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## **SUFFER THE CHILDREN**

# Sex-ed programs designed by prostitution advocates

## Catholic parents balk when dioceses adopt controversial 'Talking About Touching'

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By Mary Jo Anderson

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Although one result of the Catholic Church's traumatic clergy-sex scandal last year was the mandating of "personal safety training" sex-education programs to protect the next generation of youngsters in Catholic schools, one of the most popular such programs was designed by prostitution advocates, according to outraged parents in several dioceses using it.

In the summer of 2002, in the midst of the crisis caused by the Boston sex scandal, the U.S. Catholic bishops adopted the Dallas Charter, which calls for implementing a suitable, "age-appropriate" personal safety training program for youngsters. The Conference recruited former FBI staffer Kathleen McChesney to administer the U.S. Bishops' Office of Child and Youth Protection. Teams of auditors from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops are already visiting dioceses to monitor their progress.

The "Talking About Touching" program is taught in over 5,000 public schools nationwide, and over 20,000 schools globally, according to Joan Duffell, director of community education for Seattle-based Committee for Children which produces the program. Average cost to a diocese for the program is \$20,000 to \$50,000 for the initial year.

The problem, complain some Catholic parents in the Archdiocese of Boston and elsewhere, is that the Committee for Children is actually the cleaned-up name of COYOTE – "Call Off Your Tired Old Ethics" – an advocacy organization for prostitution.

Recently, Boston-area Catholic schools have introduced the "Talking About Touching" in kindergarten through fourth grade. The program covers issues ranging from bike safety to fire safety, but as the title indicates, the bulk of the program addresses improper "touching."

The shared history of COYOTE and the Committee for Children, or CFC, was deleted from the [CFC website](#) after concerned parents flooded the archdiocesan offices protesting the introduction of "[Talking About Touching](#)" curriculum in their schools. But it was too late. Several parents had downloaded the original history from CFC's website, which read: "1976: Seattle COYOTE changes name to Judicial Advocates for Women, becomes a non-profit and identifies its mission: To educate the public about the realities of prostitution."

COYOTE is the work of Margo St. James, a former prostitute. St. James' testimony appears in the 1996 San Francisco Task Force on Prostitution.

"The forerunner of COYOTE was WHO, "Whores, Housewives and Others," said St. James. "Others meant lesbian, but it wasn't being said out loud yet."

St. James details the birth of COYOTE during the term of San Francisco Sheriff Richard Hongisto: "I cornered him at a party and asked him what it would take to get NOW and gay rights groups to support prostitutes' rights. ... He said that we needed someone from the victim class to speak out. ... I decided to be that someone."

St. James and COYOTE have spent more than 25 years defending "prostitutes' rights," organizing the "Hooker's Ball" (drawing 20,000 in 1978) and taking her "research" to the United Nations' Women's Conferences. According to St. James, COYOTE organized the 1984 Hooker's Convention and drafted a Bill of Rights, the basis of the "World Whores' Charter, drawn up by the International Committee for Prostitutes' Rights in the European Parliament."

The Seattle branch of COYOTE is affiliated with COYOTE chapters in the U.S., as well as the National Task Force on Prostitution in New York. Additional liaisons that help defend "sex workers rights" are: International Committee for Prostitutes Rights in the Netherlands, Hooking Is Real Employment, or HIRE, in Atlanta, and Prostitutes of New York, or PONY.

A prostitute's advocate, St. James explained how she found legitimacy for COYOTE: "... a close friend, Jennifer James, an anthropology professor in Seattle," helped take COYOTE international. She coined the word 'decriminalization' and was responsible for getting NOW to make it a plank in their 1973 convention."

Today, Jennifer James is on the board of directors for the Committee for Children whose "Talking About Touching" curriculum is described by some Catholic parents as "soft porn" that desensitizes 5-to-8-year-olds.

According to the original CFC website: "Jennifer James and the University of Washington social scientists collaborate with Seattle COYOTE to conduct a research project on youth entrance into prostitution." The damning reference to COYOTE has now been removed from the web pages of CFC.

By 1979, Judicial Advocates for Women initiated a "curriculum review committee" to research child-abuse prevention, changing its name again to the Committee for Children.

Although many Catholic parents in Boston complain the graphic sex-education programs used in public schools are one of the reasons they send their children to parish schools, now the curriculum many find offensive has been mandated for the Boston Archdiocese. Samples of the lessons for 5-to-7- year-old children include:

- "Motorcycle-riding babysitter offers little Joey a ride if he plays the touching game. 'I'll put my hand down the front of your pants and then you put your hand down the front of my pants;'" and
- "This is Ian. He is worried because he has a problem and he's trying to decide whether to tell someone about it. Last week his mom's boyfriend came into Ian's room when Ian was getting ready for bed. He started to give Ian a hug and then he put his hand down the back of Ian's pajama bottoms. He warned Ian not to tell his mom about what had happened. He said they should keep it a secret."

Committee for Children has also sold its "personal safety" curriculum to the diocese of Portland, Ore., and Orlando, Fla. When trouble erupted in Boston, CFC provided "talking points" to Boston officials in an effort to allay parental fears about the program. CFC's Duffell said that a diocese could "contextualize" the material for their communities.

Shiela Horan, a U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops office staff member, told WorldNetDaily the "Talking About Touching" program was one of the top three programs in use nationwide.

A program preferred by some dioceses, but not listed by the national office, is "Kid Wise" – the choice of Bishop Weigand of Sacramento, Ca., whose schools switch to the Boy Scout Program for junior and senior high schools.

Each diocese that has selected the TAT curriculum has met some resistance. Under the guidance of Orlando's chancellor, Sr. Lucy Vasquez, and the diocese's superintendent of schools, Harry Purpur, the "Talking About Touching" program is being implemented in an effort to comply with the U.S. bishops' requirement to create safe environments for children.

"Yes, we have had some concerned parents," admitted Purpur of Orlando. "But in general, there are parents who object to *any* program dealing with sex."

Purpur, who served as superintendent of schools in Seattle, said he did not learn of the Committee for Children's curriculum until recently. Purpur discounted parental claims that the material from CFC was compromised because it was founded by COYOTE.

"What is their source?" Purpur dismissed the scathing report on CFC and "Talking About Touching" in Dr. James Dobson's "Family News in Focus," an online publication. "Again, what is their source?" asked Purpur. "I did due diligence before accepting this program," he insisted, "and the only COYOTE I found was an animal."

Dobson's report also traced CFC to COYOTE. Purpur seemed unaware that the CFC website originally listed COYOTE in its organizational history, removing the reference after Boston parents challenged the diocese about the program.

"The ideas that we are giving 4-and-5-year-olds," Carol McKinley of Boston said, according to "Family News," "is that you have sexuality and that this sexuality is a magnet to perverts. ... There is nothing in this entire program that speaks about what is right, what is wrong, what is virtue, what is sin, what is Roman Catholic and what is not." One Boston-area priest, Father Bob Carr, said he would refuse to teach the CFC curriculum in his parish even if ordered to do so.

Parents who threatened to remove their children from schools in Boston and Orlando were quick to quote the Vatican's Pontifical Council on the Family's document, "Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality." It states: "Parents must protect their children, first by teaching them a form of modesty and reserve with regard to strangers as well as giving suitable sexual information but without going into details and particulars that might upset or frighten them."

A Florida priest requesting anonymity candidly spelled out the situation this way: "Look, the bishops probably don't know what is in this curriculum. They're in a tough spot – their insurance or the Catholic Risk Retention pool pressures them to get a program in place and they have to get something ready for McChesney's auditors. And frankly, there is not much out there in the marketplace that Catholics can accept for sex education. Traditionally, it is the role of parents to teach birds and bees. The bishops

appoint a committee and put Sister Wear-the-Pants in charge to review sample material and the committee makes a recommendation, but the bishop never sees the stuff.

"More often than laity know," the priest added, "it is the middle management of dioceses that is the problem – there are radicals and 'diversity' champions who control the educational and liturgical work of the dioceses, and these folks are ruthless. I'd bet the bishop has not read this material. The inmates are running the place. Just remove your child from class on the days the 'Talking About Touching' is presented."

A more sinister observation was made by an Orlando homeschooling parent: "Here is what we face: Homosexual militants with the goal of changing moral values already have the NEA, and now public schools are a sewer of political correctness. Next, they must corrupt private and church-run schools, especially the Catholic schools."

His comment was underscored by COYOTE's St. James herself, whose political fundraising activities, as reported in the San Francisco Bay Guardian, promised the following: "'With love to Margo' features video clips of Scarlot Harlot and Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence as well as erotic readings and performances ..."

The biography of St. James' academic mentor, Jennifer James, describes the cultural anthropologist as the founder of Committee for Children and "a specialist in areas of cultural change and diversity ...". One parent bitterly observed that it seemed James' goal was to bring about her vision of "cultural change and diversity" by introducing grade-school children to explicit sexual language and approaches that implant in young minds the concept of homosexual encounters.

That charge is not softened by CFC's own policy of advertising for employees in homosexual publications. The following ad appeared in the June 2003 issue of the Seattle Gay News Online:

"Committee for Children has a Web Manager position available. Please see our web site for more information on the position and how to apply. [www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org). Position closes June 23, 2003."

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