

SB 401: GA MANDATE AND BEST PRACTICE

GCCA poised to support implementation with Dept. of Ed, schools , educators and parents.

2018

GEORGIA BECOMES THE 35TH STATE TO REQUIRE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

On May 8th, Gov. Nathan Deal signed SB 401 into law, which includes an amendment sponsored by Rep. Wes Cantrell (R – District 22) based on model legislation commonly referred to as “Erin’s Law,” making Georgia the 35th state to require all public schools to implement age appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education for students in grades K-9.

“We are thrilled that Rep. Cantrell stepped forward to bring this legislation to Georgia and our child sexual abuse prevention team will certainly do all we can to support its implementation,” says Sheila Ryan, CEO of the Georgia Center for Child Advocacy (GCCA). “We are already working to train adults in school systems and youth-serving organizations across the state on how to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse and assault. Most adults don’t realize how prevalent an issue this is: that 1 in 10 children will be abused or assaulted before age 18.”

“Schools are in a unique position to help young people shape positive healthy behaviors, reducing their vulnerability to being sexually abused or assaulted,” says Tiffany Sawyer, Director of Prevention Services with the GCCA who has led their statewide initiative to train 5% of Georgia’s adult population in child abuse prevention. Since 2006 more than 130,000 adults have been trained to date.

Georgians were ready to embrace the law at this time - - not just because of the #metoo movement and the U.S. Gymnastics case in the news -- but because we have this guide vetting programs and outlining developmentally appropriate ways to talk to children about this topic which was created by local experts on the CJCC Human Trafficking Task Force

- Polly McKinney, Voices for Georgia's Children



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Erin’s Law:

- Passed in 35 states.
- Requires that all public schools implement a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program.
- Requires training for parents, teachers.
- Called Jenna’s law in TX and IL

About GCCA

The mission of the GCCA is to champion the needs of sexually and severely physically abused children through prevention, intervention, therapy and collaboration. The Center has served more than 16,000 children in Fulton and DeKalb counties. These services are provided at no cost to the families. GCCA's prevention team leads the statewide child sexual abuse prevention initiative. For more information, visit www.georgiacenterforchildadvocacy.org.

Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Guide

is designed to be widely used and distributed and is available for free by downloading a PDF file at: <http://georgiacenterforchildadvocacy.org/learn-more/resources/child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-prevention-resource-guide.html>

For more information about the CJCC Human Trafficking Task Force: visit <https://cjcc.georgia.gov/georgia-statewide-human-trafficking-task-force>

TARG Guides Implementation

Georgia's Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force, led by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, released a comprehensive guide last August: **Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Guide**, or TARG for short, provides background on best practice, principles of prevention, identifying resources for the classroom, developing a prevention plan, age appropriate teaching suggestions, analysis of specific programs, and guidelines for implementation and evaluation. Additional appendices cover Georgia specific health standards, laws and codes regarding mandatory reporting of abuse, fact sheets and identify additional resources.

"Primary prevention education is essential in the fight against sexual abuse, assault and trafficking and it requires a collaborative effort between the schools and allied community partners such as child advocacy centers, rape crisis programs, local child abuse prevention councils and other victim services agencies," says Sawyer. "We are ready and able to support the Department of Education and individual school systems to assist with implementation using evidence-informed programs and following best practice."

"This is not sex education, so parents and school administrators don't need to be apprehensive," says Carol Neal Rossi, Regional Prevention Coordinator with GCCA and former director of Prevent Child Abuse GA. "These programs cover personal safety and anti-victimization in ways that make sense to children: teaching them that their bodies are their own, establishing healthy boundaries and how to identify and talk with an adult about their safety. They also include information on physical, emotional abuse and neglect, anti-bullying, internet safety and then dating violence in the middle school years."

The new law requires those that teach these courses in our schools receive proper instruction so they can handle disclosures as they arise, and become comfortable talking with children about these topics, in a way that makes sense to children.

Revision to Code Section 20-2-143, relating to sex education and AIDS prevention instruction requires:

- Annual age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education in kindergarten through grades 9;
- To provide that professional learning may include participating in or presenting at in-service training on sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention (Code Section 20-2-200);
- In-service training programs on sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention for professional personnel that will be providing instruction in annual age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education in K through grade 9 (Code Section 20-2-201).

For more information or assistance with program implementation, contact:

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