

ABOUT ERIN'S LAW

Erin's Law is named after childhood sexual assault survivor, author, speaker and activist Erin Merryn, who is the founder and President of Erin's Law, which is registered with the State of Illinois and the IRS as a 501 (c)(4) non-profit social welfare organization.

After Erin introduced the legislation in her home state of Illinois, the bill was named "Erin's Law" after her by legislators and it has caught on nationwide.

"**Erin's Law**" requires that all public schools in each state implement a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program which teaches:

1. Students in grades PreK – 12th grade, age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and tell a trusted adult
2. School personnel all about child sexual abuse
3. Parents & guardians the warning signs of child sexual abuse, plus needed assistance, referral or resource information to support sexually abused children and their families

KEY COMPONENTS OF ERIN'S LAW

The Task Force recommends that, to effectively address the issue of child sexual abuse in Illinois, **all public schools should implement a child sexual abuse prevention program with students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 5**. Members of this Task Force reviewed a variety of existing prevention curricula. However, recognizing the limited research available on the effects of specific curricula and the diversity of needs, resources and student populations in Illinois schools, the Task Force has chosen not to promote any specific prevention curriculum. Rather, **we recommend the following core components from which each school or district can craft an effective and comprehensive child sexual abuse prevention program**:

*Programs should include techniques to **teach children to recognize child sexual abuse**, equip them with skills to **reduce their vulnerability** and **encourage them to report the abuse**.

*Programs should include **more than one session, ideally, at least four** (Davis & Gidyez,

2000). Recognizing the importance and effectiveness of an environmental design, programs may include such building interventions as visual aids displayed throughout the school, **reinforcing the concepts learned within the prevention program** (Taylor, Stein, Woods, Mumford & Mennemeier, 2011).

*Programs should be **conducted at least annually, building on skills learned the previous year**, and should be **developmentally appropriate** for each grade level.

*Programs should involve children as **active learning** participants and should to be the most effective, **include discussion, modeling and role playing** (Davis & Gidyez, 2000).

*Programs should have the **capacity to be delivered by a wide range of personnel** (Barron & Topping, 2010). Acknowledging the varying resources and staffing patterns of each school, prevention programs should have the capacity to be delivered by a wide range of professionals, **including teachers, school counselors, outside agency prevention educators, etc.** Professionals delivering these prevention programs should **have a thorough knowledge of child sexual abuse, including how to respond appropriately to disclosures.**

*Programs should include an **evaluation component with measurable outcomes.**

*Programs should be **culturally sensitive and adaptable for use within varying school contexts** (age, race, special needs, etc.).

*Although we recognize that thorough research is limited on the efficacy of specific child sexual abuse prevention programs, we recommend that schools seek to implement programs that include an **evidence-based** curriculum.

*Programs must include a **professional training component for administrators, teachers and other school personnel on talking to students about child sexual abuse prevention, effects of child sexual abuse on children, handling disclosures, and mandated reporting.**

*Recognizing that parents play a key role in protecting children from abuse, programs must include a component to **encourage parental involvement** within the child sexual abuse prevention program.