



CAP ACTION EBLAST



Do Something! Do One Thing! One Thing Counts!

The Child Abuse Prevention Action Committee is a collaborative group involved in the planning and promotion of child abuse prevention efforts throughout Oklahoma.

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Oklahoma Child Sexual Abuse Prevention and Erin’s Law

Parents raise children to stay safe through childhood... to not play near the street; to not talk to strangers and to not stray too far from home. We protect and care for children until they can manage themselves, but only 29% of parents ever talk to their children about sexual abuse and rarely ever with children less than nine years of age.¹ With that in mind, how could we possibly expect young children to know how to respond to sexual assault or effectively avoid becoming a victim? [Every six minutes a child is sexually assaulted in the US.](#) We clearly need to do more.



Statistics regarding child sexual abuse (CSA) reveal the reality that CSA continues to traumatize children and that many of these crimes are never reported because victims don't know how to speak up about the abuse perpetrated against them. Adult retrospective studies indicate that 25% women and 16% men were sexually abused before the age of 18.² Only about 38% of child victims of sexual abuse disclose that they have been sexually abused.³ Child sexual abuse perpetrators are typically people the child knows, such as family, friends, and neighbors. It has been reported that approximately 90% of children who are sexually abused know their abuser.⁴ There are severe short and long term consequences of CSA, victims suffer higher rates of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, substance abuse disorders, suicide tendencies and chronic illness (i.e. heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure and diabetes) and have an increased risk of neurobiological changes.^{5,6} Suffice it to say, CSA is life altering.

The good news is, young children can be taught how to protect themselves and report abuse.^{7,8} An effective CSA prevention education program uses age appropriate games and materials to teach children to recognize dangerous situations; personal boundary violations and empowers children with the vocabulary to refuse approaches, summons help and courage to speak up if somebody breaks boundary rules. This is the type of CSA prevention curriculum that Erin’s Law would require be taught to children in OK elementary public schools.

While empowering children and giving them a voice is part of the equation, ultimately it is important to remember that adults are responsible for the safety of children. An adult CSA prevention education program typically includes strategies to prevent sexual abuse, information on recognizing sexual abuse and instruction on how to address these issues when identified in the children with whom they are associated.

Erin’s Law was introduced by victim advocate Erin Merryn in 2010 and is currently being introduced in Oklahoma as House Bill 1684. This bill requires all public elementary schools establish a sexual abuse prevention program, sets minimum instructional requirements and gives school boards discretion of content provided they adhere to broad guidelines. Every child must learn the drill, not only about tornados and fire but also about protecting themselves from sexual predators.

CSA is a community problem, cutting across all societal economic boundaries. We can help eradicate this problem by educating children, parents and ourselves on how to protect against and prevent CSA. Imagine if you will... a world full of empowered children, growing into healthy, happy adults.

**References available on the back*

Do just one thing! **YOUR ONE THING COUNTS!** *Help stop the cycle of CSA...*

- ✓ Promote CSA prevention education with both child and adult presentations at schools, childcares, churches, or civic groups in your community. **Bethesda, Inc. in Norman is one good resource, 405.364.0333.**
- ✓ Download and circulate the "Stop, Go and Tell" poster at the below link. Hang it in your school, childcare facility or church. <http://bethesdaok.org/useruploads/files/poster-blue.pdf>
- ✓ Assist youth organizations in your community to create safe environments by establishing child sexual abuse prevention guidelines. Resource information: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/preventingchildabuse.html
- ✓ Know how to report and immediately respond to a child who discloses they have been abused see: www.cacok.com/reportabuse.html

Extra Resources

www.stopitnow.org www.d2l.org <http://erinslaw.org> www.childfirst.com
www.bethesdaok.org www.familybuildersok.org www.parentchildcenter.org

Agency Spotlight

The Saville Center for Child Advocacy...

is a child advocacy center that provides a warm and caring home environment for child victims of abuse. Children of all ages come to The Saville Center to speak with specially trained forensic interviewers about their experience. The Saville Center brings together all the professionals and agencies needed to offer services: law enforcement, child protective services, prosecution, mental health, medical and advocacy. This approach ensures that children receive child-focused service in a child friendly environment. The Saville Center also provides mental health services, medical exams, victim advocacy, and prevention programs. To find ways to become involved, please visit www.savillecenter.org.

Upcoming Events

The Saville Center is hosting an **Appetite for Advocacy Luncheon** providing an educational program on Child Abuse Prevention in Payne County. We will look at “Erin’s Law” and discuss a proposed school program which gives students tools to help reduce potential abuse, identify safe people, and be able to tell if something isn’t safe. “*Stop. Go. Tell.*”. This program will take place on February 10th, 2015 from Noon – 1:00 p.m. For more information, please email smanuel@savillecenter.org.

The Saville Center’s annual fundraiser will be held April 10th, 2015 at Meditations Catering & Banquet Facility in Stillwater, OK. For more information, please call 405.377.5670.

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**EARLY CHILDHOOD
TIP SHEETS**

2015 Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Action begins now! Sign Up today to join efforts!

E-blast References [February 2015]

¹ House Bill 1684 - Oklahoma legislation introduced during the 2015 session by Rep. Lee Denney of district 33, An Act relating to education; creating Erin's Law.

² Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2006) Adverse Childhood Experiences; Dube SR, et al. 2005 Long-term Consequences of Childhood Sexual Abuse by Gender of Victim. *Am J Prev Med.* 2005 Jun;28(5):430-438.

³ London, K., Bruck, M., Ceci, S., & Shuman, D. (2003) Disclosure of child sexual abuse: What does the research tell us about the ways that children tell? *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 11(1), 194-226.

⁴ Snyder, H (2000) *Sexual Assault of Young Children As Reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident and Offender Characteristics*. Washington, DC: U S Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, and Bureau of Justice Statistics.

⁵ Teicher, M. (2000) Wounds That Time Won't Heal: the Neurology of Child Abuse (W. Dunway, Ed.) *Cerebrum: The Dana forum on Brain Science (online journal)*, 2(4).

⁶ Darkness 2 Light (2014) : Immediate Consequences and Long-term Consequences www.d2l.org/site/c.4dICIJOKGcISE/b.6143427/k.38C5/Child_Sexual_Abuse_Statistics.

⁷ Davis M.K.; Gidycz C.A. (2000). Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Clinical and Child Psychology*, 2,257-265.

⁸ Martine.,Tournigny M. (2004). Child Sexual Abuse Prevention: A Review of Evaluative Studies and Recommendations for Program Development. *Advances in Psychology Research*, 29, 123-155.