

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Education

Guidance for Instructors

Introduction

Child sexual abuse (CSA) has a significant impact on the well-being of many of Maine’s children and adults. Because of this, educators have an important role in providing accurate information to children and their families, and effective prevention education can help stop abuse before it begins.

There is a lot we don’t know about how to prevent childhood sexual abuse, and there are very few specific programs which have been proven to prevent violence. The good news is that in recent years, much has been learned about what strategies are effective for both children and adults. No single prevention curriculum or educational message can keep a child safe – ending child sexual abuse is the responsibility of our whole community. The best prevention strategies develop good messages, and then reinforce those messages in many activities, conversations, and approaches across the community (with adults and children both). This is called ‘primary prevention’ or ‘the public health model of prevention,’ and it’s how the best available research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention describes effective prevention.

The information included in this document is meant to guide educators and youth-serving professionals in developing effective messages for children about sexual abuse prevention. It outlines the skills and knowledge that children should have at different points in their development, and a range of books, lessons and activities to help reinforce those messages. The skills aim to strengthen factors that we know change the likelihood of victimization or perpetration. These ‘protective factors’ include the presence of skills to experience healthy sexuality and engage in healthy relationships; families and adults who provide a caring, open, and encouraging environment that actively promotes positive development; and, schools that teach healthy beliefs and skill development.

Getting Started

While there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to teaching about child sexual abuse prevention, the following pages are meant to serve as a road map for teaching child sexual abuse prevention education in classrooms grades pre-K-5. Suggestions are split into two age spans: pre-K-2 and 3-5. The pre-K-2 content lays the groundwork, which is built upon in grades 3-5. Desired outcomes for each grade span are listed, followed by brief descriptions of key concepts, and then several lessons, activities, and/or books that could be used to help relay content to students and develop essential skills. You will notice that there are several lessons that are cross listed among content area because they are appropriate for multiple learning results.

There are several factors to consider before beginning to ensure that prevention education is accurate and effective.

- Do the individuals charged with leading these education efforts have the necessary skills, boundaries, and supports to be effective educators on this topic?

- Are there additional professionals working on child sexual abuse prevention who can act as partners?
- What community resources are available to train and support staff in providing effective child sexual abuse prevention?
- Who else needs to be aware of child sexual abuse prevention messages, such as personnel, families and community members?
- Where is the education taking place, and how can sexual abuse prevention messages be reinforced in various settings and venues?
- Is our school community aware of and prepared to be responsive to our obligations to the state?

Remember, this document is not a complete curriculum but instead is a list of suggestions. The expectation is for CSA prevention lessons to take place at least three times each year (Pre-K through 5) and that each year scaffolds into the next. Our recommendation would be to incorporate lessons from this document as appropriate with lessons from the local sexual assault response center and lessons you are already doing at your school or agency.

According to the Maine Department of Education Model Policy, the prevention education curriculum implemented in schools should include:

- Age appropriate education regarding physical and personal boundaries, including biologically accurate terminology;
- Helps children identify unsafe or uncomfortable situations including a range of feelings, touches, or violations of physical boundaries;
- Helps children identify safe adults with whom they could discuss unsafe or uncomfortable situations, and;
- Helps children identify and develop skills to support a friend who may be experiencing unsafe or uncomfortable situations.

The table below is meant to support you as you plan your curriculum and classroom resources. In order for prevention education to be effective, it must take into account the following:

DO:	AVOID:
<p>Know your audience. Messages and teaching tools will be different for children of different ages and development levels. But regardless of age, prevention messages should always be clear, concrete, and use appropriate terminology.</p>	<p>Euphemisms or scare tactics. It is important to neither shy away from difficult topics, nor overemphasize potential dangers. If you feel uncomfortable talking about child sexual abuse prevention, reach out to trained educators in your community.</p>
<p>Focus on teaching children that they are in control of their bodies. A cornerstone of child sexual abuse prevention is helping children understand that they have the right to set boundaries about who touches them and how, and that their choices and privacy should be respected. Make it clear that if someone’s behavior towards them makes them uncomfortable, they should tell a trusted adult.</p>	<p>Ambiguous concepts like “Good touch, bad touch.” Abusive situations may be confusing for children; inappropriate kinds of touch may feel (physically) good, while being emotionally upsetting. Instead, be clear that it’s not ok for people to touch private parts of their bodies – and teach them the specific terms for those body parts.</p>

<p>Plan for multiple lessons or conversations. For prevention education to be effective, children need to be exposed to enough information, over time, to have an effect on their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.</p>	<p>Stand-alone, single-session activities. For information to “stick,” children need the opportunity to repeatedly practice and apply the concepts they’re learning. It is ok to have a special presenter or activity, but make sure you reinforce and integrate the information into ongoing discussions and lessons.</p>
<p>Use Varied Teaching Methods. Children learn best when they’re engaged. Use interactive methods like discussion, role-playing, and teach-backs to make sure students fully understand the concepts they’re learning.</p>	<p>Lecturing. Providing accurate information is important, but all children learn differently. Talking <i>at</i> students may make it difficult for them to understand and engage with the lesson – try talking <i>with</i> them instead. Discussions, games, and creative projects let children apply the information you’ve taught them.</p>
<p>Train and prepare all staff. Any staff person who will be providing information to children about sexual abuse needs to be well-trained on effective prevention methods, and how to teach them. In addition, all staff members need basic instruction on how to support child abuse prevention, and how to recognize and respond to children who may disclose abuse.</p>	<p>Putting staff in uncomfortable situations. Child sexual abuse can be a difficult topic for adults, for many reasons. A staff person who lacks confidence may unintentionally communicate that discomfort to the children in their care. If a staff member doesn’t feel able to provide this education, that’s ok – invite in another educator from your program or the larger community.</p>
<p>Engage and involve families and caretakers. Before providing any child abuse prevention programming, inform families about what will be taught, and why it is important. Provide specific examples of how families can support and reinforce prevention messages with their children.</p>	<p>Assuming that “home” is a safe place for all children. We know that most children are abused by someone they know – such as family members, relatives, or friends. Make sure that your program is prepared for children who may disclose experiences of abuse, and that all staff know the procedures for reporting abuse.</p>
<p>Take a comprehensive, community-wide approach. In addition to providing effective education about prevention, make sure there are clear, comprehensive policies and systems to address child sexual abuse, and support any child who experiences sexual violence. Clearly communicate that sexual abuse prevention is an essential part of your overall commitment to keeping all children safe, happy, and ready to learn.</p>	<p>Scattered or uncoordinated activities. To be most effective, prevention education should happen at every age level, and build on skills that children have already learned. This means investing time and effort into a comprehensive approach that includes evidence-based activities, clear policies and systems, and engagement with the broader community about the need to prevent child sexual abuse. Effective prevention can be labor-intensive – but it’s essential to promoting the well-being of children in your care.</p>

[Additional Resources](#)

Through collaboration with our graphic designer, Masey Kaplan, the Children’s Safety Partnership (CSP) is also pleased to offer a coloring and workbook for students to do independently as well as with grown-

ups in their lives. This workbook covers everything from boundaries and feelings, to safe adults and assertiveness. Individual pages can easily be turned into a supplemental activity for a lesson or as a jumping off point for these conversations. A [sample booklet and individual pages](#) are available for download on www.childrensafetypartnership.org and full workbooks are available for free for schools and community sites in Maine through your local sexual assault support center. Other resources on the website include training tools, handouts about responding to sexual behaviors, and supplemental materials relating to Maine's child sexual abuse prevention law.

The website, www.childrensafetypartnership.org is available as a one-stop shop for anything and everything relating to CSP. Webpages are tailored to meet the needs of teachers, administrators, families, and community members. Training and curriculum resources are also available through the site upon completion of a Personnel and Awareness and/or Curriculum training.

Additional CSP materials, beyond workbooks and crayons, will be made available on the website soon. These materials are free to Maine schools, teachers, and students and available at a small cost for those out of state. Keep checking the website for a full reveal of print materials and resources.

Your local sexual assault response center is a great resource if you have questions about curriculum or presenting the one-hour staff training. We recommend connecting with your local center to learn more about how the lessons they present can fit in with what we have listed below and curricula that you may already be using.

If you have other questions that go beyond what is on the website or your local center, please reach out to Katie Church, Children's Safety Partnership Coordinator at church@mecasa.org

Thank you for your efforts to educate and support children, and your commitment to helping them lead lives free of abuse.

***To adapt to current circumstances, a column has been added to the resource list below noting whether a lesson/activity/book is suitable for online learning. If you have questions about utilizing the materials or making adaptations, please reach out to Katie or your local sexual assault support center for help.**

Sample Resources Aligning with CSP Law Regarding Prevention Education

Law Component #1: Age appropriate education regarding physical and personal boundaries, including biologically accurate terminology					
Grade	Title	Type	HES/MLR	Notes	Distance Learning Friendly?
Pre-K through 2*	Paper Plate Emotion Masks	Activity	A2	This activity turns a challenging topic like emotions into play. The goal of this activity isn't to have award winning artwork, instead it's to play with and open up a dialogue about feelings with your students. This activity can also work with law component #4.	X
Kindergarten	How Big is Your Hula Hoop?	Lesson	A1	In this lesson, students will learn what personal boundaries are and how they are different for everyone. They will also explore respectful ways of conveying their boundaries to others.	
Kindergarten	My Body	Lesson	A6	Teaches children appropriate names of body parts and supports them to recognize the names of body parts when following physical instructions (bend your knee, hands on your hips, etc.).	
K-1	Draw Your Feelings Page	Lesson	A2	This template gives room for students to draw pictures that reflect the emotion written in each box.	X
K-2	Who Has What? All About Girl's Bodies and Boy's Bodies by Robie Harris	Book	A6	Humorous illustrations, conversations between the siblings, and a clear text all reassure young kids that their bodies are perfectly normal, healthy, and wonderful. While this book presents the information in the context of boys and girls bodies and can be a good jumping off point, it is important to use the phrase "some	*If you have access to the book, this could be recorded and shared*

				bodies” wherever gendered to promote inclusivity.	
K-2	What are Private Parts coloring page/Info Sheet	Activity	A6	A coloring page specifically addressing the concept of private parts. More coloring pages are available here .	*could be done remotely, but might be challenging considering content*
Grades 1-4	I Know What to Do When I Am... Activity Page	Activity	E1	Activity pages that encourage students to reflect on appropriate coping strategies when they feel each emotion. This lesson also fulfills law component #4.	X
Grade 2	Understanding Our Bodies	Lesson	A6	This lesson teaches children the appropriate names of genitals and why it is important to know them by name. Definitely read the note on language at the beginning. To promote inclusivity, we recommend using “some bodies have... and some bodies have...” to avoid gendering if possible.	
Grade 3*	Feeling SAFE!	Lesson	A6, B2, C2	This lesson teaches students about boundaries – what they are and how to respond if their boundary is crossed. It also helps students identify trusted adults to talk to. This lesson also fulfills Law Component #3.	
Grade 5*	Assertiveness Skills	Lesson	C2	This lesson plan includes games that will help kids learn the difference between verbal and nonverbal language. It will also teach them how to identify and send clear messages. This lesson also includes an activity that allows children to practice and learn ways to effectively communicate and express themselves. This lesson also fulfills Law Component #4.	

Law Component #2: Helps children identify unsafe or uncomfortable situations including a range of feelings, touches, or violations of physical boundaries					
Grade	Title	Type	HES/MLR	Notes	
Pre-K	Safe and Unsafe Touches	Lesson	A6	Introduces the concept of safe and unsafe touches and the skills needed to say “no”.	
Pre-K through 2	Your Body Belongs to You by Cornelia Maude Spelman	Book	A1	In simple, reassuring language, the author explains that a child's body is his or her own; that it is all right for kids to decline a friendly hug or kiss, even from someone they love; and that you can still be friends even if you don't want a hug now.	*If you have access to this book, this could be recorded and shared*
Pre-K to 2	I Said No! by Zach and Kimberly King	Book	E1	This book uses kid-friendly language and illustrations to help trusted adults provide guidance to students on setting and maintaining healthy boundaries. Using a simple, direct, decidedly non-icky approach that doesn't dumb down the issues involved, this book provides an easy-to-use system to help kids rehearse and remember appropriate responses to help keep them safe.	*If you have access to this book, this could be recorded and shared*
Kindergarten	My Space, Your Space	Lesson	A1	This lesson will help students identify okay and uncomfortable touches, the right to determine when and how they want to be touched, and how to respond if the touching is unwanted/uncomfortable.	
Kindergarten	The Importance of Safety Rules	Lesson	C2	This lesson introduces the concept of safety rules and what we can all do to keep our bodies safe.	
K-2	Safe and Unsafe Touches Activity	Resource	A6	Teaches children safety rules about safe and unsafe touches.	

K-2	Tell A Trusted Adult	Lesson	B1	Students will learn to tell a trusted adult if anything happens to them. They will also learn who trusted adults are. Includes two activities.	
K-2	Create a Criteria Chart for Touches	Activity	C2	This activity helps students create a criteria chart for safe, confusing, and unsafe touches.	X
K-2	Do You Have A Secret by Jennifer Moore-Mallinos	Book	C2	Every child has secrets, and many secrets are fun to keep, for instance, a surprise birthday gift for Mom, or a secret handshake with a young friend. But sometimes, children have secrets that make them feel bad, and these secrets are best shared with their parents, or with some trusted older person. This book helps students identify the difference between safe and unsafe secrets.	*If you have access to this book, this could be recorded and shared*
K-3	Safe and Unsafe Secrets	Activity	C2	An activity exploring the difference between safe and unsafe secrets. Would be a good starting point for discussing why they are safe and unsafe.	X
K-5	Safe and Unsafe Touching Activity	Resource	C2	This guide provides three different topics to use to introduce the concept of safe and unsafe touches.	
Grade 1*	Safety Rules and Trusted Triangle	Lesson	B1, E1	This lesson will introduce important safety rules and help students establish three trusted adults in their lives. More information here . This lesson also fulfills Law Component #3	
Grade 1*	Keep and Speak Secrets	Lesson	C2	A series of scenarios that illustrate safe and unsafe secrets that should prompt discussion. This lesson also fulfills Law Component #4	
Grade 2	Safe and Unsafe Touches	Lesson	A6, E1	Expands on the concept of safe and unsafe touches and how to say “no” to touches that are unsafe or hurtful.	
Grade 2*	Seeking Help	Lesson	B1, E1	By the end of this lesson, students will understand that being touched or forced to touch someone else is never their fault. It also	

				supports students to identify safe adults to talk to. This lesson also fulfills Law Component #3.	
Grade 2*	Review of Safety Tools	Lesson	B1	Review of safety tools established in previous Safer, Smarter Kids lessons such as the trusted triangle.	
Grade 2*	Review of Safety Tools	Lesson	C2, F1	In this lesson, students will review previously learned safety rules. They will also learn that when something does not feel safe, they will use “Think, Feel, Act” (TFA). TFA teaches children to Think about a situation, assess what they Feel, and Act by using one of their tools – especially when telling someone in their Trusted Triangle if something unsafe has happened or if something is making them feel unsafe or icky. This lesson also fulfills law component #3.	
Grade 3*	No, Go, Tell Coloring Sheet	Activity	C2	This worksheet is a colorful way to reinforce the “no, go, tell” approach when a student feels uncomfortable about something that is happening. This lesson also fulfills law component #3.	X
Grades 3-5	Criteria for Different Types of Touches	Activity	A6	This activity helps students create a criteria chart for safe, confusing, and unsafe touches.	X
Grade 4	Your Body, Your Rights	Lesson	A6, C2	Please be mindful with this lesson. While the content overall is very much appropriate, we discourage the use of terms like “bad touch”. Also, if you plan to use this content, please tweak the helpline information to reflect Maine’s Statewide Resource: 1-800-871-7741.	
Grade 5	Unsafe/Unwanted Touches	Lesson	C2	This lesson teaches students the difference between safe and unsafe touches and helps students develop skills to say no to touch they don’t want, whether it is safe or unsafe.	

Law Component #3: Helps children identify safe adults with whom they could discuss unsafe or uncomfortable situations					
Grade	Title	Type	HES/MLR	Notes	
K-2	Tell a Trusted Adult	Lesson	C2	Students will learn to tell a trusted adult if anything happens to them. They will also learn who trusted adults are. Includes two activities.	
Grade 1	Safety Rules and Trusted Triangle	Lesson	C2	This lesson will introduce important safety rules and help students establish three trusted adults in their lives. More information here .	
Grade 4*	Figuring Out Friendships	Lesson	B2	Students will focus on healthy and unhealthy characteristics of friendships in this lesson. They will learn about positive and negative influences in these types of relationships and identifying a trusted adult they can talk to if their friendships. This lesson also fulfills Law Component #4.	
Grade 5	Tell a Trusted Adult	Lesson	B2	This lesson encourages students to identify trusted adults they can talk to if they need help through a series of activities and a video.	
Law Component #4: Helps children identify and develop skills to support a friend who may be experiencing unsafe or uncomfortable situations.					
Grade	Title	Type	HES/MLR	Notes	
Pre-K to 2	Empathy	Lesson	C3	These activities will help your students understand how to describe their own feelings and how to be supportive of each other.	
Pre-K to 3*	Feelings/Emotions Match Game	Activity	C3	Access to printable feelings and emotions card that can be used for a range of activities appropriate for Pre-K through Grade 3. This activity can also work for law component #1.	X
Pre-K to 3*	Feelings Worksheet	Activity	C3	This template gives room for students to draw pictures that reflect the emotion written in each	X

				box. This activity can also work for law component #1.	
Pre-K to 3*	I Know What to Do When I Am... Activity Page	Activity	C3	Activity pages that encourage students to reflect on appropriate coping strategies when they feel each emotion. This activity can also work for law component #1.	X
Grade 3	Good Citizenship	Lesson	A6	This lesson introduces the concept of safety in the community and what it means to be “good citizens”.	
Grades 3-4	Introduce the Idea of Assertive Superpowers	Activity	E1	This blog post provides an overview on how to frame assertive skills as superpowers when working with kids.	X
Grades 3-5	Empathy	Lesson/Activity	E1	These activities will help students explore how to reach out to others, in words and in actions.	X – worksheets and discussion questions are distance learning friendly
Grades 4-5	Friendship Stop Light Game	Activity	E1	This activity will help students identify good, bad, and warning signs in a friendship.	X – could be adapted for at home learning
Grades 4-6	Sexual Harassment Awareness	Lesson	A6	Frames sexual harassment as gender harassment and talks about what it is and how it makes people feel.	
Grade 5	Being Clear with Your Friends	Lesson	A6	This lesson outlines assertive communication and appropriate refusal skills when met with peer pressure and other situations in which the student wants to say “no”.	
Grade 5	Healthy Relationships	Lesson	A6	This lesson teaches students that healthy relationships are based on respect, which applies to both words and actions.	

Grade 5	<u>Being Clear with your Friends</u>	Lesson	E1	This lesson outlines assertive communication and appropriate refusal skills when met with peer pressure.	
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