect time for parents to come to terms with how rampant the sexual abuse of children is—and how ill-prepared children and their families are to notice it, report it, and prevent it in the future,” said Mary Pulido, PhD., Executive Director of The NYSPCC.

The NYSPCC’s survey also found that more than two-thirds (68%) of parents with children under 18 are concerned that kids can access websites containing any form of pornography. According to [The New York Times](#), the number of reported photos, videos and other materials related to online child sexual abuse grew by more than 50 percent in 2019—reaching nearly 70 million images and videos reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children—an indication that many of the world’s biggest technology platforms remain infested with the illegal content.

“Though the topic may be uncomfortable, parents must always prioritize discussing what constitutes inappropriate sexual behavior, both online and in-person,” said Dr. Pulido. “As children have been spending increased amounts of time online and access to inappropriate content has become easier, it is even more crucial for parents to have these important conversations in order to equip children with the knowledge and tools to protect themselves from predators.”

On a positive note, the survey revealed that even though most parents do not feel very well prepared for discussions about inappropriate behavior, the majority report that they have in fact had talks with their children surrounding it. Fifty-eight percent of parents say they talked with

their children about inappropriate sexual behavior perpetrated by adults or other young people — including 62% of those raising teenagers and 66% of parents with children age 18 and older. Though fewer parents with children under age 13 (46%) have talked with their children about how to recognize when an adult or other young person might be taking inappropriate sexual advantage of them, an additional 38% plan to have this discussion with their children.

“If you feel unprepared for these discussions, there are vast resources provided by The NYSPCC and other child protection organizations that are available to support you and your child through these difficult topics,” Dr. Pulido said. “Setting up an atmosphere where your child feels safe and comfortable coming to you or another trusted adult can be the difference between reporting inappropriate behavior and getting the help needed, or letting sexual abuse continue unresolved.”

To obtain the full set of findings of the survey, which also covered [perceptions regarding the extent of this issue](#) and [measures supported by the public to combat this problem](#), please contact nvspcc@high10media.com.

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Survey Methodology

The results reported here are based on completed interviews with a national probability sample of 1,000 Americans, age 18 and older. The research was designed for the NYSPCC by Michaels Opinion Research, Inc. and utilized the AmeriSpeak panel. Funded and operated by NORC at the University of Chicago, AmeriSpeak is a probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The mixed-mode panel (online and telephone) provides sample coverage of approximately 97% of the U.S. household population. Data have been weighted to national U.S. Census benchmarks and are balanced by gender, age, education, race/ethnicity, and region. The survey was fielded August 17-20, 2020 and the tabulated results have a margin of error of ± 4.3 percentage-points.

ABOUT THE NYSPCC

The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ([The NYSPCC](#)) is one of the most highly respected child protective agencies in the world. Founded in 1875, The NYSPCC helps the most vulnerable children of our community recover from trauma. And, more importantly, it helps prevent child abuse through its work with parents, teachers, children and foster care agencies. The NYSPCC’s amazing work is used as a model for child welfare agencies across the nation. The NYSPCC has investigated more than 650,000 cases on behalf of over two million children and has educated over 53,000 professionals working with children on child abuse and neglect issues. Read more about The NYSPCC at <http://www.nvspcc.org>

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