



Annual Report

Child Protection Advisory Board for the Archdiocese of Washington

June 1, 2004-June 30, 2005

Introduction

Established in July 2002, the Child Protection Advisory Board of the Archdiocese of Washington is composed primarily of lay people who have particular experience or expertise related to the protection of children and young people. The Board is tasked with reviewing, strengthening and monitoring all Archdiocesan child protection efforts.

The Archdiocese of Washington has had a written Child Protection Policy since 1986; this Policy has been updated several times since that time. The current policy, developed by the Child Protection Advisory Board in 2003, includes a number of accountability measures. One of these is an annual report to parishioners “on the status of Archdiocesan child protection activities.” (*Archdiocese of Washington Child Protection Policy, Sec. 11.8*).

This second annual report summarizes the Archdiocese of Washington’s implementation of its Child Protection Policy, including training, prevention and outreach between June 2004 and June 2005.

Summary of Policy

The revised Child Protection Policy of the Archdiocese of Washington requires employees and volunteers who have substantial contact with children to complete an employment/volunteer application, acknowledge in writing the receipt and review of the policy, be fingerprinted and complete a Criminal History Record Check, and attend education on the prevention, recognition and reporting of child abuse.

In addition to these preventative measures, the policy calls for an Office of Child Protection Services to coordinate education and outreach; mandatory reporting of child abuse or neglect to civil and Archdiocesan authorities; offers of counseling and pastoral support; immediate removal from ministry while an allegation is investigated and permanent removal if an allegation is found credible; and a review by a predominantly lay Case Review Board when an allegation is made against a member of the clergy.

Fingerprinting and Background Checks

The Archdiocese of Washington has mandated fingerprinting and background checks for many years. Since 2002, the Archdiocese has used state-of-the-art technology for scanning fingerprints and a centralized collection process. Between June 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005:

- 6,654 employees, volunteers and clergy, including 39 priests, were fingerprinted
- Two background checks were conducted on each person (FBI and Maryland State), generating 13,308 reports.

Fingerprinting is managed by the Office of Employee and Volunteer Services. During this year, fingerprinting was available by appointment at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center and two additional parish sites, located in Southern Maryland and upper Montgomery County, to better accommodate employees and volunteers.

Education

Adult Education. The Archdiocese, under the direction of the Director of Child Protection Services, continued to provide child abuse awareness and prevention education through *Protecting God's Children for Adults*, a nationally recognized program developed by National Catholic Risk Retention Group:

- 84 safe environment training sessions, including two in Spanish, were held between June 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005.
- 7,000 people, including volunteers, new employees and clergy, attended these sessions

Child Education. This year, a major focus was choosing and implementing standard safe environment education for all children in Archdiocesan schools and religious education programs. During the 2004-2005 school year,

- 21,721 Catholic school students and
- 24,509 religious education students received safe environment education.

The Catholic Schools Office worked to integrate safe environment education into its overall curriculum standards. After conducting a review of available training programs, the Office chose *Child Lures Prevention School Program*, a nationally-recognized program, for use in Archdiocesan Catholic schools. In November 2004, all principals were trained in the program; in January 2005, teacher and parent meetings were conducted to introduce the program. It was implemented in all schools starting in February 2005. While *Child Lures* was offered as a stand-alone program during the first year of implementation, the plan is to integrate lessons into the overall curriculum in future years.

The Director of the Office of Religious Education developed a different approach to the educational requirement from the Catholic schools since these students typically attend a religious education class only once per week.

An age-appropriate Curriculum Guide was developed for use by all religious education programs, along with four presentation options. Four trained facilitators who work with the Office for Child Protection Services were made available to assist in the presentation of the information. Catechetical leaders were advised to give adequate notice to parents as to how they would implement these guidelines. As with the schools, materials were consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church. After approval by the Office for Child Protection Services, the guidelines were introduced to catechetical leaders in October 2004. Copies were then distributed to all catechists attending the annual Archdiocesan Catechetical Day on November 6, 2004.

Continuing education. The Director of Child Protection Services participated in conferences and continuing education during the year. This included programs offered by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for victim assistance coordinators to ensure they have the most current information in the field and to develop contacts to further their work.

Child Abuse Allegations

Archdiocesan personnel report suspected abuse to civil authorities. Allegations from persons reporting past abuse are either received directly by or directed to the Office of Child Protection.

Allegations against Archdiocesan clergy. No credible allegations were received during this reporting period. One allegation against a priest not in ministry and dating back many years was received, but was quickly determined by the authorities not to be credible.

Allegations against lay employees and contract workers. A single allegation of inappropriate contact was made against an employee at an Archdiocesan school. The allegation was reported to the authorities and the employee was placed on leave during an investigation by the authorities, but they declined to prosecute.

Financial Resources for Child Protection Efforts

Approximately \$345,000 was spent on implementing and complying with the Child Protection Policy in the fiscal year of July 1, 2004-June 30, 2005. This includes salaries and benefits for the Office of Child Protection and Office of Employee and Volunteer Services, materials, training stipends, fingerprinting and other equipment purchases and maintenance, and professional fees for the training program. An additional \$200,000 was spent on counseling for victims.

Child Protection Policy Survey

In May 2005, Archdiocesan staff implemented a survey of employees, volunteers and others who have responsibilities under the Child Protection Policy to seek their views on the effectiveness of the policy; 639 people responded. The results were compiled and provided to the Child Protection Advisory Board for input as the Board considers revisions to the Child Protection Policy.

National Audit

In October 2004, an independent, on-site audit of the Archdiocese's child protection efforts was conducted by former FBI agents as part of a national review of diocesan compliance with the US Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. For the second straight year, the Archdiocese of Washington was found in full compliance.

Conclusion and Direction for the Future

The implementation of the Child Protection Policy, particularly the adult education, fingerprinting and background checks, continued very smoothly this year.

Looking ahead, the Catholic Schools Office, in coordination with the Director of Child Protection Services, will evaluate the implementation of safe environment education for children and integrate it into the Catholic Schools curriculum standards. Archdiocesan staff will focus on identifying and implementing compliance and monitoring of the policy at the parish level. The Child Protection Advisory Board will undertake a complete review of the Child Protection Policy to identify appropriate revisions.

The Child Protection Advisory Board is grateful to the Board chair, Mr. Shay Bilchik, for his leadership during the past year.