

Even for victims in the US, the media and abolitionist organizations such as “SAGE” either deliberately or unintentionally, frequently misquote its sources, stating that “there are 300,000 children trafficked into prostitution each year,” when that figure actually references the number of children* *AT RISK* of being trafficked, **NOT those who WERE trafficked.**

From the Crimes against Children Research Center:

Sex Trafficking of Minors: How Many Juveniles Are Being Prostituted in the US?

(revised in 2012) Michelle Stransky and David Finkelhor

“There have been many attempts to estimate the number of juvenile prostitutes within the United States. These estimates range from 1,400 to 2.4 million, although most *[estimates]* fall between 300,000 and 600,000. **BUT PLEASE DO NOT CITE THESE NUMBERS. READ ON.** A close look at these diverse estimates *reveals that none are based on a strong scientific foundation.* They are mostly educated guesses or **extrapolations based on questionable assumptions...**

The reality is that we do not currently know how many juveniles are involved in prostitution.

Scientifically credible estimates do not exist.

Despite the fact that the General Accounting Office estimates are obsolete, current groups concerned with child welfare still use this estimate.... As this critique of estimates suggest, there is currently no reliable estimate of juveniles who are prostituted in the US. Some current estimates are based upon “gut hunches” and “guesstimates” from almost thirty years ago. Others offer definitions of sexual exchanges that may not actually constitute prostitution. Also, the methods used to create these estimates are often difficult to find, making them methodologically suspect. Organizations may recognize these problems but continue to cite such poorly calculated estimates. *[um... like the POLARIS PROJECT????]*

For brief treatments of the problem, one can say simply: “*Unfortunately, there are no credible or supported estimates about the size of the problem.*” For more extended treatments of the problem, one can cite some of the statistics, but then indicate that *these numbers are based mostly on guesses or extremely imprecise and speculative methodologies.* It would be a good idea when citing any numbers to be sure to include the **low end estimate from law enforcement of 1,400**, since this is among the most recent and clearly defined of the estimates, and counters the assumption that all the estimates are large.”

But it is essentially a guesstimate and not a scientific estimate.

* According the the FBI Bureau of Criminal Statistics, any person under age 18 is considered a ‘child’ for purposes of statistical reporting, even in states where the age of consent is 16.

“What about the children?”