

# Joint Task Force on Children’s Justice and Child Sexual Abuse – Erin’s Law



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## Contents

What is Erin’s Law? .....	2
Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Curricula for Pre-K-12.....	3
Other Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Curricula Resources .....	5
Resource Listings of Selected National Organizations .....	7
Resource Listings for Childcare Providers .....	8

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The Joint Task Force on Children’s Justice and Child Sexual Abuse (JTF) was created by statute in 1985 by the Tennessee General Assembly, which enacted legislation requiring the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services (TDCS) to develop a task force to address the state’s response to child sexual abuse and other forms of severe abuse—detection, intervention, prevention, and treatment. TDCS works closely with the JTF, a group of child welfare, juvenile justice, and mental health professionals, and representatives from state child-serving agencies throughout Tennessee who are appointed by the TDCS commissioner to help fulfill this task.

The Tennessee Department of Children’s Services (DCS) has adopted a definition of child sexual abuse that includes “any sexual acts involving a child under the age of 13 or was under the age of 13 when the abuse occurred, or a child is age 13 – 18 and meets the relationship criteria per the Department’s policy.”<sup>1</sup> Child sexual abuse includes acts that produce sexual arousal and/or gratification for the perpetrator involving the following:

- Explicit sexual acts;
- Vaginal, oral, anal or digital penetration with or without the use of an object;
- Touching, fondling, molestation or intentional contact with genitals, buttocks or breasts of child or perpetrator. This also includes when adolescents or adults instruct children to engage in such behaviors with each other;
- Indecent exposure and voyeurism; and
- Intentionally exposing a child to sexually explicit material.<sup>2</sup>

Child sexual abuse also means sexual behaviors or situations in which the motivation may or may not be sexual, but there is a clear sexual component such as:

- Taking pictures or videos of children engaging in sexual activities or in sexually explicit poses;

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<sup>1</sup> Tennessee Department of Children’s Services <https://files.dcs.tn.gov/policies/chap14/WA1.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Text for Footnote No. 2



- Making children available to others for sexual purposes;
- The sexual gratification or benefit of an adult;
- Use of a child for prostitution; and
- Caregiver has knowledge or reasonable suspicion of child sexual abuse by another person and intentionally fails to intervene or protect child.

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*Child sexual abuse is **more prevalent** than the U.S. public would like to believe. It is widespread, **children of all ages, races, and ethnicities experience child sexual abuse.***

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Here are some other key findings from the CDC about child sexual abuse:<sup>3</sup>



**One in four girls** and **one in 13 boys** experience child sexual abuse at some point in childhood.



Most children are **sexually abused by someone they know and trust.**



In 2019, there were **over 41 million videos of child sexual abuse reported compared to five years** ago when there were less than 350,000.



**Physical force is very rarely used, rather the offender uses manipulation** such as bribes, gifts and games.



**More than 80% of child sexual abuse cases never come to the attention** of Child Protective Services (CPS) or law enforcement.



**Children often do not tell because they are afraid** they will not be believed or they worry about what a disclosure would do to their family.



**There is no typical offender—they come from all walks of life.** It happens not only in impoverished areas but in affluent communities as well.

## What is Erin's Law?

Erin's Law focuses on preventing child sexual abuse and was signed into law in Tennessee in 2014. This law encourages schools across the state to provide age-appropriate instruction to students on personal body safety and how to report sexual abuse, including such abuse which may occur in the child's home for grades K-12. The bill is named after Erin Merryn, an Illinois native who was sexually abused as a child. For more information on Erin's Law, please visit <http://www.tn.gov/sos/acts/108/pub/pc0706.pdf> and [www.erinslaw.org](http://www.erinslaw.org).

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<sup>3</sup> Text for Footnote No. 3



## Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Curricula

Erin's law emphasizes the importance of educational programs that help prevent sexual abuse by using age-appropriate techniques to instruct children on how to recognize and report sexual abuse. Recognizing the need to provide school personnel with a diversity of curricula and resources, the JTF in partnership with both state departments of Education and Children's Services reviewed a variety of existing prevention curricula; and has identified a number of free or low cost resources and trainings that Tennessee public schools can utilize to train school personnel who interact with children and youth on how to prevent, recognize, and respond appropriately to child sexual abuse. While the resources in this document are primarily intended to help school districts, it is the hope of the JTF that other professionals working with children and youth could also use this document as a point of reference. The JTF does not promote any specific prevention curriculum or training, but rather identifies existing resources from state and other agencies on child sexual abuse prevention instruction for grades Pre-K-12.

### Kid Central TN

**Website:** [www.kidcentraltn.com](http://www.kidcentraltn.com)

This state government website offers a wealth of information and resources, not only for Tennessee families related to child development, education, health, and supportive services, but also provide resources for school personnel on identifying, preventing and reporting child abuse and neglect.

### Kids on the Block Program

**Audience:** Grades K-3

**Cost:** For schools whose counties have funding, the program is free of charge, but a travel fee ranging from \$150-\$175 is required. Schools whose counties do not have funding will have to pay an initial \$500 program fee with additional costs of \$150 per each additional program plus the travel fee.

**Nashville – Stars website:** <https://starsnashville.org/programs-and-services/kids-on-the-block/>

This theater format training educates young children about child sexual abuse through the use of puppetry. The program also includes different programs in which the puppets discuss their "personal stories" regarding both physical and sexual abuse. Following the presentation, the puppeteers are trained to address issues related to child abuse and answer questions from the children via the puppets, so that children can clarify any information and gain additional insight into abuse.

### Nurture the Next (Tennessee)

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** [www.nurturethenext.org](http://www.nurturethenext.org)

This organization is a leader in building awareness and providing education to the general public and to everyone involved in the effort to prevent the abuse and neglect of Tennessee's children.

### Sexual Assault Center of East Tennessee

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** <http://www.mcnabbcenter.org/sacet>



This center is located in Knoxville and serves 15 counties. The center provides services for survivors of sexual assault and their education department also has a child sexual abuse prevention curriculum that they facilitate in Knox, Anderson, and Blount county schools from K-12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Sexual Assault Center of Nashville

**Audience:** Grades Pre-K – 12

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** <https://www.sacenter.org/resources/safety-and-support-for-parents-caregivers.aspx>

This organization offers several child sexual abuse resources for children, teens, parents, caregivers, and professionals such as child care providers, school counselors and teachers, and children and youth organizations that pertains to:

- Learn the Facts about Child Sexual Abuse
- Reduce the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse
- Talking Points for Children (Body Safety Conversation Starters, Body Safety Rules, Listening to Children, Talking with Teens, Activity Books)
- Recognizing the Warning Signs of Child Sexual Abuse
- Know what to do When Receiving a Disclosure and Addressing Boundary Violations
- Tips for Talking to Children by Age (5 and under, ages 6-9, and all ages)
- Children's Coloring Activities Books that can be downloaded
- Talking with Teens About Safety and Sexual Assault
- Signs of Sexual Assault in Children
- How can I tell if my teen has experienced Sexual Assault or Harassment

### Shelby County Rape Crisis Center

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** <https://www.shelbycountyttn.gov/index.aspx?NID=737>

This center is located in Memphis and provides services to victims of all ages. In addition, they have programs that educate students on how to recognize and prevent sexual assault.

### Stewards of Children Training

**Cost:** \$10.00 per participant; however some groups might qualify for a waiver

This training program/curriculum is designed to educate and motivate adults to prevent, recognize, and respond to childhood sexual abuse. The accompanying workbook and video/DVD use the principles of choice, consciousness, and personal power. These principles are used to promote an understanding of the nature and impact of childhood sexual abuse and to provide a context for empowered action. Stewards of Children also incorporates the 5 Steps to Protecting our Children, Darkness to Light's core educational tool for sexual abuse prevention. This training program is appropriate not only for systems and organizations who work with children, but also for individuals and other groups who want to respond to the epidemic nature of child sexual abuse at all levels of society. For more information about this training, please contact Nurture the Next at [www.nurturethenext.org](http://www.nurturethenext.org) or the Tennessee Chapter of Children's Advocacy Centers at [www.tncac.org](http://www.tncac.org).



## Tennessee Chapter of Children's Advocacy Centers (TNCAC)

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** [www.tncac.org](http://www.tncac.org)

TNCAC is a statewide membership organization dedicated to helping communities, through local child advocacy centers (CACs); respond to allegations of child abuse. This resource has several advantages in that there are nearly 50 CACs serving children and families across the state with expert staff in child abuse and many of them currently provide child sexual abuse training to students and teachers annually or upon request.

## Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS)

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** <https://www.tn.gov/dcs>

The DCS is Tennessee's public child welfare agency. The Department investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect in partnership with community partners such as Child Advocacy Centers, law enforcement, schools, and other agencies. DCS offers a self-paced online training on how to report and recognize child abuse and neglect on their websites as well as training on mandated reporting. Also, you may contact your local/regional DCS office to request training on how to prevent, recognize and respond appropriately to child abuse.

In addition, please see **DCS child sexual abuse prevention website** at <https://www.tn.gov/dcs/program-areas/prevention/child-sexual-abuse-prevention.html>. The website includes the following information - DCS partners in prevention, prevention training for adults and children, understanding sexually abusive behavior, resources and materials, and a public service announcement for preventing child sexual abuse: **"What if I told You Something Happened to me"** on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urxjQiqWAuA>.

## Tennessee Voices for Victims

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** [www.tnvoicesforvictims.org](http://www.tnvoicesforvictims.org)

This victim advocate organization services includes in-service training for teachers and parents, as well as presentations for middle and high school on such topics as child sexual abuse, domestic violence, sexting, internet dangers and acquaintance rape. In addition they are trained to facilitate the child sexual abuse curriculum Darkness to Light. Over the last 20 years they have presented hundreds of programs for teachers, students, and the general public on these topics.

## Other Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Curricula Resources

### Childhelp – Speak Up Be Safe

**Audience:** Grades Pre K – 12

**Cost:**

**Website:** <https://www.childhelp.org/subs/the-curriculum/>

This evidence-based child abuse prevention education program provides fully scripted, age-appropriate lessons in grades PK-12, plus in-depth facilitator training. Lessons build safety skills and resistance strategies to help youth prevent and interrupt various types of abuse physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, bullying, and cyber abuse. Childhelp requires that every person who intends to deliver Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe lessons is a certified facilitator. Facilitator training



is available on demand via the LMS at [www.speakupbesafe.org](http://www.speakupbesafe.org) and is included when a school, school district, or community organization purchases the curriculum.

### Child Lures Prevention

**Audience:** Grades Pre K-12

**Cost:** \$489.00 – Bulk rates and customized editions are also available

**Website:** <http://childluresprevention.com/>

This comprehensive, research-based program teaches age appropriate “Child Lures” and prevention strategies for each lure. In February 2015, the curriculum received approval by the National Educators to Stop Trafficking.

### Defend Innocence

**Audience:** All ages

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** <https://defendinnocence.org/child-sexual-abuse-risk-reduction/proactive-parenting/build-support/7-ways-teachers-can-help-prevent-child-sexual-abuse/>

This program explains how teachers can act as a safety net for children who are at high risk of abuse at home and offers seven ways teachers can help prevent sexual abuse of their students. Also, this program provides information about typical sexual behavior for children ages 0-2, 3-6, 6-9, 10-12.

### Mama Bear Effect - Rock the Talk

**Audience:** All ages, including children with disabilities

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** <https://themamabeareffect.org/rock-the-talk/>

The Rock the Top program includes child sexual abuse prevention activities and information for infant to four years, grade school, tweens and teens, and for children with disabilities as well as resources – coloring pages, free downloads, and book recommendations.

### Michigan Model

**Audience:** Grades K-6

**Cost:** Print/Digital varies from \$80.00 to \$262.00 and Bundle varies from \$145.00 to \$275.00

**Website (safety section):** <https://www.michiganmodelforhealth.org/news-releases/blog/personal-safety-child-sexual-abuse-grk-6-mmh-curriculum-updates>

The personal safety lessons in the *Michigan Model for Health*™ curriculum at grades K-6 have gone through a major update and revision in 2020. The updated MMH curriculum is available in both print\* and digital formats and the scope of the curriculum content changes include:

- New streamed videos, children's books and posters on child sexual abuse prevention
- New and updated Family Resource Sheets (FRS) for parents and guardians on personal safety and child sexual abuse prevention
- Updated website resources for teachers and parents

To order the curriculum, out-of-state teachers and educators and Health Coordinators/Consultants, should go to the [Michigan Model for Health Clearinghouse website](https://www.michiganmodelforhealth.org) or contact MMHC for assistance at [support@michiganmodelforhealth.org](mailto:support@michiganmodelforhealth.org) and [\(888\) 517-6195](tel:8885176195).



## Play it Safe!®

**Audience:** Grades Pre K – 12

**Cost:** Online Pre-2<sup>nd</sup> is \$229.00 per grade and online and hardcopy is \$329.00 per grade; online for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is \$179.00 per grade and online and hardcopy is \$229.00 per grade. For the cost of the videos for grades Pre K -12, please contact Diane Mayfield at

[dmayfield@womenscentertc.org](mailto:dmayfield@womenscentertc.org)

**Website:** <https://www.playitsafe.org/>

This child abuse awareness and prevention program uses age-appropriate materials to educate children Pre-K through high school in ways they can best learn and respond. Scripts and videos are developed through an evidence-based approach to teach children and teens how to reduce their risk of sexual and physical abuse by recognizing potentially abusive behavior, responding appropriately to threatening situations, and reporting abuse to a trusted adult. Some of the program topics include safe, unsafe, and confusing touch for elementary-aged children and sexting, healthy relationships and dating violence for middle and high school-aged children.

## Second Step

**Audience:** Grades K-5

**Cost:** \$1,129.00

**Website:** <https://www.secondstep.org/child-protection>

This training was created by Committee for Children, an organization active in the field of child sexual abuse prevention for nearly 40 years. The Second Step Child Protection Unit takes a holistic approach to a school community's efforts to protect students. Online training modules guide administrators through child protection policies and procedures, train all staff to recognize and respond to indicators of abuse and neglect, and teach educators to deliver the classroom lessons to students in Early Learning through Grade 5. Easy-to-follow, scripted lessons teach children safety skills using age-appropriate instruction, giving kids the know-how and avenues to disclose abuse. Family materials explain what children are learning, alleviate anxiety, and provide guidance for talking to kids about safe and unsafe touch.

## Zero Abuse Project

**Audiences:** Grades K-6

**Cost:** Free tips, tools and resources to help adults help the kids in their life to be able to walk around smart and not scared:

**Website:** <https://www.zeroabuseproject.org/victim-assistance/jwrc/keep-kids-safe/personal-safety/>

This child sexual abuse prevention curriculum covers the following topics:

- What if Games
- How to Talk to Strangers
- Talk about Touches
- Age Appropriate Conversations
- Empower Me
- Talking to Children about Scary News

## Resource Listings of Selected National Organizations

### Darkness to Light

**Website:** [www.d2l.org](http://www.d2l.org)



This program raises awareness of the prevalence and consequences of child sexual abuse by educating adults about the steps they can take to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to the reality of child sexual abuse. Additionally, Darkness to Light Prevent 360 is ideal for daycares and schools, child advocacy centers, youth sports and other youth-serving organizations, and faith-based groups. The complementary skills taught through Prevent 360 give children and adults a common language and expectation that can help keep children safe. In addition, some of Tennessee CACs offer this training. For more information, please contact Michelle Reiter at [michelle.l.reiter@tn.gov](mailto:michelle.l.reiter@tn.gov).

### Prevent Child Abuse America

**Website:** [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)

This national organization was founded in 1972 in Chicago, and works to promote the healthy development of children and prevent child abuse before it can occur in order to help children to grow up and contribute in their communities. In addition, you can find published information and resources on child sexual abuse on the website.

### Stop It Now!

**Website:** [www.stopitnow.org](http://www.stopitnow.org)

This national nonprofit organization employs a public health approach to preventing the perpetration of child sexual abuse. Through its public education, public policy, and research programs, this organization reaches families where a parent, child, or other relative may be at risk to abuse a child; abusers themselves; and those at risk to abuse; helping them to stop or prevent the sexual abuse and seek help.

## Resource Listings for Childcare Providers

### Defend Innocence

**Audience:** All ages

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** <https://defendinnocence.org/child-sexual-abuse-risk-reduction/proactive-parenting/build-support/7-ways-teachers-can-help-prevent-child-sexual-abuse/>

This program explains how teachers can act as a safety net for children who are at high risk of abuse at home and offers seven ways teachers can help prevent sexual abuse of their students. Also, this program provides information about typical sexual behavior for children ages 0-2, 3-6, 6-9, 10-12.

### Extension Alliance for Better Child Care

**Website:** <https://childcare.extension.org/child-care-and-child-abuse-and-neglect/>

These NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) articles are REALLY OLD however still applicable. NAEYC provides resources for educators that work with children ages 6 weeks-8 years.





### Mama Bear Effect - Rock the Talk

**Audience:** All ages, including children with disabilities

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** <https://themamabeareffect.org/rock-the-talk/>

The Rock the Top program includes child sexual abuse prevention activities and information for infant to four years, grade school, tweens and teens, and for children with disabilities as well as resources – coloring pages, free downloads, and book recommendations.

### National Association Education of Young Children (NAEYC) - Where We Stand on Child Abuse Prevention and Prevention of Child Abuse in Early Childhood Programs and the Responsibilities of Early Childhood Professionals to Prevent Child Abuse

**Websites:** <https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/ChildAbuseStand.pdf> and <https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/PSCHAB98.PDF>

NAEYC outlines the organization's position statements for the "Prevention of Child Abuse in Early Childhood Programs and the Responsibilities of Early Childhood Professionals to Prevent Child Abuse" and "Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment" and other for early childhood programs and professionals

### Nurture the Next (Tennessee)

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** [www.nurturethenext.org](http://www.nurturethenext.org)

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### Sexual Assault Center of Nashville

**Audience:** Grades Pre-K – 12

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** <https://www.sacenter.org/resources/safety-and-support-for-parents-caregivers.aspx>

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- Recognizing the Warning Signs of Child Sexual Abuse
- Know what to do When Receiving a Disclosure and Addressing Boundary Violations
- Tips for Talking to Children by Age (5 and under)
- Children's Coloring Activities Books that can be downloaded



## Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS)

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** <https://www.tn.gov/dcs>

The DCS is Tennessee's public child welfare agency. The Department investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect in partnership with community partners such as Child Advocacy Centers, law enforcement, schools, and other agencies. DCS offers a self-paced online training on how to report and recognize child abuse and neglect on their websites as well as training on mandated reporting. Also, you may contact your local/regional DCS office to request training on how to prevent, recognize and respond appropriately to child abuse.

## Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) – Keeping Kids Safe

**Audience:** Ages 3 - 5

**Cost:** Free

**Website:** [https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/keeping\\_kids\\_safe\\_content\\_updated\\_wdraft\\_cover.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/keeping_kids_safe_content_updated_wdraft_cover.pdf)

"Keeping Kids Safe" is the sample personal safety curriculum offered by DHS. This curriculum takes a holistic approach to the safety of children. The curriculum is composed of the following units: Self Esteem, Family & Friends, Feelings, Problem Solving, Personal Safety (general) and Personal Safety (4-5 year olds), and Safety Around Me. All sessions begin with group time, and are followed by supplemental activities that give children additional practice in understanding the concepts. The curriculum uses hand puppets to serve as a group motivator and to introduce the stories.