

Illinois DCFS releases Public Service Announcement to prevent child human trafficking

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January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month in Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – The human trafficking of children for sex in Illinois happens in every small town and big city throughout the state. In 2016, DCFS investigated 143 calls to the hotline for allegations of Human Trafficking. Many of the reports involved children being victimized within blocks of where they live.

Trafficking is not just an issue that happens to people in other countries. The United States is a source and transit country, and is also considered one of the top destination

points for victims of child trafficking and exploitation. Cases of human trafficking have been reported in all 50 U.S. States; anyone can be trafficked regardless of race, class, education, gender, age, or citizenship when forcefully coerced or enticed by false promises (source: unicefusa.org). It's important to remember that anyone under the age of 18 involved in this crime is a victim.

The public can help us stop this crime by knowing the signs and by reporting it.

What are some potential indicators of trafficking a child? The child may:

- Show signs of physical harm
- Become depressed, fearful or withdrawn
- Have a history of running away or currently be on run
- Have expensive clothing, jewelry, manicures, pedicures, etc.
- Begin spending time with an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Be found in a hotel/motel
- Have new tattoos or branding
- Be performing work inappropriate for his or her age
- Become isolated from family, friends or sources of support
- No longer have control of his or her driver's license or other identification documents

To learn more about how to recognize the signs of human trafficking, visit DCFS. Illinois.gov.

If you suspect or know a child is a victim of human trafficking, call 911 and the DCFS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline 1-800-25-ABUSE. Remember, our children are not for sale. To download the audio PSAs in English or Spanish, visit: <https://www.illinois.gov/cms/agency/media/radio/SitePages/PSA.aspx>

DCFS receives, investigates and acts upon a report of child abuse or neglect every five minutes. Tens of thousands of children are safer thanks to those who call our Child Abuse hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (252-2873) each year. Working together, we can ensure a safe, loving home and brighter future for every child.

