



OJJDP FACT SHEET

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Missing and Exploited Children's Training Program

by Helen Connelly and Ron Laney

Addressing issues associated with missing, exploited, and abused children can be complex, cumbersome, and often frustrating for those responsible for protecting them. Significant experience and expertise are required to conduct proper investigations, effectively manage cases, protect young victims, prosecute perpetrators, and prevent further victimization of children. To ensure that juvenile justice professionals have the necessary skills and information to address the myriad issues that surround cases of missing, exploited, and abused children, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) funds comprehensive training and technical assistance through its Missing and Exploited Children's (MEC's) Training and Technical Assistance Program. Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) in Appleton, WI, has provided this training and technical assistance since 1993.

FVTC currently offers five week-long training courses, each tailored for a specific audience and designed to improve the handling of, and response to, cases involving children. The five programs are described below:

- ◆ **Child Abuse and Exploitation Investigative Techniques.** This program is designed to improve the skills of professionals in law enforcement, child protective services, and other parts of the justice system who investigate child abuse, child sexual exploitation, child pornography, and missing children cases. Training focuses on recognizing signs of physical and/or sexual abuse, properly collecting and preserving evidence, preparing a case for prosecution, interviewing victims and interrogating suspects, and understanding liability issues. Training also addresses issues such as child prostitution, team investigations, and special investigative techniques for cases involving missing and abused children.
- ◆ **Child Fatality Investigations.** This course provides comprehensive training on how to detect whether a fatality is a homicide or the result of an accident and how to investigate and prosecute cases involving fatal child abuse and neglect. The course is offered to professionals in law enforcement, child protective services, and other parts of the juvenile justice system and to medical professionals. Training topics include investigating fatal child abuse and neglect, collecting and preserving forensic

and crime scene evidence, understanding the role of child protective services in investigating fatal child abuse, and conducting interviews and interrogations. Medical and case management issues are also covered.

- ◆ **Child Sexual Exploitation Investigations.** This course helps law enforcement professionals recognize, investigate, and resolve cases involving child sexual exploitation. Participants gain an understanding of the behavior of the child predator, including how he or she solicits a child and accomplishes the offending; learn how to obtain and execute search warrants, interview victims, and interrogate suspects; and prepare a case for prosecution. Federal resources available to support local efforts are also discussed. The training addresses computer child exploitation, child prostitution, and missing children cases. The course is offered to law enforcement investigators, child protective service workers, and other juvenile justice system professionals involved in the investigation of child sexual abuse and exploitation and missing children cases.
- ◆ **Responding to Missing and Abducted Children.** This course provides law enforcement professionals with the information and tools required to understand, recognize, investigate, and resolve missing and abducted children cases. It covers case management, issues related to the investigation of nonfamily and family abductions and runaway and throwaway children, effective methods for recovery and reunification, the use of the media, and the availability of Federal resources to aid in the investigation and recovery of missing and abducted children.
- ◆ **Team Investigative Process for Missing, Abused, and Exploited Children.** This program is a team-based training course designed to promote the development and use of a multidisciplinary, community-based approach for investigating cases of missing, abused, and exploited children. It equips local teams with tools to effectively investigate, prepare, and prosecute cases. Participating teams develop local interagency action plans to improve their management and investigation of cases. This program is offered to local teams composed of administrators or chief executive officers from law enforcement, prosecution, social services, and the medical field.

In addition to these training programs, FVTC, in cooperation with OJJDP's National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), conducts several additional training programs for law enforcement professionals and prosecutors. Three programs focus on Internet crimes against children. Each is described below:

- ◆ **Protecting Children Online.** This 4½-day course is designed to improve the ability of law enforcement to investigate computer crimes against children. Open to law enforcement investigators, the training focuses on how to recognize and identify computer crimes against children, conduct investigations, and prepare cases for prosecution. Types of computer technology, legal issues involved in computer crimes, and ways to help prevent computer victimization of children are also discussed.
- ◆ **Protecting Children Online/Unit Commander Policy Training Program.** This 2½-day program for commanders of law enforcement units is designed to improve their understanding of key issues involved in the investigation, prosecution, and prevention of Internet crimes against children. Topics covered include recognizing and identifying computer crimes against children, an introduction to computer technology, an overview of online communications, unit commander roles and responsibilities, understanding the technical investigation, cyberlaw, and discussing available resources.
- ◆ **Protecting Children Online for Prosecutors.** This 4½-day course provides prosecutors with critical information to help them understand, identify, and prosecute computer crimes against children. The course helps prosecutors recognize when a child is the victim of a computer crime, present and use expert testimony, and understand liability issues involved in the search, seizure, and removal of suspects' computers. Training also includes charging and plea negotiations, preparation of cases for court, and effective methods for meeting defenses. Cross-examination tactics also are discussed.

FVTC and NCMEC also collaborate on the Missing and Exploited Children Chief Executive Officer Seminar, a 2-day program that provides police chiefs and sheriffs with the information to raise awareness and understanding of, and improve communities' responses to, cases of missing and exploited children.

For Further Information

To register for classes, contact FVTC at the address listed below, or visit the FVTC Web site for a schedule of classes and to obtain a registration form.

Fox Valley Technical College
1825 North Bluemound Drive
Appleton, WI 54912
800-648-4966
920-735-4757 (fax)
www.foxvalleytech.com/ojjdp (Internet)

To obtain copies of other OJJDP publications related to missing, exploited, and abused children, contact:

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse
800-638-8736
301-519-5600 (fax)
puborder@ncjrs.org (e-mail)
www.ncjrs.org/puborder (Internet)

For more information on NCMEC and its programs, contact:

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
Charles B. Wang International Children's Building
699 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-3175
703-274-3900
703-274-2222 (fax)
www.missingkids.com (Internet)

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The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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