

Possible Indicators for Identifying Commercially Sexually Exploited Children

- ☐ Offers canned responses
- ☐ Cannot speak privately
- ☐ Unable to socialize
- ☐ Has gaps in schooling/not in school
- ☐ Has heightened sense of fear or distrust of authority
- ☐ Lying about age/false ID/not in possession of ID
- ☐ Inconsistencies in story
- ☐ Has gaps in memory
- ☐ Demeanor: fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, tense, nervous
- ☐ Unable or unwilling to give local address or information about parents
- ☐ Lives in an unstable environment
- ☐ Lives with a non-parent/non-guardian
- ☐ Lives at workplace/with employer
- ☐ Sleeping/living separately from “family” (in the garage or on the floor instead of bedroom)
- ☐ Has hotel keys
- ☐ Chronic runaway/homeless youth
- ☐ Mentions a pimp/boyfriend
- ☐ Presence of older male or boyfriend who seems controlling
- ☐ Shows signs of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse
- ☐ Deprived of food, water, or medical care
- ☐ Threats of traffickers reporting child to police/immigration
- ☐ Threats to child’s parents, grandparents, sibling, or own minor children
- ☐ Methods of control leave no visible signs of abuse
- ☐ Cannot freely contact parents or guardians
- ☐ Is paid very little or nothing for long hours of work or services performed
- ☐ Forced to sell drugs, jewelry, magazines on the street
- ☐ Any child working where “pay” goes directly towards rent, debt, living expenses/necessities
- ☐ Has excess amount of cash
- ☐ Exploitation on the internet, online ads
- ☐ Under age 18 and in commercial sex work
- ☐ Loyalty, positive feeling toward trafficker
- ☐ Does not consider self a victim

*The existence of one or more of these indicators is not proof positive of child sex trafficking.
Each case must be individually assessed based on all of the circumstances.*

This list was compiled by:

The Center for the Human Rights for Children, Loyola University of Chicago and International Organization for Adolescents, cited in *Ending the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Call for Multi-System Collaboration in California*, California Child Welfare Council – 2013

with additional suggestions from Kavitha Sreeharsha, Global Freedom Center.



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Theresa Sparks
Executive Director



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MAYOR EDWIN M. LEE

