

Resource Document for Educators:

Supporting the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse



2023

Resource Document for Educators on Supporting the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse

In accordance with [N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.5a](#), also known as Erin’s Law, each school district in New Jersey must incorporate age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education in grades Prek-12 as part of the district’s implementation of the NJ Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education ([NJSL-CHPE](#)). This toolkit serves to provide educators¹ with relevant resources, sample activities and lessons, and best practices in support of the prevention of child sexual abuse (a specific type of child abuse) in accordance with the NJSL-CHPE. Educators can find the performance expectations related to Erin’s Law within Standards 2.1 - Personal and Mental Health and 2.3 - Safety. It is important to note that the resources below are being provided for districts to explore, however decisions on programming and curricula to fulfill a district’s compliance with the NJSL remain with the local education agency.

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- NJ Department of Children and Families
- NJ Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- Prevent Child Abuse NJ
- NJ Children’s Alliance
- American Federation of Teachers
- NJ Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers
- NJ Association of School Administrators
- NJ Association of School Social Workers
- NJ Child Assault Prevention
- NJ Coalition Against Human Trafficking
- NJ Education Association
- NJ Principals and Supervisors Association
- NJ School Boards Association
- NJ State School Nurses Association
- NJ School Counselor Association
- SHAPE NJ

How to use this toolkit

The Table of Contents will direct you to the various sections of this toolkit. You may choose to read this toolkit in its entirety or to consult certain sections as needed. While all sections hold importance, educators may be particularly interested in the curricula & sample learning activities, professional development, and informational resource sections. Within the curricula & sample learning activities section, items are categorized within each topic area by resource name, description, and grade band. Professional development and staff training resources are organized by training topic and other listed resources are organized by topic area and intended audience (e.g., educators and/or parents and caregivers). For

¹ In this document, the term “educator” refers to all school positions that contribute to a student’s learning (e.g., teachers, counselors, nurses, paraprofessionals, coaches).

all listed curricula, training, and resources, associated costs (when known) are listed. All listed resources include a link that will bring you to additional information.

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Child Sexual Abuse and Assault: How to Respond

Child sexual abuse is a form of child abuse that includes sexual activity with a minor. Further, the sexual assault of a child can also be child abuse. As required by New Jersey's mandated reporting law (*N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10*) and in accordance with your local district's policy, **all** suspected cases of child abuse and neglect (which includes child sexual abuse) must be [reported](#) immediately to the appropriate authorities.

Remember, if there is **any suspicion of potential child abuse and neglect**, it must be reported. The duty of mandated reporters is to simply report. The trained staff at the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) and law enforcement are the experts who will properly investigate and make determinations.

For brief descriptions, signs, and symptoms of each type of abuse or neglect, please see the following [2019 Factsheet](#) from the Children's Bureau (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).

Prevention Frameworks

The CDC has developed evidence-based [technical packages](#) to assist in the prevention of child abuse and neglect, sexual violence, and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). These technical packages and frameworks are intended to be used in combination with one another by various sectors to prevent violence. Utilizing strategies from all three of these technical packages, schools can focus on promoting social norms that protect against violence, teaching skills to prevent sexual violence (including social-emotional learning and healthy relationship skills), providing opportunities to empower and support girls and women, creating protective environments, ensuring a strong start for children (through preschool enrichment with family engagement), connecting youth to caring adults and activities, and supporting victims/survivors to lessen harms. This resource document has been crafted keeping these prevention frameworks in mind.

Considerations and Recommended Best Practices for Child Abuse Prevention Education

- The majority of resources included in this toolkit are to assist schools and districts at a primary level of prevention, (approaches directed at general population before abuse has occurred) and secondary level of prevention (activities offered to populations that have risk factor(s) associated with child maltreatment (see [Risk and Protective Factors](#)). However, schools are encouraged to identify a list of community resources to aid its affected families with tertiary prevention, (activities for families where maltreatment has already occurred), aimed at providing support and preventing recurrence (Children's Bureau, n.d.).
- Schools should consider how the education and prevention of child sexual abuse fits into their currently existing **tiered systems of support**. The [New Jersey Tiered System of Supports](#) is an example of a multi-tiered framework aimed at providing supports and interventions to improve student achievement (Tier 1 – Universal supports; Tier 2 – Targeted, Small group interventions; Tier 3 – Intensive individual interventions).

- When possible, it is recommended to **utilize evidence-based or evidence-informed approaches** to ensure the effectiveness of the approach or the programming being provided as well as to utilize a **culturally aware or culturally sensitive lens**. (See the NJDOE’s [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Educational Resources](#) page to learn more.)
- Any form of child abuse and neglect is an adverse childhood experience (ACE); consequently, it is of equal importance to **utilize a trauma-informed lens** when evaluating or implementing prevention education.
- When looking specifically at **child sexual abuse prevention programming for students**, some helpful considerations are as follows (Barron & Topping, 2008; 2009; Whittle, Hamilton-Giachritsis, & Beech, 2014):
 - Students should gain age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of child sexual abuse through teaching about body safety, safe/unsafe touch, and private zones.
 - In an age-appropriate way, students should also learn about consent (*N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.38*) and body boundaries and have what that looks like modeled for them (e.g., asking, “Can I give you a high five?”).
 - Students should be encouraged to report child sexual abuse (e.g., helping them identify trusted adults, communicating that child sexual abuse is not their fault, etc.).
 - Programming that incorporates online safety and the prevention of online grooming should be considered.
 - Opportunities should be provided for the students’ parents and caregivers to practice safety skills with their children in the home. This could apply to both physical safety as well as online safety.
 - As having a disability is an identified risk factor of child sexual abuse (Assink et. al, 2019), it is imperative to ensure appropriate child sexual abuse prevention instruction is being provided to students receiving special education services.
- Repetition is an important principle in a child’s learning and helps to deepen the message being taught (Bruner, 2001). It is why young children will ask to have the same book read to them over and over. The same is true of child sexual abuse prevention – all students (grades pre-k – 12) should be learning this information each year in an age-appropriate way and in a variety of ways as appropriate (i.e., lectures, student-centered activities, reading texts, guest speakers, etc.). (Bruner, 2001).
- Lastly, it is imperative that adults convey their responsibility in protecting children to alleviate the burden of prevention being placed on students themselves. Adults should encourage children to tell a trusted adult if they or someone they know has been abused.

Risk and Protective Factors

Individual, relational, community, and societal factors all contribute to the risk of child abuse and neglect. Risk factors of child abuse and neglect are characteristics that may increase its likelihood of happening whereas protective factors are known to decrease its likelihood. Though [risk and protective factors](#) can vary depending on the type of child abuse and neglect, the CDC provides information on risk factors for both victimization and perpetration of child abuse and neglect, as well as protective factors.

It is important to be aware that certain populations of children may be more vulnerable to child abuse and neglect including young children (those 0-3 years old), children with special health-care needs, and children with disabilities (Children’s Bureau, n.d.). There are also parental risk-factors associated with child maltreatment such as poverty, young parental age, and parental substance abuse, mental health concerns and disabilities (Children’s Bureau, n.d.).

While more research is needed on the risk and protective factors particular to child sexual abuse, **individual risk factors** such as low social skills or gender (with girls being at higher risk than boys); **relational risk factors** such as the absence of one or both parents within one’s home; and **community risk factors** such as living in a rural area, have been identified in child sexual abuse (Assink et. al, 2019; Putnum, 2003; Sedlak et. al., 2010).

Supporting Prevention Across School Roles



Supporting Prevention Across School Roles

Curricula & Sample Learning Activities

Child Abuse (including Sexual Assault/Abuse) Prevention Education

Resource Title and Description	Grade Bands Served*	Cost
The Barbara Sinatra Children’s Center Foundation offers a National Prevention Program titled Fight Child Abuse, where information is presented through an age-appropriate video series.	Pre-K, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12	None

Resource Title and Description	Grade Bands Served*	Cost
Child Lures Prevention: Think First & Stay Safe Sexual Abuse Prevention Curricula	Pre-K, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12	At-cost
Child Welfare Information Gateway - School-based Prevention Programming	Grade level varies by program	Listed curricula may have associated costs
Green Dot offers research-informed primary prevention approaches for children, including risk and protective factors.	K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12	At-cost
Health World offers age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention programming with a focus on personal body safety education.	K-2, 3-5	At-cost
Kid & Teen SAFE: An Abuse Prevention Program for Youth with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 - Students with disabilities 	None
The Monique Burr Foundation for Children offers evidence-based and evidence-informed prevention programming to educate on bullying, abuse, and victimization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-K, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 - After school programs - Student athletes 	At-cost; limited scholarships available
NJ Child Assault Prevention (NJCAP) offers student programming on child assault prevention at every grade level. Also has child assault prevention programming to meet the needs of children with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 - Students with disabilities 	At-cost; NJCAP grants are available
Play it Safe! provides evidence-supported and age-appropriate child abuse prevention programming.	Pre-K, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12	At-cost
Safe to Compete : Protecting Child Athletes from Sexual Abuse This program provides access to resources to help protect student athletes from sexual abuse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 - Coaches - Parents 	None
Safer, Smarter Kids! offers an adapted child sexual abuse prevention curriculum for students with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - K-2, 3-5 - Students with disabilities 	At-cost

Resource Title and Description	Grade Bands Served*	Cost
Second Step's Child Protection Unit provides age-appropriate student lessons on child abuse prevention and intervention.	Pre-K–2, 3–5	Programming is at-cost; free resources

Healthy Relationships & Consent

Resource Title and Description	Grade Bands Served	Cost
Love Is Respect provides resources, quizzes, and text and call lines to help promote healthy relationships among youth. They also offer educator toolkits for how to lead discussions and provide guidance to students.	6–8, 9–12	None
Dating Matters®: Strategies to Promote Healthy Teen Relationships is an evidence-based comprehensive teen dating violence prevention model developed by the CDC.	6–8	None
Prevent Child Abuse Vermont offers a Healthy Relationships Project which is comprised of three school-based programs (Care for Kids, We Care Elementary, and SAFE-T).	Pre-K, K–2, 3–5, 6–8	At-cost
Prevent Child Abuse NJ's Sexual Consent page provides various handouts, videos, and guidance.	6–8, 9–12	None

Human Trafficking & Exploitation

Resource Title and Description	Grade Bands Served	Cost
Project Sex Trafficking Awareness for Individual Strength and Hope (STARFISH) is a school prevention project that trains teachers on the topic and provides sample lesson plans as well as ideas for class and school-wide awareness activities.	6–8 9–12	None
A21 provides various resources and trainings to help educate on human trafficking and online safety.	Pre-K, K–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–12	None
Project Stay Gold is a student movement to abolish modern day slavery.	6–8, 9–12	None

Online Safety

Resource Title & Description	Grade Bands Served	Cost
NetSmartz offers teaching materials for educators in digital citizenship and online safety.	K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12	None
Social Media TestDrive , created by Common Sense Education, provides students with a simulated social media environment where young people can practice and prepare for real-life experiences in the digital world	3-5, 6-8	None
Shared Hope International assists youth in recognizing and staying safe from online sex trafficking through Social Media Safety 101 .	6-8, 9-12	None

Social and Emotional Learning

Resource Title & Description	Grade Bands Served	Cost
NJDOE Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) webpage includes the NJDOE SEL Competencies, SEL Modules for Educators, and various related resources	Pre-K, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12	None
Harmony SEL is an SEL program that is accessible online and includes resources, tools, strategies, and product training and support.	Pre-K, K-2, 3-5, 6-8	None
Everfi provides free digital SEL Lessons on Compassion, Character, and Mental Wellness	2-5, 6-8, 9-10	None
Second Step offers free SEL activities, lessons, and materials .	Pre-K, K-2, 3-5, 6-8	None
SHAPE America's health.moves.minds.®Fundraiser provides SEL education resources to schools nationwide.	K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12	None
Also see Healthy Relationships & Consent Resources	-	-

*The listed Grade Bands signify materials appropriate for at least one of the grades included in each grade band. Please reference the resource directly to ensure use with appropriate grade. Example: Resource may be appropriate for grades 8-12. Therefore, grade bands 6-8 and 9-12 will be listed, but it may not be appropriate to utilize the resource for students in grades 6 and 7.

Professional Development Opportunities & Staff Training

Resource Title and Description	Training Topic Area(s)	Cost
<p>Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect, What School Personnel Need to Do</p> <p>Developed by the New Jersey Department of Education and the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, these training modules assist school personnel on the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1</p>	Child Abuse and Neglect	None
<p>Sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, the Mandated Reporting Training resource provides a brief yet comprehensive overview on child abuse reporting requirements</p>	Child Abuse and Neglect	None
<p>NJ Child Assault Prevention (NJCAP) offers adult workshops and a dedicated “Resource” section.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Child Assault Prevention – Bullying Prevention – Human Trafficking Awareness – Cyber Empowerment 	May have associated costs
<p>Darkness to Light offers continuing education for adults on preventing child sexual abuse.</p>	Child Sexual Abuse	Associated Costs
<p>Prevent Child Abuse NJ’s Enough Abuse Campaign provides various trainings for educators on child sexual abuse prevention.</p>	Child Sexual Abuse	At-cost
<p>Within the NJDOE’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Educational Resources page, related videos and webinars are available to educators.</p>	Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	None
<p>ChildWIN offers a two-part online course: Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Overview & Prevention of CSEC.</p>	Human Trafficking	At-cost
<p>Safe Place to Learn is resource package from the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments and offers a range of materials to support school efforts to prevent and eliminate peer-to-peer sexual harassment and sexual violence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promoting Positive School Climates – Sexual Violence Prevention 	None

Resource Title and Description	Training Topic Area(s)	Cost
Harmony SEL provides professional learning opportunities for educators in the Pre-k – 12 classroom.	Social and Emotional Learning	None
Shape NJ provides professional development opportunities to current members in areas related to health and wellness.	Social and Sexual Health	Costs vary
NCSSLE offers tip sheets, handouts, training packages and more to help staff with adopting a trauma-sensitive approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tips for Working with Students Known to be Affected by Trauma – Triggers and Dissociation – Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package – Building Student Resilience Toolkit 	Trauma-informed Practices	None
The New Jersey Department of Education offers information and resources on Trauma-informed and Healing-Centered Practices .	Trauma-informed Practices	External programs/resources may be at-cost
School Crisis Recovery and Renewal offers resources and tools for advancing school crisis readiness, response, recovery and renewal work.	Trauma-informed Practices	None

Informational Resources for Educators, Parents, & Caregivers

*Asterisk denotes that there may be associated fees with some aspects of programming.

Resource Title & Description	Topic Area	Intended Audience
The NJ Department of Children and Families is home to the NJ Child Abuse Hotline (where all reports of child abuse and neglect must be reported to the State Central Registry) and provides free publications on materials regarding child abuse and neglect . (Available in English and Spanish.)	Child Abuse and Neglect	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers

Resource Title & Description	Topic Area	Intended Audience
Childhelp – Handling Child Abuse Disclosures Offers a pamphlet sharing the types of disclosures and what to do/how to support the child during a disclosure.	Child Abuse and Neglect	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers
Child Trauma Academy Resource Library - Child Abuse and Neglect Research Articles	Child Abuse and Neglect	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers
Childhood Maltreatment among Children with Disabilities – the CDC provides information and resources for parents and caregivers on how to prevent maltreatment and provide a safe and nurturing environment for their child. (Available in English and Spanish.)	Child Abuse and Neglect	Parents & Caregivers
Every April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month . This resource guide is updated on an annual basis and is available for individuals, schools, and communities. It includes information on protective factors, Positive and Adverse Childhood Experiences (PACES), and includes tip sheets for parents and caregivers. (Parent and caregiver conversation guides available in English and Spanish.)	Child Abuse and Neglect	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers
NJ Child Assault Prevention (NJCAP) offers adult workshops and a dedicated “ Resource ” section that includes various guides. All guides are also available in Spanish.*	– Child Abuse and Neglect – Violence Prevention	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers
KidSmartz is a child safety program that offers resources to help parents, caregivers, and educators keep children safe.	Child Safety	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers
Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey developed Sexual Abuse Safe Child Standards and accompanying Resource Bank, to assist youth-serving organizations in creating policies and procedures to support the protection of children from sexual abuse.	Child Sexual Abuse	Educators
Second Step offers activities and resources for families on child sexual abuse, bullying prevention and SEL.	Child Sexual Abuse	Parents & Caregivers

Resource Title & Description	Topic Area	Intended Audience
The Enough Abuse Campaign offers a prevention guide for parents on child sexual abuse, including a separate guide for parents of children with disabilities . (First guide is also available in Spanish.)	Child Sexual Abuse	Parents & Caregivers
The U.S. Department of Justice's SMART Office , offers information on how to prevent, identify, and respond to child sexual abuse.	Child Sexual Abuse	Parents & Caregivers
NJ Coalition Against Sexual Assault offers related fact sheets to provide an overview of concepts and additional resources to learn more.	– Child Sexual Abuse – Sexual Violence	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers
Safe Secure Kids offers information and activities to teach children and have conversations with them around consent.	Consent	Parents & Caregivers
A21 offers parent guides to help parents of young children and teenagers start conversations about human trafficking. (Parent guides offered in multiple languages.)	Human Trafficking	Parents & Caregivers
NJ Coalition Against Human Trafficking provides helpful information and resources as well as offering training and professional development opportunities.*	Human Trafficking	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers
The NJDOE Guidelines for Schools on the Prevention of Human Trafficking of Students provides direction regarding how to create awareness of and an informed response to the trafficking of students, as well as how best to prevent it. Also includes a resource section.	Human Trafficking	Educators
The NJ Human Trafficking Task Force (NJHTTF) webpage within the NJ Division on Criminal Justice, Office of the Attorney General, includes resources on reporting, county liaison lists, and other related resources on awareness and education]	Human Trafficking	Educators
The U.S. Department of Education has released Human Trafficking in America's Schools: 2nd Edition which acts as a guide to help school officials understand the impact of human trafficking within schools, recognize the indicators of possible child trafficking and develop policies, procedures, and partnerships to address and prevent the exploitation of children	Human Trafficking	Educators

Resource Title & Description	Topic Area	Intended Audience
The NJDOE, in collaboration with the NJ Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, created a parent flyer, Keeping Children and Youth Safe While Connected: Online Safety Tips for Parents & Caregivers .	Online Safety	Parents & Caregivers
New Jersey Department of Children and Families offers parental resources on internet safety. (Available in English and Spanish.)	Online Safety	Parents & Caregivers
New Jersey State Police offers internet safety tips for children and teens as well as provides internet safety lectures to interested participants.	Online Safety	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers
CDC's Creating Positive Childhood Experiences Website offers facts, resources, and other relevant information to assist in keeping children safe and thriving within their families.	Protective Factors	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers
Balancing ACEs with HOPE - This report introduces the importance of HOPE – Health Outcomes of Positive Experiences, a framework that studies and promotes positive child and family well-being	– Protective Factors – Positive Childhood Experiences	– Administrators – Educators
The National Sexual Violence Resource Center offers resources and information on a variety of related topics as well as specifically on prevention.*	Sexual Violence	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers
NJ Sexual Violence Programs by County	Sexual Violence	Parents & Caregivers
CDC developed, STOP SV: A Technical Package to Prevent Sexual Violence , to help reduce sexual violence and its consequences.	Sexual Violence	Educators
Through the <i>National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative</i> , SAMHSA helps to raise awareness about the impact of trauma on children and adolescents as a behavioral concern. They also developed this fact sheet to help parents and teachers recognize common reactions of children exposed to trauma and breaks up the information by developmentally by age: – Understanding Child Trauma (Some materials also available in Spanish.)	Trauma-informed Practices	– Educators – Parents & Caregivers

Resource Title & Description	Topic Area	Intended Audience
– Tips for Talking with and Helping Children and Youth Cope after a Disaster or Traumatic Event: A Guide for Parents, Caregivers, and Teachers		

The selection of curricula, activities, and resources listed in this toolkit were determined by the Erin’s Law Resource Working Group. Please direct any questions regarding this resource to SafeSupportiveSchools@doe.nj.gov.

Funding Opportunities

The NJDOE offers information to schools and school district leaders on [Maximizing Federal Funding](#) to meet specific, identified needs.

Within the aforementioned resource, information and examples are provided on how to braid and blend multiple funding streams (including Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief [ESSER] Funds) to support school district initiatives.

For additional information see:

- [Investing American Rescue Plan Funds Strategically and Effectively](#): Guidance for School Districts (June 2021).
- [Unlocking Your Federal Funds](#) (updated June 2017).

Mandated Reporting

Though the focus of this resource document is on prevention, it is important to call attention to NJ’s mandated reporter legislation (*N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10*), which states that any person (including, but not limited to, all school staff) having reasonable cause to suspect the abuse or neglect of a child, including sexual abuse, must immediately report this information to [NJ's Child Abuse Hotline](#). Additionally, every school district must adopt policies and procedures for the early detection of potentially missing, abused, or neglected children (pursuant to [N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1](#)) and all staff, volunteers, and interns should be made aware of these policies and procedures.

When needing to make a report, the reporter (the person who suspects or witnessed the abuse or to whom the abuse was disclosed to directly by the student) should call the [Child Abuse Hotline](#) (State Central Registry) at 1-877-NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) **and** the appropriate school contact should call local law enforcement authorities in accordance with the law and their district policies and procedures.

Important notes:

- A district’s policies and procedures cannot require confirmation by another person (administration or other school staff) to report a potentially missing-, abused-, or neglected-child situation (in compliance with *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1(a)4*).

- It is not the duty of a mandated reporter to investigate any suspicions or claims, only to report them to the Child Abuse Hotline and local law enforcement in a manner consistent with the law and their district policy.
- Do not assume someone else will report. **All** school staff are mandated reporters.
- Notification to the student’s parents or guardians must **not** be made by school officials when it is suspected that either parent or guardian is responsible for the suspected abuse (see [Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials \(MOA\)](#)).

Responding to Student Disclosures of Abuse or Assault

When looking specifically at child sexual abuse disclosures, an increase in disclosure is possible following the provision of body safety education or other prevention and education awareness efforts. Therefore, schools should be ready to appropriately respond to disclosures of this nature. Additionally, research has shown that children and adolescents often delay disclosing experiences of abuse (McElvaney, 2013; Schönbucher et al., 2012). Consequently, when a child self-discloses, they are showing they trust you and it is important to remember the following:

- Remain calm, with a non-judgmental disposition. Do not outwardly show any strong reactions (even if you may be experiencing them internally).
- Ensure the child’s safety and help to make them feel comfortable.
- Acknowledge the student’s bravery in sharing their experience and thank them for trusting you to help them.
- Though any school staff member may find themselves in a situation of student disclosure, trained staff such as the school counselor, social worker, or other appropriately designated staff member should be utilized when possible.
 - **Note:** In alignment with a trauma-informed approach, a student should not be asked to repeat their disclosure until the Division on Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) or law enforcement arrives. Staff members may wish to write down any facts that may prove helpful for their report to help ensure the student will not have to share their disclosure multiple times.
- Don’t ask leading questions – let the student tell their story without probing for additional information.
- Be honest that you don’t know exactly what will happen but that when someone is being hurt or harmed, that is information that needs to be shared. Also assure them that the information will only be shared with those whom it absolutely needs to be shared.
- Adhere to your district’s policies and procedures (e.g., reporting suspected abuse or neglect to the [Child Abuse Hotline](#) (State Central Registry) at 1-877-NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) **and** the local law enforcement authorities, notifying an administrator, etc.) including any needed documentation.

(Crosson-Tower, 2003). Also see, [Childhelp – Handling Child Abuse Disclosures](#).

Child-on-Child Sexual Misconduct

Sexual assault, criminal sexual contact, and other inappropriate and potentially criminal interactions of a sexual nature can also happen between two minors (those 17 years and younger). These cases must be reported to local law enforcement in a manner consistent with your school district policies. Please reference the [MOA](#) for more information on mandatory reporting requirements. It is also strongly recommended that schools call the Child Abuse Hotline if either child is displaying problematic sexual behaviors (PSB), has or may have an open case with the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), or the incident raises concerns about the adequacy of either child's supervision.

In cases involving two minors, it is important to remember to show compassion and provide support to both the youth with PSB and the youth who was affected. Both are children or youth in need of support and follow-up care, though the type of support may look differently for each of them.

Disclaimer: The resources provided in this toolkit are for informational purposes only. All resources must meet the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) accessibility guidelines. Currently, the Department aims to conform to Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1). However, the Department does not guarantee that linked external sites conform to Level AA of the WCAG 2.1. Neither the Department of Education nor its officers, employees, agents, or consultative state agency partners, specifically endorse, recommend or favor these resources or the organizations that created them. Please note that neither the Department of Education, nor its consultative state agency partners, have reviewed or approved the materials related to the programs.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How often and for what duration should students be receiving child sexual abuse prevention education?

- A. Students in grades preschool through 12 should receive age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education consistent with the district's implementation of the [New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education \(NJSL-CHPE\)](#), (see [N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.5a](#)). When districts are making determinations, it is important to consider that the higher frequency with which information is presented to students and the greater variety of ways in which that is done (discussion, project-based, etc.), will better support a student's understanding of the concepts and materials (Bruner, 2001).

2. Is there a specific curriculum that must be used?

- A. No. Though this toolkit provides sample curricula and lessons for consideration, in New Jersey, school districts are responsible for creating curriculum and selecting resources that enable students to demonstrate that they have met or exceeded the expectations of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSL).

3. What do I do if parents/guardians have objections to curriculum or ask about opting out?

- A. As a first step, you might suggest the parent or guardian schedule a meeting with the supervisor of health and physical education, the health teacher(s) or school counselor(s) to discuss the sex education/family life curriculum in the school district. Additionally, if information on this process is listed within your district's website, familiarize yourself on where it is located so that you may also direct the parent to that information directly.

All students are required to take health, family life or sex education class. Any child whose parent or guardian presents to the school a signed statement that any part of instruction in health, family life education, or sex education is in conflict with his or her conscience or sincerely held moral or religious beliefs **shall be excused from that portion of the course**. Students excused from instruction should be provided alternative instructional content and activities aligned with the 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education (NJSL-CHPE) and the local health, family life/sex education curriculum. ([N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.7](#)).

4. What do I do if a child or staff member discloses an incident of [child abuse or neglect](#)?

- A. Report any disclosures to the [Child Abuse Hotline](#) (State Central Registry) at 1-877-NJ ABUSE (1-877-652-2873) **and** the local law enforcement authorities, in alignment with your district policy on reporting. When submitting a report to NJ’s Child Abuse Hotline, remember that the adult (school staff, volunteers, interns, etc.) that has the first account of the disclosure should be the one to make the call. Do not rely on someone else to make the call for you. For additional tips, please see [Responding to Student Disclosures](#).

5. What if I would like additional training on content and pedagogy related to this topic area?

- A. You could share this request with your supervisor and jointly develop a plan for additional professional development and training in this subject area. Furthermore, seek out others in your professional networks and school community who may be able to assist (e.g., school counselors could seek support through their professional networks [e.g., American School Counselor Association and NJ School Counselor Association resources and blogs] whereas a 2nd grade health and PE teacher may seek assistance from the school counselor).

6. Are there resources to help teachers who might need emotional support of their own in having to play a role in the delivery of this content?

- A. Contact your district’s human resource office to obtain information about employee assistance programs (EAPs) available to you. These are at no-cost to school district employees and offer assessment, counseling, and resources for support. Should your district not have an EAP, contact your health insurance.

NJ Education Association members are also offered [AID-NJEA](#), which is a helpline that provides counseling by phone.

7. What happens if I fail to report a suspected case of child abuse or neglect in a timely manner or at all?

- A. Failing to report a suspected case of child abuse or neglect in a timely manner could put the student at risk of returning to an unsafe environment and prevent the child and their family from receiving the help and support they may need. Additionally, persons who knowingly fail to report an act of child abuse can also be found to be a disorderly person (see [N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.14](#)) as well as subject to possible revocation of their teaching license (see [N.J.S.A. 18A:6-38.5](#)).

8. What if a student has a particular question while I am teaching an abuse/assault prevention lesson that I don’t have an immediate answer to? How do I respond and who should they be referred to?

- A. First thank the student for sharing with you and appreciate that they are trusting you with this question/information. If you are unsure of how to answer their question, be honest with the student. In a developmentally appropriate way depending on the student's age, let them know that their question is important to you, so you need a little time to reflect or consult with others. Let them know that you will get back to them directly or connect them with the right person who can. Then, if a referral is needed, after the lesson/class, you could share that there are staff in the school that you would like to connect them to that can better help. You could then give the child agency in planning with them how to share. (E.g., We can go talk to the school counselor together or I could speak with them first.) Follow your district policy and consult the appropriate administrator as needed.

9. Are there professional development requirements in addition to student education requirements?

- A. Yes. Per *N.J.S.A. 18A:6-131.1*, a teaching staff member must devote at least one hour per professional development (PD) cycle being trained on sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention. Consult the [NJDOE's Professional Development page](#) for general PD information and the [Professional Development Opportunities and Staff Training Section](#) of this toolkit For PD opportunities specific to sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention.

10. What if I am not sure about my suspicion of child abuse and neglect? What if I'm wrong?

- A. If there is any suspicion of potential child abuse and neglect, you should report. The duty of mandated reporters is to simply report. The trained staff at the Division of Child Protection and Permanency and law enforcement are the experts who will properly investigate and make determinations. Additionally, all school district policies and procedures must include a statement that prohibits reprisal or retaliation against any person who, in **good faith**, reports or causes a report to be made of a potential missing-, abused-, or neglected-child situation pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.13 (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1(a)10)*.

11. Do I need to notify my administrator if I make a report?

- A. Please refer to your local district policy and [N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1\(a\)2](#).

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How Various School Roles Can Support Child Abuse & Neglect (CA&N) Prevention and Intervention Efforts²

All adults can play a role in the prevention and intervention of child sexual abuse. By supporting practices that reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors, knowing the signs of abuse, and being trained on how to properly report suspected instances, school staff can be an integral asset to keep students safe.

It is important for educators to remain cognizant of the statutory and regulatory requirements pertaining to child abuse and neglect policy, procedures, and training as well as requirements to offer curricula and instruction to students in line with the NJ Student Learning Standards. The information in the table below aims to highlight recommended best practices alongside related requirements.

School/District Position	Supportive Roles
<p>All school district employees, volunteers, or interns</p> <p>(including but not limited to administrative assistants, custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and coaches).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly receive professional development and training in child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention and the utilization of trauma-informed and healing-centered practices. • Know and be familiar with your school district policy on reporting potentially missing, abused/assaulted, or neglected children (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11.1) and your district’s requirements to report offenses in alignment with the Memorandum of Agreement. • Also know your district’s staff code of conduct policy to help with identification of signs of potential grooming in students or adult sexual misconduct of colleagues and how to respond. • Strive to make any and all interactions with students positive, supportive, and safe.
<p>Teachers & Paraprofessionals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a manner consistent with the NJ Student Learning Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teach curricula that includes age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education. ○ Educate about body boundaries, consent, healthy self-esteem and online safety. • Bolster students’ protective factors through teaching social and emotional skills and utilizing trauma-informed and healing-centered engagement practices. • Refer students with presenting concerns as appropriate (e.g., to school nurse for bruising, school safety specialist for concerns about grooming behaviors, school counselor for disclosures, etc.).
<p>School Counselors & Social Workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in delivering age-appropriate child sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention programming through classroom lessons, small groups, assemblies, and the like. • Bolster students’ protective factors through teaching social and emotional skills and utilizing trauma-informed and healing-centered engagement practices. • Support educators in reporting student disclosures. • Support the Division of Child Protection & Permanency (DCP&P) staff in their investigations. • Have follow-ups or check-ins with the impacted student(s) and provide other supports as needed. • Assist families with referrals and linkages to services as needed.

² As sexual abuse is the type of child abuse of focus within *N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.5a*, it is understood that mention of child abuse and neglect throughout this document also encompasses that of child sexual abuse/assault.

School/District Position	Supportive Roles
School Nurses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in delivering age-appropriate child sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention programming through classroom lessons, small groups, assemblies, and the like. • Be part of the coordination of strategies to assist the student/family. • Utilize trauma-informed and healing-centered engagement practices. • Assess and provide immediate healthcare needs to a student presenting with possible physical signs of abuse (lacerations, burns, unexplained bleeding or bruising, etc.).
Parent and Community Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the process for reporting and to which individual any concerns should be reported to. • Facilitate positive social connections through Parent Teacher Associations/Community events, gatherings, etc. • Advocate for supportive services for families such as parent workshops, before/aftercare services, translation services, etc. • Organize a food drive, diaper drive, etc. to assist families in the community by providing concrete support in times of need.
Building Level Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate related reporting policies and the staff code of conduct to all staff members. • Coordinate and provide staff training on prevention efforts and reporting procedures for all school staff, interns, and volunteers. • Consider having a contact person that all support staff and parent volunteers can report concerns to. • Incorporate the prevention and intervention of child abuse and neglect (CA&N) into any tiered systems of support your school may be utilizing. • Be available to answer any questions. • Promote the development of a culture that recognizes Positive and Adverse Childhood Experiences (PACEs) and the importance of utilizing trauma-informed and healing centered practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that building staff have opportunities for professional development on this topic.
District Level Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the development of a culture that recognizes PACEs and the importance of utilizing trauma-informed and healing centered practices. • Ensure that all district-level staff receive required trainings in CA&N prevention and intervention and have opportunities for professional development on trauma-informed and healing-centered practices. • Ensure that the district’s code of conduct for staff minimizes the risk associated with grooming behaviors. • Implement safe technology practices and ensure devices given to students have the proper blockers and filters needed to increase student safety. • Recommend curriculum to the board of education that includes age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education in grades preschool through 12 as well as appropriate related policy.
School Board Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support adoption and implementation of policies that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention. ○ Protect children from inappropriate staff conduct.

School/District Position	Supportive Roles
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support adoption and implementation of curriculum that includes age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education.• Oversight of hiring practices that include comprehensive background checks and reference checks consistent with applicable law.

[Return to Curricula & Sample Learning Activities](#)