

**Recent Alabama Statistics:**

**194,334**  
serious crimes a year

**297** homicides

**18,602** violent crimes

**182,241**  
property crimes

Almost all crimes take place in the communities where the victims live, work or go to school.

**John Tyson is providing parents with information that will help them keep their children safe.**

People who molest children can be any age, any race, with any level of education or from any social class. Any child can be vulnerable. But there are signs that a parent or guardian can look for that should raise red flags.

It's not the dangerous stranger with candy or stories of lost puppies that most parents must watch out for (although they are out there, too). Over 80% of children who are molested know the molester because he or she is a family member or acquaintance.

The pedophile (child-molester) often exhibits many signs of their particular preference for children. The individual signs alone mean little, but several together can come to form a pattern of behavior and should cause concern. Here is a list of characteristics to watch for (from Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis):

- Sexual abuse in background. Many abusers were themselves abused.
- Limited social contact as teenagers, often described as a loner.
- Premature separation from military (not necessarily for child abuse).
- Frequent and unexplained moves (could have been asked to leave former community).
- Prior arrests (not necessarily for child abuse).
- Multiple victims -- if a person has molested a child, there will likely be many other victims.
- Planned, repeated, or high-risk attempts to seduce or molest children.
- Older than 25, never married (only significant in combination with other characteristics).
- Lives alone or with parents (only significant in combination with other characteristics).
- Limited dating relationship if not married.
- If married, "special" relationship with spouse (probably nonsexual union).
- Excessive interest in children. Parents should beware of anyone who wants to be with their children more than they do.
- Associates and circle of friends are young. Pedophiles get involved in youth activities.
- Limited peer relationships. If a pedophile has a close adult friend, that person is also suspect.
- Age and gender preferences. Most pedophiles prefer children of a certain sex and age range.
- Refers to children as "clean," "pure," "innocent," "impish," or objects.
- Skilled at identifying vulnerable victims.
- Identifies with children (better than with adults). Often described as "pied pipers."

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- Access to children through work, marriage, volunteer, or "neighborhood nice guy."
- Activities with children, often excluding other adults (babysitting, troop leader...)
- Seduces with attention, affection, and gifts to make the child feel special.
- Skilled at manipulating children.
- Hobbies and interests appealing to children: collections of toys targeted at preferred age.
- Shows sexually explicit material to children to lower inhibitions of child.
- Youth-oriented decorations in house or room.
- Photographing of children, (even fully dressed).
- Collecting child pornography or erotica.

Typically, pedophiles have several children in the "grooming" and abuse process.. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the typical child sex offender molests an average of 117 children (most of whom do not report the offence).

The internet provides an additional way for molesters to find and groom children to abuse. Molesters often pose as young people in chat rooms, on web sites and through emails. They may talk about the newest video games, movies or other subjects that interest children to gain their trust.

## **Providing parents with steps they can take to help them keep their children safe:**

What can a parent do to prevent their child from being molested?

- Know where your child is at all times
- Teach them basic "stranger safety"
- Know the source of any gifts or money they bring home
- Know about their friends, especially adult friends
- Make sure they know they can talk to you and that you will believe what they tell you

Who can a parent call if they are concerned that their child (or a child they know) is being seduced or has been molested? Call the local police, sheriff, local district attorney's office, or local Child Advocacy Center. Phone numbers for local services, including Child Advocacy Centers, are available on our web site: [www.johntysonjr.com](http://www.johntysonjr.com).

There is additional information on sexual abuse and victimization of children at:  
The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children web site ([www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com))  
National Child Advocacy Centers web site ([www.nca-online.org](http://www.nca-online.org))