



MEDIA ADVISORY

OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL HENRY MCMASTER
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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AG's Conference To Help Parents and Professionals Recognize And Prevent Child Exploitation

COLUMBIA, S.C. – In an effort to provide parents, educators and law enforcement with the resources and information needed to recognize and prevent child exploitation, Attorney General Henry McMaster has organized a two-day symposium featuring some of the nation's premier child safety consultants.

The symposium, entitled *Protecting South Carolina's Children: At Home, School and Play*, will be held **September 9-10, 2004**, at the Ocean Drive Beach & Golf Resort, located at 98 North Ocean Boulevard in **North Myrtle Beach**.

"Awareness is the key to defending our children from those predators who seek to do them harm," said McMaster. "The purpose of this meeting is to teach parents and other adults how to protect against the numerous methods of exploitation and to recognize the warning signs."

Thousands of victim advocates, law enforcement officers, educators, guidance counselors, school district health directors, psychologists, principals and superintendents from across the state have been invited to participate. The symposium is also open to the public and parents are invited and encouraged to attend.

Rapid advances in technology, alarming domestic violence rates and drug and substance abuse are just a few factors that put children at increased risk of exploitation or abduction. The symposium is designed to provide valuable information and resources in an effort to recognize dangerous situations and warning signs associated with the potential sexual exploitation of children.

The seminar will be highlighted by two presentations from Ken Wooden, the founder of Child Lures Prevention and NBC News/Today Show national child safety consultant. Wooden's child personal safety training videos are frequently featured on national newsmagazine and talk shows to demonstrate dangers faced by children in today's society.

Also included will be presentations by NetSmartz, Web Wise Kids, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Darkness to Light, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the South Carolina Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force.

The ICAC task force, operated by the Attorney General's office, is part of a nationwide federal program created to develop state and local law enforcement cyber units to investigate and prosecute child sexual exploitation cases. Assistant Attorneys General working with the ICAC task force prosecute child sexual exploitation, pornography and Internet predator-enticement cases.

Cracking down on Internet child predators has been a centerpiece of McMaster's administration, with the Attorney General's Internet Child Predator legislation sailing through the legislature and becoming law in April 2004.

The new law makes the act of stalking, luring or enticing a child for the purpose of abduction or sexual assault a crime. The law also includes an "impossibility defense" provision, which prevents predators caught in an online sting operation from getting off the hook because they were talking to a police officer as opposed to a minor. It also increases maximum penalties for all obscenity offenses involving minors and removes the "multi-county" limitation placed on the state grand jury for investigating obscenity offenses.

Registration for this conference is open to the public and will be on a first-come, first-served basis through August 31, 2004. For more information, please contact the Attorney General's Office or visit www.SCKidsOnline.com on the Internet.

AGENDA

Ocean Drive Beach & Golf Resort North Myrtle Beach

Thursday, September 9, 2004

6:00 – 7:00	Registration and Reception
7:00 – 7:15	Welcome – Attorney General Henry McMaster
7:15 – 8:45	Ken Wooden, Child Lures Prevention

Friday, September 10, 2004

8:00 – 8:25	Registration
8:25 – 8:30	Welcome – Chief Justice Jean Toal Attorney General Henry McMaster
8:30 – 10:30	Ken Wooden, Child Lures Prevention
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:45	Dr. Trisha Bennett, Darkness to Light
11:45 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 2:00	FBI
2:00 – 3:00	Jenn Gillins, NetSmartz / Charlotte Foster, NCMEC
3:00 – 3:15	Break
3:15 – 4:15	Christina Slenk, Web Wise Kids
4:15 – 5:00	S.C. ICAC Task Force

FEATURED PRESENTERS

Henry McMaster is the South Carolina Attorney General. He has practiced law for over 30 years, serving from 1981 - 1985 as the United States Attorney for S.C. Since being elected Attorney General, he has worked with local, state and federal leaders to enhance South Carolina's ability to investigate and prosecute Internet crimes and other sexual exploitation of children cases.

Jean Toal is the Chief Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court. Chief Justice Toal was in the private practice of law from 1968 until 1988. She was elected to the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1975 where she served until 1988. Chief Justice Toal has served as a member of the Court since 1988 and was elected Chief Justice in 1999.

Ken Wooden is the founder of Child Lures Prevention, a group formed in 1984 to provide effective child personal safety training programs and raise national awareness regarding child sexual exploitation and similar crimes. Ken has testified as an expert witness numerous times before the United States Congress. He is a frequent guest on national television shows and has been appointed NBC News / Today Show's child safety consultant.

Darkness to Light is a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization and initiative located in Charleston, S.C. Formed in 1997 by a group of concerned citizens, Darkness to Light focuses on the prevention of child sexual abuse through public awareness and education.

The F.B.I.'s Innocent Images Initiative is a component of the F.B.I. Cyber Crimes Program. The group was formed to combat the proliferation of child pornography and child sexual exploitation facilitated by an online computer.

The National Center for the Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) was established in 1984 to provide services nationwide for families and professionals in the prevention of abducted, endangered, and sexually exploited children. Their services include the operation of a Cyber Tipline, providing assistance with any case involving a missing or exploited child, offering training to law enforcement and prosecutors, and coordinating national legislative efforts to enhance the protection of children.

NetSmartz is an interactive, educational safety resource from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and Boys & Girls Clubs of America for children aged 5 to 17, parents, guardians, educators, and law enforcement that uses age-appropriate, 3-D activities to teach children how to stay safer on the Internet.

Web Wise Kids is dedicated to equipping children to make wise choices on the Internet by taking a proactive approach against predators. Using an interactive game targeted especially to middle school students (ages 11-14), Web Wise Kids teaches children about the dangers of being online and Internet safety.

Online Resources: www.scattorneygeneral.com
 www.sled.state.sc.us
 www.scvan.org
 www.missingkids.com
 www.cybertipline.com

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