



**Stop It Now! Georgia**

*The Campaign to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse*

## Press Release

**Contact:** Jeanette Meyer  
Communications Coordinator  
404.870.6588 *tel*

## **Parents Must Trust Instincts, Take Action Against Possible Child Sexual Abuse** *Most abusers are people who are supposed to protect kids*

(Atlanta) - The issue of child sexual abuse has been in the limelight recently, thanks in part to the efforts of Oprah, who launched a Web site dedicated to capturing fugitive offenders. This renewed focus on sex abusers has sparked public outcry and prompted proposed legislation to increase sentences and expand community notification about convicted sex offenders living in neighborhoods.

While being aware of the people living in the community certainly is an important part of child sexual abuse prevention, parents must be prepared to confront not just strangers, but people they know and love.

“Though we’d rather not face it, most of us already know someone who has triggered an uneasy ‘gut feeling,’” says Prevent Child Abuse Georgia Executive Director Doug Middleton. “In all likelihood, he or she is someone we trust – a relative, friend, teacher, or coach. If someone is sending your instincts into overdrive, it is up to you to find out why -- before a child is harmed.”

Of the estimated 500,000 children who are sexually assaulted each year, more than 90 percent of them know their abuser. A staggering 88 percent never report the abuse to authorities. As many as half the incidents of sexual abuse are committed by children against other, less powerful children.

Unfortunately, laws, policies and celebrity campaigns targeting registered sex offenders will not impact this vast majority of sexual abuse perpetration. So while we should join Oprah and lawmakers in strengthening efforts to keep our children safe from convicted offenders, we must also move beyond merely tracking down and punishing the abusers after the fact. We’ve already failed if a child has been harmed.

Child sexual abuse is not inevitable. It’s preventable. Protection has to start at home. Prevent Child Abuse Georgia can help.

**For information about how to create a safety net around children at home and in communities, please call the Stop It Now! Georgia and Prevent Child Abuse Georgia Helpline at 1-800-CHILDREN (244-5373) 8:00am-8:00pm, Monday through Friday.**

Stop It Now! Georgia is a program of Prevent Child Abuse Georgia and is one site of the national Stop It Now! organization. Stop It Now! was founded in 1992 with the belief that adults can prevent child sexual abuse. Funding for this project comes through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. PCA Georgia is a statewide private nonprofit organization dedicated to child abuse prevention and relies on community support and volunteers to assist in its effort to end child abuse in Georgia. For more information about Stop It Now! Georgia and PCA Georgia’s services, resources and educational programs, please call 1-800-CHILDREN or go to [www.stopitnowga.org](http://www.stopitnowga.org).

# # #