



**Prevent Child Abuse**  
New Jersey

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# Press Release

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## **JACKSON ACQUITTAL PROMPTS WARNING:**

*Parents must discuss relationships and sexuality with their children*

While we know that many adults are discussing their opinion of the Michael Jackson trial and acquittal, don't be surprised that kids are in on the conversation too. Young people have their own opinions about sleepovers with grown-ups, whether or not sexual contact occurred, and how the young man may feel; all topics they have seen or heard discussed in the media and on-line. Prevent Child Abuse – NJ reminds parents and teachers that they now have a unique opportunity to discuss relationships, sexuality and personal safety with their children, as well as the workings of the legal system.

“This is a time to discuss the fact that the overwhelming majority of sexual abusers are known to a child. They work very hard to become a friend to their victim and even their family.” Said Dr. Janet Rosenzweig, the Executive Director of Prevent Child Abuse – NJ. “Very few abusers ever get charged or taken to court, and even fewer are convicted. Young children in particular need help comprehending the concept that an act may have occurred, but there was not enough evidence for the court to find guilt. This case illustrates that the child protection and law enforcement systems are not set up to prevent abuse, they are intended to intervene. That's why it is so important for all adults to step up and be the front line in preventing child sexual abuse.”

Prevent Child Abuse- New Jersey has advice and resources available for parents, youth serving organizations and communities on preventing child sexual abuse. “Communication between parents and children about sexuality is the most important step in prevention,” said Rosenzweig, a certified sex educator. “Abusers seek children who lack sexual language knowing they are less likely to tell an adult.”

For child-serving agencies hiring staff and recruiting volunteers, a criminal background check is one small step, but nothing can replace thorough reference checks. Personal and professional reference checks, along with close supervision of new employees and policies and procedures to regulate staff-child contact can help.

“The Jackson case is an object lesson in the fact that the sexual abuse of a child is not only a criminal issue, R”osenzweig said. “The entire community has a role to play in keeping children safe and preventing sexual abuse.”

PCA-NJ builds communities, strengthens families, and empowers parents through parenting programs, education and training, advocacy, and public awareness activities. PCA-NJ is a statewide, non-profit agency that is guided by the mission of eliminating child abuse and neglect in all of its forms. 2005 marks the 26<sup>th</sup> year of service to New Jersey.

For more information, please call 1-800-CHILDREN or 732-246-8060 or visit us on the web at [www.PreventChildAbuseNJ.org](http://www.PreventChildAbuseNJ.org).

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