



DOMESTIC CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING AND BLACK GIRLS

WHAT IS DOMESTIC CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING?

Domestic Child Sex Trafficking (DCST) occurs any time a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident under the age of 18 exchanges sex for anything of value (e.g., food, shelter, money, etc.).ⁱ

WHAT MAKES A YOUTH VULNERABLE TO TRAFFICKING?

The following factors make youth vulnerable to sex trafficking and exploitation.ⁱⁱ

- A history of sexual and/or physical abuse
- Community or family instability and dislocation
- Child welfare involvement, especially out-of-home foster care placement
- Being a runaway or homeless youth
- Disconnection from the education system and being off-track for achievement
- Poverty

BLACK GIRLS ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AT-RISK

Black girls are more likely to experience the risk factors listed above. In addition, studies report that Black girls become trafficked at younger ages than their racial counterparts.ⁱⁱⁱ They are more likely to experience poverty, and consequently more likely to be disconnected from schools and other community supports.^{iv} Also, younger Black Girls have an increased risk of experiencing abuse due to the fact that children are most likely to experience physical and sexual abuse at young ages^v and Black girls witness and experience multiple forms of violence at higher rates than their white peers.^{vi}

A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF DCST VICTIMS ARE BLACK GIRLS

According to the FBI, Black children comprise 57% of all juvenile prostitution arrests—more than any other racial group.^{vii} In a two-year review of all suspected human trafficking incidents across the country, 40% of sex trafficking victims were Black.^{viii} In Los Angeles County, 92% of girls in the juvenile justice system identified as trafficking victims were Black, 62% of those children were from the child welfare system, and 84% were from poor communities in the southeastern part of LA County.^{ix} In Alameda County, 66% of child sex trafficking survivors identified as Black girls.^x

Even in communities where a small percentage of the population is Black, Black children are disproportionately trafficked. For example, in King County, Washington, 52% of all child sex trafficking victims are Black, though Black children and adults together only comprise 7% of the general population.^{xi} In Multnomah County, Oregon, Black children comprise less than 6% of the population but represent 27% of child sex trafficking victims.^{xii}



ⁱ As defined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, DCST is the “recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act” where the victim is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident under the age of 18. 22 U.S.C. §§ 7102(9)-(10). A commercial sex act is defined as “any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person.” § 7102(4).

ⁱⁱ Kate Walker, California Child Welfare Council, [*Ending the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Call for Multi-System Collaboration in California*](#) (2013), pp.18-20.

ⁱⁱⁱ Lisa Goldblatt Grace & Francine T. Sherman, *The System Response to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Girls*, in *Juvenile Justice: Advancing Research Policy, and Practice*, 336 (Francine T. Sherman & Francine H. Jacobs eds., 2011).

^{iv} Lauren Frohlich, Janel George, Fatima Goss Graves, Lara S. Kaufmann, & Leticia Smith-Evans, NAACP Legal Defense Fund & National Women’s Law Center, [*Unlocking Opportunity for African American Girls: A Call to Action for Educational Equity*](#) (2014), p.7.

^v Children’s Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, [*Child Maltreatment 2015*](#) (2017).

^{vi} National Center for Victims of Crime, Action Partnership on Interventions for Black Children Exposed to Violence and Victimization, [*Black Children Exposed to Violence and Victimization*](#) (accessed 2015).

^{vii} Federal Bureau of Investigation, [*Crime in the United States 2016*](#), Tables 21B.

^{viii} Bureau of Justice Statistics, [*Characteristics of Suspected Human Trafficking Incidents, 2008-2010*](#) (April 2011).

^{ix} Los Angeles Times, [*“Campaign to halt sex trafficking launched in L.A. County”*](#) (May 31, 2012).

^x Kate Walker, California Child Welfare Council, [*Ending the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Call for Multi-System Collaboration in California*](#) (2013), p.22.

^{xi} Val Richey, OJJDP Online University, [*Reducing Demand for the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Minors in Your Community*](#) (May 2017).

^{xii} Christopher Carey & Lena Teplitsky, Portland State University, *Memo regarding the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) in the Portland Metro Area* (August 3, 2013), p.3.