

# WHAT IS COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN?



Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) occurs when an individual offers to, or does buy, trade or sell sexual acts with a child. Child sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a child for the purposes of sexual acts. Boys, girls and transgender youth under the age of 18 can be victims of child sexual exploitation and trafficking. Examples of CSEC include:

- Child sex trafficking
- Sexual acts in an exchange for something
- Gang based trafficking
- Escort services/private parties/stripping
- Production of child pornography
- Online transmission of live video of a child engaged in sexual activity

The **average**  
**age of entry** into  
the sex trade is  
**12-14**  
years old

SOURCES: MISSINGKIDS.COM  
AND HOPE4JUSTICE.ORG

**1** **IN** **3**  
**TEENS**

will be sexually exploited  
within 48 hours of running  
away from home

Minor victims are  
**SOLD FOR SEX**  
an average of  
**10 TO 15**  
**TIMES A DAY**  
6 days a week

# What to look for:

- Changes in appearance, friend groups, interests, school activities, vocabulary, demeanor, attitude and sexual behavior
- Luxury items like manicures and designer clothes without an explainable source of income
- Low or no school attendance
- Getting into trouble in the company of older teens or adults; receiving calls, texts or online messages from adults
- Clothing not appropriate for age, setting or season
- Possession of hotel keys
- Possession of vapes/vape products/substances with no means of access
- Multiple phone or social media accounts
- Runaway/homeless youth, especially from group homes and foster care, are particularly vulnerable

## What do you do if you suspect a child is being commercially sexually exploited?

If you suspect a child, under the age of 18, is a potential victim report it immediately to the local police department or the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF) Child-at-Risk Hotline at 800-792-5200. You do not need to know who may be responsible or have confirmed evidence exploitation is occurring – only a reasonable suspicion.

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### **If a child is in immediate danger call 911.**

Children's Cove provides a coordinated and victim-centered response to all victims of child sexual exploitation and trafficking in partnership with state agencies and community providers. All services are free of charge. To learn more about commercially sexually exploited children and how it impacts our community, please contact Children's Cove.



508-375-0410 • [childrenscove.org](https://childrenscove.org)

Individuals pictured are models and are used for illustrative purposes only.