

SB

216

<TARGET><BILL>SB 216</BILL><SUBJECT>SB
216</SUBJECT><COMM>SEDC28</COMM></TARGET>

Alaska State Legislature Senate Rules Committee

Session:
State Capitol 103
Juneau, AK 99801
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Rules Committee:
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Senator Coghill
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Rules Committee
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Judiciary Committee
Legislative Council
TAPS Troughput Decline
World Trade and Tourism

Senator Lesil McGuire, Chairman

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 216

Child abuse is a devastating epidemic that affects our most vulnerable Alaskans with lifelong trauma though most suffer in silence. Senate Bill 216 will help to empower our communities by educating children, parents and teachers and give them the opportunity to speak out. According to the Office of Children's Services, statistics show that in 2013 there were more than 2,000 allegations of child sexual abuse in Alaska, with more than 1800 individual victims, over 40% of who were Alaska Native children.

Senate Bill 216 also known as "Erin's Law" requires school districts to develop age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention from kindergarten through 12th grade. The bill is part of a national effort spearheaded by Erin Merryn. Erin, an advocate and sexual abuse survivor, has made it her mission to enact this legislation in all 50 states. Recently, she visited Juneau to promote this legislation and gave her powerful testimony in the House Education committee.

"Had someone taught me about safe touch, unsafe touch, safe secrets and unsafe secrets, I would have known it was safe to tell. Instead I lived my horror in silence. I am now on a mission to give children across the country the voice I never had as a child," said Merryn. To date versions of Erin's Law have been enacted in eight states and twenty-fives states, including Alaska have proposed versions of Erin's Law this year.

Under this bill, the curriculum for public schools will allow for enough flexibility so that each diverse region of Alaska can serve their communities in their own unique and most

effective ways. Required curricula will include: warning signs of sexual abuse; referral and resource information; counseling and educational support; methods for increasing awareness of issues regarding sexual abuse of children; and actions a child may take to prevent and report sexual abuse or sexual assault.

I ask for your consideration and support of Erin's Law to give Alaskan's the tools to prevent and combat abuse. It is imperative that we send the important message that we value every child in our state and will do everything possible to protect them.

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Sectional Analysis

SB 216

“An Act relating to sexual abuse and sexual awareness and prevention efforts in public schools.”

Section 1. Provides short title: “Erin’s Law”

Section 2. (a) Adds a new section to AS14.30 requiring all Alaska school districts to adopt and implement age-appropriate, sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention training programs for K-12 students and district employees. (b) Lists the requirements for the policy, training and notice to parents, students, and staff. (c) Gives definition for “district.”

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 216()
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to sexual abuse and sexual assault awareness and prevention efforts in**
2 **public schools."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 * **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
5 to read:

6 SHORT TITLE. This Act may be known as Erin's Law.

7 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.30 is amended by adding a new section to read:

8 **Article 6A. Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention.**

9 **Sec. 14.30.355. Sexual abuse and sexual assault awareness and prevention.**

10 (a) The governing body of each school district shall adopt and implement a policy,
11 establish a mandatory training program for employees and students, and provide
12 parent, student, and staff notices relating to sexual abuse and sexual assault awareness
13 and prevention for students enrolled in grades kindergarten through 12.

14 (b) The policy, training, and notices under this section must include

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- (1) age-appropriate information;
- (2) warning signs of sexual abuse of a child;
- (3) referral and resource information;
- (4) available student counseling and educational support;
- (5) methods for increasing teacher, student, and parent awareness of issues regarding sexual abuse of children;
- (6) actions that a child may take to prevent and report sexual abuse or sexual assault.

(c) In this section, "district" has the meaning given in AS 14.17.990.

“My name is Erin Merryn I come here today from Chicago to speak on a very important topic that is near and dear to my heart. A topic I am very passionate about.”

“One in four girls and one in six boys will be sexually abused before their eighteen birthday. There are currently forty two million survivors of sexual abuse in America alone. Three million of those are children. We are just talking about America. Those three million kids could fill forty six national football stadiums. As I often tell people these children are sitting in our classrooms. Yet we often fail to address the warning signs. We often label these kids behavior disorder, emotionally disturbed, but we never get to the root of the problem. We give them aids, we hold them back, and we put all these resources into these children but we are often failing these kids because we are not educating them. We are not giving them a voice and empowering them to speak up and tell if someone is ever doing anything inappropriate.

When I was just a little six year old I met my best friend in school her name was Ashley. Ashley and I began doing everything together and it was at Ashley’s house I had my first sleepover. I was so excited as that little six year old going off to my best friend’s house. I fell asleep that night only to wake up that night to her uncle coming into the room and sexually abuse me for the first time. This man went on to sexually abuse me many more times in my childhood. I didn’t go home and tell my parents the next day what he had done. No I stayed silent because the only message I was getting as a child from this man was, “this is our little secret, I will come get you Erin, I know where you live, if you tell anyone nobody will believe you.” I was being brainwashed with this so I continued to stay silent. At seven years old this man raped me. I can remember that day as if it happened yesterday. This man continued to sexually abuse me until I was 8 1/2 years old. Finally my saving grace came when I moved to a new house. But moving only got me that much closer to my next abuser. It wasn’t that stranger danger I was taught about

every year, don't go look for the lost puppy, don't talk to strangers, or as I put in my childhood diary, "I sobbed the whole way home over and over in my head I thought about what just happened. In school a guy called officer friendly teaches us about strangers, never answer the door when my parents aren't home, I thought people like my cousin jumped out of bushes and attacked you at night, they don't warn us about our own family, they don't teach us that in school."

You see from ages eleven to thirteen an older cousin was sexually abusing me. Once again getting the only message this is our secret Erin nobody will believe you. I knew as a child how to duck and cover from a tornado, how to run out of a burning building, how to evacuate a school bus, how to tell a teacher if I am being bullied, internet safety, and what to do in a lock down situation if there was a gunman in my school, but we fail to teach kids on the prevention of sexual abuse. On empowering them if someone is abusing you, you speak up and tell a safe adult. You tell a parent, a teacher, a school social worker, a family member, somebody but you don't keep this a secret.

I was also taught DARE we teach this across this country. I am sure we teach it right here in Kansas. You see DARE teaches us the eight ways to say no to drugs but I ask you today where are the eight ways on how to get away and tell today. They never came in my childhood and the only message as I mentioned that I got, "This is our little secret, nobody will believe you, I will come hurt you."

How did I finally find my voice then? Well unfortunately it was learning my little 11 year old sister was also being molested by this same relative. You see these perpetrators live in our backyards. I guarantee every single one of you knows someone that has been sexually abused.

We live in a society that looks the other way, pretends it isn't going on, when it is really in our faces all the time we just fail to recognize it. There are people like Jerry Sandusky living in all our communities. There out there.

Erin's Law will give children the tools on the difference between a safe touch and unsafe touch, safe secret and unsafe secret, how to get away and tell today. I want educators to be educated on the warning signs to look for and the proper way to handle a child that discloses abuse. I want that seven year old that is being sexually abused tonight to be educated on how to tell through age appropriate curriculum. So she will go to school tomorrow and report it. Because right now in our society that little 7 year old will stay silent and continue to be abused by that step-father for years and it isn't until she is 30 years old in drug rehab finally coming to terms with what she never dealt with because she wasn't educate. My goal here and across this nation is to get this law passed in every state. Every child deserves to be empowered with their voice and not to keep this a secret. Every child should know how to speak up and tell, the same way they know how to not talk to strangers or use drugs. I say to all legislators across this country the only ones that should be against this bill to help give kids a voice and educate our educators are the sexual offenders themselves. Help me protect kids by giving them the voice I never had. Help the children of Alaska know how to speak up and tell. Thank you!" -Erin Merryn

There are 42 million sexual abuse survivors in America; 3 million are children, which would fill 46 national football stadiums.

93 PERCENT OF CHILDREN KNOW THE ABUSER; 7 PERCENT IS BY A STRANGER.

1 IN 4 GIRLS AND 1 IN 6 BOYS ARE SEXUALLY ABUSED BEFORE THE AGE OF 18.

ERIN'S LAW



CURRENT AS OF 01-28-14

WE TEACH KIDS 8 WAYS TO SAY NO TO DRUGS, BUT WHERE ARE THE 8 WAYS ON HOW TO GET AWAY AND TELL TODAY?



LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICES

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Research Brief

TO: Representative Geran Tarr
FROM: Tim Spengler, Legislative Analyst
DATE: February 17, 2014
RE: Alaska Child Sexual Abuse Statistics, Fiscal Year 2013
LRS Report 14.254

You asked for information on child sexual abuse allegations in Alaska for the most recent year available.

The Office of Children's Services (OCS), Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, provided us with the sexual abuse allegation data below.¹

Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse Received by the Office of Children's Services in FY 2013²

- 2,296 total allegations received, involving 1,817 unique alleged child victims³
 - Of these allegations, 971 were in the Anchorage Region, 286 in Northern Region, 575 in Southcentral Region, 242 in Southeast Region, and 222 in Western Region
- 1,487 allegations were *screened out*, of which 884 were *screened out* to law enforcement⁴
- 809 allegations were *screened in* for initial assessment⁵

Of the 809 allegations *screened in*:

- 126 allegations were *substantiated*, involving 117 unique child victims
- 646 allegations were *not substantiated*⁶
- 37 allegations were in initial assessments that were closed without finding⁷

Of the 1,817 alleged child victims:

- 1,245 were female

¹ Naomi Harris, OCS Community Relations Manager can be reached at (907)465-3548. Definitions in the footnotes come from OCS Child Protective Services Manual (<http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Documents/Publications/CPSManual/cps-manual.pdf>).

² What constitutes child sexual abuse is discussed in Alaska's Child in Need of Aid (CINA) statutes at AS 47.10.011(7).

³ One or more allegations may be associated with a single incident of abuse. The number of allegations should not be interpreted as the number of incidents.

⁴ A report is *screened out* when OCS determines the information received does not meet the definition of maltreatment (as described in AS 47.10.011) or for any of the following reasons: insufficient information to locate, multiple reports on same incident, child residing out-of-state, referred to a tribe that has exclusive jurisdiction, or referred to law enforcement. When allegations made to OCS are *screened out* to law enforcement, it generally means that the abuse was allegedly perpetrated by an individual who resides outside the child's home. These cases are investigated by law enforcement personnel.

⁵ During the initial assessment OCS gathers information to determine whether the child is unsafe or at high risk of maltreatment and the extent of the familial protective capacities. A report is *screened in* when the information received indicates a child may be unsafe or at high risk of maltreatment by a primary caregiver, parent, custodian or guardian.

⁶ At the conclusion of an investigation, OCS determines that an allegation was *substantiated* or *not substantiated*. A *substantiated* finding is one where the available facts indicate a child suffered harm as a result of abuse or neglect as defined by AS 47.17.290. A *not substantiated* finding is one where, based on the available facts, the worker is unable to determine if a child suffered harm as a result of abuse or neglect, or where there are no facts to support the allegation that a child suffered abuse or neglect.

⁷ An initial assessment may be closed without finding when the family cannot be located.

- 556 were male
- 16 the gender was unknown
- 747 were Native
- 951 were Non-Native
- 119 race was undetermined
 - Of the 1,817 alleged victims, 771 were in Anchorage Region, 238 in Northern Region, 485 in Southcentral Region, 183 in Southeast Region, and 147 in Western Region.⁸

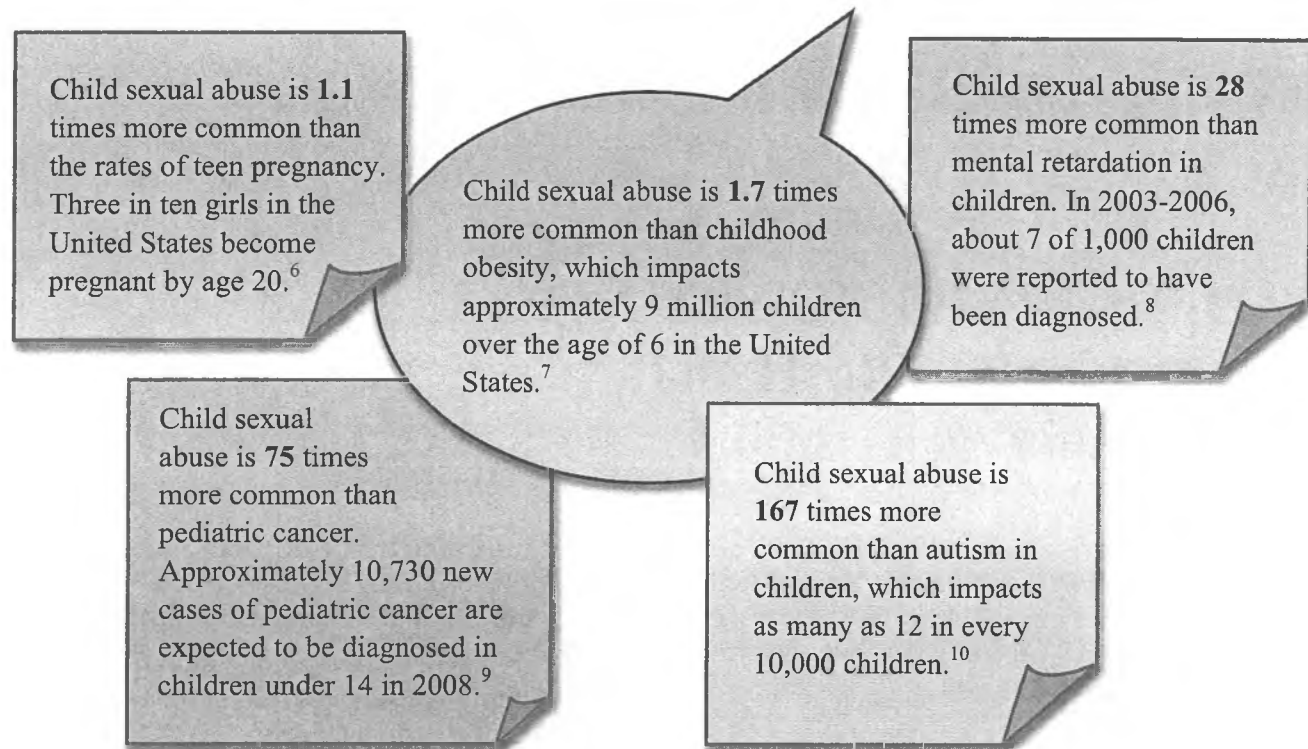
We hope this is helpful. If you have questions or need additional information, please let us know.

⁸ Children may be alleged victims in one or more allegations and regions. In regional counts, alleged victims are counted once in each region reported. In Statewide counts, alleged victims are counted once. The sum of regional counts will not add to the statewide total.

FACTS FOR PREVENTION: The Health Impact on Children & Youth

One study suggests that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be the victim of some type of sexual abuse or assault before the age of 18.¹ With 75 million children in the United States,² this translates to almost 15 million children who will be sexually victimized and abused over the next 18 years.³ The exploitation of children, and its resulting host of negative health outcomes, should be dealt with as a public health concern.⁴

Consider child sexual abuse in a social context:⁵



Adapted with permission from Chris Newlin, National Children's Advocacy Center

"I am well aware that child sexual abuse and exploitation are huge factors in children's health and in the broader public health. A culture that values its children, invests in its children. It's time to invest in prevention of such abuse." Sharon Cooper, M.D.¹¹

Research indicates that:

- The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study estimates that 25% of females and 16% of males have experienced sexual abuse as children. The same study indicates that sexual abuse has been associated with significant negative short-term and long-term health impacts for the victims.¹²
- Child sexual abuse impacts health care costs across a lifespan. Healthcare costs are 16% higher for women who experienced child sexual abuse and 36% higher if they experienced both sexual and physical abuse.¹³

- Children now spend 45 hours a week with media, 17 hours with their parents, and 30 hours in school. A strong connection has been proven between media exposure and childhood obesity, smoking, and sexual activity.¹⁴
- Media viewing is a critical risk factor for aggression, linking media viewing and physical behavior.¹⁵
- Teens exposed to high levels of televised sexual content were twice as likely to experience a pregnancy during the three-year period, compared to teens with lower levels of exposure.¹⁶
- Childhood sexual abuse can involve a wide number of psychological sequelae, including low self-esteem, anxiety and depression. Numerous studies have noted that child sexual abuse victims are vulnerable to later sexual victimization as well as the link between child sexual abuse and later engagement in high-risk sexual behavior. Survivors of child sexual abuse are more likely to have multiple sex partners, become pregnant as teenagers, and experience sexual assault as adults.¹⁷
- Data from 67,853 women in a Nurses Health Survey II, analyzed in 2009, examined lifetime abuse reported in 2001 with risk of diabetes from 1989-2005. The results showed child or teen physical abuse reported by 54% and sexual abuse by 34% of participants. Moderate to severe physical and sexual abuse in childhood and adolescence have dose-response associations with risk of type 2 diabetes among adult women. This excess risk is partially explained by higher BMI of women with a history of early abuse.¹⁸
- Girls exposed to sexualizing and objectifying media are more likely to develop body image dissatisfaction, eating disorders, depression, low self-esteem and possibly lower academic functioning. The American Psychological Association's Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls noted that consequences of sexualization ranged from mental health issues to negative impact to girls' and women's physical health.¹⁹

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Have questions?
Need resources?
Get Help Now!

Online Help Center
<http://GetHelp.StopItNow.org>

Stop It Now! prevents the sexual abuse of children by mobilizing adults, families and communities to take actions that protect children before they are harmed.

Warning Signs in Children and Adolescents of Possible Child Sexual Abuse

Any one sign doesn't mean that a child was sexually abused, but the presence of several suggests that you begin asking questions and consider seeking help. Keep in mind that some of these signs can emerge at other times of stress such as:

- During a divorce
- Death of a family member or pet
- Problems at school or with friends
- Other anxiety-inducing or traumatic events

Behavior you may see in a child or adolescent

- Has nightmares or other sleep problems without an explanation
- Seems distracted or distant at odd times
- Has a sudden change in eating habits
 - Refuses to eat
 - Loses or drastically increases appetite
 - Has trouble swallowing.
- Sudden mood swings: rage, fear, insecurity or withdrawal
- Leaves "clues" that seem likely to provoke a discussion about sexual issues
- Writes, draws, plays or dreams of sexual or frightening images
- Develops new or unusual fear of certain people or places
- Refuses to talk about a secret shared with an adult or older child
- Talks about a new older friend
- Suddenly has money, toys or other gifts without reason
- Thinks of self or body as repulsive, dirty or bad
- Exhibits adult-like sexual behaviors, language and knowledge

Signs more typical of younger children

- An older child behaving like a younger child (such as bed-wetting or thumb sucking)
- Has new words for private body parts
- Resists removing clothes when appropriate times (bath, bed, toileting, diapering)
- Asks other children to behave sexually or play sexual games
- Mimics adult-like sexual behaviors with toys or stuffed animal
- Wetting and soiling accidents unrelated to toilet training

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Signs more typical in adolescents

- Self-injury (cutting, burning)
- Inadequate personal hygiene
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Sexual promiscuity
- Running away from home
- Depression, anxiety
- Suicide attempts
- Fear of intimacy or closeness
- Compulsive eating or dieting

Physical warning signs

Physical signs of sexual abuse are rare. If you see these signs, bring your child to a doctor. Your doctor can help you understand what may be happening and test for sexually transmitted diseases.

- Pain, discoloration, bleeding or discharges in genitals, anus or mouth
- Persistent or recurring pain during urination and bowel movements
- Wetting and soiling accidents unrelated to toilet training

What You Can Do If You See Warning Signs

- Create a Safety Plan. Don't wait for "proof" of child sexual abuse.
- Look for patterns of behavior that make children less safe. Keep track of behaviors that concern you. This Sample Journal Page can be a helpful tool.
- See our Let's Talk Guidebook for tips on speaking up whenever you have a concern.
- If you have questions or would like resources or guidance for responding to a specific situation, visit our Online Help Center, <http://GetHelp.StopItNow.org>.

Remember, the most effective prevention takes place before there's a child victim to heal or an offender to punish.

For more information and guidance, please visit our Online Help Center, <http://GetHelp.StopItNow.org>.

Transforming Communities to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation:

A Primary Prevention Approach

This document was prepared by Prevention Institute.

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Prevention
Institute
Putting prevention
at the center of community well-being

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This policy brief presents the distilled research and critical thinking of a diverse group of local and national experts in the field of child sexual abuse and exploitation. Prevention Institute assembled this team and coordinated their efforts with the generous funding and support of the Ms. Foundation for Women.* Via candid dialog and interviews, these leaders developed and prioritized primary prevention strategies, analyzed environmental factors and norms that perpetuate these problems, and outlined policies and practices for transforming our communities and our nation during these turbulent political and economic times. This brief focuses especially on strategies that build on previous successes within this field and hold the greatest promise for transforming communities and preventing child abuse and exploitation.

We thank these leaders for their dedication to the field and for their thoughtful insights throughout this process. Likewise, we thank the Ms. Foundation for Women for sponsoring this vital initiative.

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Prevention Institute

is a nonprofit, national center dedicated to improving community health and well-being by building momentum for effective primary prevention. Primary prevention means taking action to build resilience and to prevent problems before they occur. The Institute's work is characterized by a strong commitment to community participation and promotion of equitable health outcomes among all social and economic groups. Since its founding in 1997, the organization has focused on injury and violence prevention, traffic safety, health disparities, nutrition and physical activity, and youth development.

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* Prevention Institute materials are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Ms. Foundation for Women.

"I have a ten-year-old daughter and a five-year-old boy. I want the world my children grow up in to be one where my daughter can live free of violence and my son will be expected to treat all women with respect. We need to invest at a level where we can create this future for our kids."

Jim Hafner, Stop It Now! National Office

Preventing Abuse Before it Occurs: A Primary Prevention Approach

Over the last 30 years, advocates have worked hard to successfully educate us in child sexual abuse and its detrimental effects on children and society. Leaders and the general public alike have a greater understanding of the issue, and this awareness has reached a tipping point over the last ten years, resulting in mobilized groups advocating for social and political solutions to abuse. So far, the response to these demands has largely focused on after-the-fact actions like incarceration and individual protection efforts such as Internet safety campaigns. The next step requires expanding the overarching dialog, moving from a focus on the individual and after-the-fact efforts to an approach that can prevent child sexual abuse from ever happening. A primary prevention approach prevents abuse before it happens by addressing the environmental factors and societal norms that contribute to its occurrence in the first place. Leaders agree that the movement is poised for a greater emphasis on primary prevention, which honors and builds upon past successes and complements the field's continued commitment to improving responses to this critical issue. This shift will require an increased effort to advance promising primary prevention approaches—essential to achieving dramatic reductions in rates of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

A primary prevention approach to child sexual abuse and exploitation promotes safe, healthy environments and behaviors, reducing the likelihood of abuse¹ in the first place. This approach is often confused with early intervention services for victims and perpetrators. Interventions, such as universal screening in health care settings, may help to alleviate trauma and potentially prevent future incidences; however, early identification is subsequent to actual or threatened violence and seldom alters the broader community and societal environment that gave rise to the violence. Primary prevention moves far upstream to change the environmental factors—such as economic inequalities, sexism, media, and marketing practices—that

We must begin to shift our focus from individuals to environments, from fear to wellness, and build national momentum for a balanced, targeted investment in quality prevention strategies.

A primary prevention approach to child sexual abuse and exploitation promotes safe, healthy environments and behaviors, reducing the likelihood of abuse in the first place.

shape norms and behaviors of an entire population. Primary prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation is a systemic process capable of dramatically reshaping our environment and norms. It is a crucial component of community wellness.

Our success in preventing child sexual abuse depends on our ability to maintain a coordinated, comprehensive effort. Research confirms that the issue is deeply rooted in our environment and reinforced by our societal norms. It touches every community—the latest data reports that one in four girls and one in seven boys will be the victim of some type of sexual abuse/assault before age 18.² These numbers do not include the various ways children are sexually exploited through technology, pornography, and other commercial sexual exploitation. Further, we know that victims of abuse are at an increased risk for alcoholism, depression, sexually transmitted infections, intimate partner violence, and suicide attempts.³ The statistics provide an important challenge to our current norms and environments for children and adults: We must begin to shift our focus from individuals to environments, from fear to wellness, and build national momentum for a balanced, targeted investment in quality prevention strategies.

Quality prevention strategies counter environmental factors that support child sexual abuse and exploitation. Examples of these environmental factors include increased marketing towards children and a pervasive media presence with drastically high levels of sexualized messages and rigid gender roles. Root factors, such as marginalization—which increases the risks and decreases the resilience within specific communities—have not been widely acknowledged in policies and practices addressing child sexual abuse and exploitation. As one leader said, “There must be an increased awareness that child sexual abuse and exploitation does not occur in isolation, but instead, stems from deeply rooted social inequities and environmental influences.” These factors are relevant to all communities, and we can focus on them via comprehensive prevention initiatives. As a more progressive agenda is gaining momentum nationally, we have a prime opportunity to examine the current context and push for community transformation on multiple levels, incorporating successful projects from around the nation that help build resilience and protective factors at the individual and community levels. It is also a key moment to organize support for elected officials willing to adopt a legislative agenda that promotes healthy environments for all communities.

This brief is designed for advocates, practitioners, government officials, and funders who are interested in transforming broad social norms and our communities in order to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation before it occurs. The following pages lay out a primary prevention approach with a special focus on effecting change by influencing policies and altering organizational practices. We begin with a short discussion of emerging environmental challenges followed by an examination of specific norms that contribute to child sexual abuse and exploitation. The third section, grounded in the belief that a single individual or sector cannot address the problem in isolation, provides the framework for a comprehensive strategy across the *Spectrum of Prevention* (see Figure 2, page 8) designed to transform environments so all children can thrive in safe and supportive communities.

Full Article Available here:

http://www.preventioninstitute.org/index.php?option=com_jlibrary&view=article&id=31&Itemid=127



The RESOURCE

Newsletter of the National Sexual Violence Resource Center

Fall/Winter 2005

Recollections of a Hurricane

LaFASA Director Recounts Katrina's Devastation

By
Judy Benitez

In the following piece, the Executive Director of the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault (LaFASA) presents a revealing and moving glimpse into the devastation that touched so many lives in the Gulf Coast region as a result of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. With journal-type entries, Judy Benitez tells us about the impact this disaster had on her life and her family and friends, and about her deep concerns, as a coalition director, regarding the sexual victimization of residents and evacuees and for the programs in storm-ravaged areas.

Saturday, Aug. 27, Dad's birthday: My friend and co-worker Misty and her new husband, Doug, planned their wedding reception for tonight at her parents' house in Mandeville, since so many people couldn't get to the wedding earlier in month. I took my kids along, and Martha from the office went too. But our co-worker, Vita, stayed home, expecting her parents to arrive soon, since they were evacuating from their home on the west bank of the Mississippi.

The party was fun, but much of the conversation focused on the coming storm. Most people had the attitude, "We live far enough away from the coast. We stayed through Andrew; we'll stay through this." Remembering how miserable it was after Andrew - five days without electricity and air-conditioning in south Louisiana in August had tempers flaring and putrid meat rotting in the freezer - I found little comfort in that thought. But I did not plan on leaving either.



Boat rests on roof of Louisiana home after Hurricane Katrina, August 2005

It took us almost three hours to make the 45 minute trip home. We avoided the interstate, knowing it would be jammed and slow-moving; the two-lane state highway we took was not much better. Several times the kids and I talked about how glad we were that we don't live in New Orleans.

(Continued on page 4)

Consent and the Court of Public Opinion

By
Anne Munch, JD and Patti Powers, JD

The surge of media attention surrounding high profile sexual assault cases in the last few years has brought the question of what the crime of sexual assault really means to the forefront of our minds and into our conversations. Attitudes and opinions held by the public have fueled a lively

debate on this topic. These ideas and beliefs held by the public reflect what the court of public opinion believes about this crime. Many of the jurors who ultimately decide these cases in a courtroom spend time debating the issue in the court of public opinion first.

(Continued on page 2)

NSVRC Inside The Resource

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The following article by an Inupiat woman from a very remote region of Alaska offers a rare and important view of Child Sexual Assault (CSA). More than a survivor story, this remarkable piece represents her attempt to understand CSA as a social problem, and her effort to help others. It is especially remarkable because there are virtually no sexual assault services in this region. She approaches the personally painful subject with insight and an obvious need to learn more and to share information; she encourages openness and therapy for others. Throughout, her voice resonates with a simple reality that goes beyond the value of any statistics.

Although Alaska has the highest rate of sexual assault of all states, we have relatively few first-hand accounts of its prevalence or impact; clearly this primary source document is a rare, unique resource.

Child Sexual Abuse in the Bering Straits Region

By
Karlene Sagoonik

I am a survivor of child sexual abuse and much of my life has been plagued with emotional, spiritual, and physical consequences of the abuse, and this is part of my reason for writing on the subject. I live in a small town (population: approx. 240) in the Bering Straits region of Alaska, and I know that there are others that have suffered in many of the same ways that I have. So I decided to write this paper and interview some people of different generations in my area to help me understand how they deal with child sexual assault (CSA).

Unlike most of the people I interviewed for this paper, I have received counseling and have gone through different types of therapy at different intervals in my lifetime. As a result, I am able to talk about my experiences more openly. However, I have problems that may never go away, even though counseling has helped me understand and deal with the issue. In writing this paper, I suffered memories, which made me physically ill, angry, frustrated, very lonely, and my mental and physical self acted as though the assault had just happened, even though it was a long time ago.

In spite of these things, I feel that I need to reach out to people who are weary of keeping their secrets. I need to let them know that this kind of abuse happened to many others and it is okay to go to people who are willing and able to help. It is important for people to recover from CSA and therapy is a very important part of the healing process. I recommend that anyone who is a victim of CSA and who has not received help, get help through some type of counseling.

It is difficult to determine how prevalent child sexual abuse is in the Bering Straits Region because statistics are inadequate and present a different viewpoint than the one you find when talking with actual victims and

others in a community in the Bering Straits. I want to show the reader different viewpoints from statistics; discuss some actual victims of child sexual abuse; and consider what can aid in their restoration.

Reports of how prevalent people think child sexual abuse is in the Bering Straits Region differ. According to a census of the population of the Bering Straits Region, 40% of 9,176 people are between the ages of 0-19 (3,670), and statistics from Kawerak's Child Advocacy Center in Nome say 51 cases of child sexual abuse were reported in the region for the entire year of 2003. That means that approximately one child per 180 (of total population of region) or one in 72 (of youth population in the region) was sexually victimized. But these reported cases are far fewer than the incidents I heard about when I asked people from my region.

(Continued on page 10)



Child Sexual Abuse in the Bering Straits Region

(Continued from page 3)

Two researchers, Burgess and Holmstrom, tell us what signs to look for in a victim of sexual abuse and what should be done to aid the healing process.* They say that the healing process depends on how sexual abuse is approached and defined in our immediate environments and communities. So I looked to my environment and communities here in the Bearing Straits Region.

As I interviewed people from my area and I found that attitudes towards CSA have changed over time. ** It seemed that people in different age groups hold different ideas about CSA. To show how these attitudes have changed, I interviewed people from different generations. I talked with some people who were at least thirty or over in a small town and a neighboring village in the Bering Straits Region. Nearly all the women and one in three of the men I interviewed had been sexually abused before they reached adolescence.

A man, in his thirties, said to me, "My cousin and I were little kids and we started playing this game of 'let me see your thing, and I'll show you mine.'" He said it turned into having sex with each other. He said he was too little to know how to do it, but his cousin no older than him knew how and he felt it was CSA. He also said that all his buddies were sexually abused and that one of them committed suicide.

A woman I have known my entire life has told me more than once that she was sexually abused by her brothers, cousins, and an uncle. She has not gotten any kind of help. Instead she just keeps doing drugs and drinking. To this day, I don't think her parents know about the abuse.

I also know of another older woman from the same family who used to babysit people's kids. She was sexually abused by one of her brothers. Years later, she beat him up when they were both in a drunken stupor, and there are stories that she sexually abused some young men when they were adolescent boys. People who are abused sometimes wind up being abusers themselves. I know that she has never gotten any kind of help either. She just keeps drinking and doing drugs.

As I talked with more and more people, I became more and more aware that the statistics of sexual abuse of children do not reflect all the occurrences. According to three different people in their forties they either knew of someone who was sexually abused who did not report it or receive any kind of

help, or they were victims of sexual abuse themselves. One woman from a neighboring town said she knows her cousin was sexually abused as a child, and she has grown into a bitter, miserable person who seems to have no sort of relief in sight from the experience. This woman said, "[CSA] affects people all their life and talking with a friend or a professional would help."

Someone in her forties told me some time ago that she was sexually abused over and over during her adolescent years, but she never tried to get any kind of help. Instead, she has taken to drinking alcohol for years. Another woman in her forties was also abused when she was a child and now she abuses crack cocaine, alcohol and other drugs. Someone once said she traded one of her daughters for sex so she could get a piece of crack cocaine. Her daughters are doing drugs, drinking, and each one has had at least one baby before she turned 18. It was her sister who told me that she had confided in her. Some of these instances were hearsay or confidential conversations, but they do indicate how many people there have had some sort of damaging sexual experience before they reached adulthood.

As I interviewed the older generations, the subject of CSA was either unknown or they had been forbidden to speak of it back when they were young. I asked a man in his fifties if sexual abuse was a problem when he was a kid. He said he did not know if there were problems with sexual abuse, but that he did not start hearing about sexual abuse until he was in his twenties. A woman in the same age group said either there was no problem or that it was never talked about. When I asked her to clarify herself, she said there could have been a problem in the community, but she did not know because it was never talked about.

As I talked with more and more people, I became more and more aware that the statistics of sexual abuse of children do not reflect all the occurrences.

The silence on the subject of CSA may be a result of cultural admonition on the older generations not to discuss sexual abuse.

When talking with

a sixty year old woman, she said she was molested when she was 12 years old and tried to tell her aunt, but her aunt told her, "Don't talk like that." After that, she said it was years before she told anyone, because she got the idea that people did not talk about stuff like that.

(Continued on page 12)

Child Sexual Abuse in the Bering Straits Region

(Continued from page 10)

Some time ago, I spoke with a woman who is now in her seventies, and the closest she came to admitting that she was a victim of sexual abuse was that she said to me, she knew how I felt. According to her, people used to get drunk a long time ago and things happened that they could not talk about. It would appear that a lot of things people could not talk about were associated to abuse.

Reported or not, child sexual abuse is a problem that needs to be addressed and dealt with in a positive way. One of the first steps in a community is just to get more information about CSA and to treat it as a severe injury, with symptoms and consequences, and methods of treatment, and not as a subject for shame.

Burgess and Holmstrom point out some signs to look for in child sexual abuse victims, and they describe two phases: the acute (immediate) phase and the reorganizational phase. *

Acute Phase

"The acute phase [can] last from a few days to several weeks. [It's when a] victim's life has been ... disrupted, and going through disorientation and shock".* Victims go through physical and emotional symptoms common to someone who has experienced a terrible tragedy. Physical reactions may include muscle soreness and bruises, feeling tired and problems with sleeping, eating too much or not enough, and feeling jumpy. As a CSA victim, I have gone through most of the physical reactions and many of the emotional reactions as well.

Emotional reactions in this phase can be of two different kinds, expressed and controlled. The expressed reactions are visible and include laughing or crying, making jokes or becoming stiff or shaking. The controlled reactions are invisible to others. The victim appears not to feel anything but is actually depressed, angry, feeling shameful, or having thoughts of revenge.

I remember feeling disgust, shame, or guilt while appearing calm. Other victims have mentioned masking feelings too: two of the women I spoke with, the one who was abused by her brothers and uncle, and the forty something woman who

said she was abused repeatedly as an adolescent mentioned that they felt this way. Victims may also alternate between expressed and controlled responses, and these responses may surprise or catch the victim off guard. Emotions may go from one extreme to another.

Reorganizational Phase

In the reorganizational phase, the victim comes to terms with the sexual abuse experience. This phase can last from "a couple of months to years." * How long this phase lasts depends on how old the person is, their character, and the kind of help the person receives.

During this phase, the victim makes adjustments in his or her life, moves to a new location or changes their phone number, makes new friends, changes schools or jobs, fears being alone, or fears things associated with the place

or circumstances of the sexual assault. After that, victims reorganize and prioritize their lives, making choices, which Burgess and Holmstrom say is healthy. According to them, "sexual assault is the ultimate loss of personal control." Knowing that a CSA problem exists and what victim suffers from are two steps toward acquiring help for the CSA victim.

Knowing how the healing process for victims of CSA begins is also helpful towards restoration. I interviewed a child sexual abuse counselor and she said, "There are different kinds of therapy." They include, play therapy, art therapy, narrative therapy and group therapy.

The Bering Straits region does not lend itself to group therapy because a few of the Village Based Counselors (VBC) (these are counselors usually associated with clinics

in a given village) have not had enough training yet to get one started. In the Nome area, no clinicians are available to get one started because they are travelling around the region and area and are short-staffed. One thing I brought up with the

*Reported or not,
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*I remember feeling
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(Continued on next page)

Child Sexual Abuse in the Bering Straits Region

counselor was the fact that, in our village, the VBC tried to get different groups started, but the circle of trust was broken. The circle of trust is the most important part of group therapy, and they are afraid to have it happen to them. There is just way too much gossip in the village.

Another kind of therapy involves the parents and a moderator in the counseling of the CSA victim. The kind of therapy used depends on how long the abuse has been going on and what is best suited to the child's needs. Therapy can take anywhere from six weeks to six months, but the child can carry the trauma throughout their lives. What a clinician does through therapy is to teach the victims coping skills to help them deal with suicidal thoughts and depression because self-esteem is always an issue. I am so glad to have been taught to think positively through therapy, reading, and talking to people who used to be negative thinkers. All of these things make a big difference.

The clinician from Norton Sound Health Corporation says there are workbooks that specifically target sexual abuse. These workbooks include topics on anger management, coping skills, self-esteem, anxiety issues, and identifying feelings. They teach CSA victims to get in touch with their feelings and they discuss how their bodies respond to CSA. Victims have a tendency to dissociate themselves from their bodies to what is happening around them. When the sexual abuse has happened frequently, this dissociation is a common reaction.

Therapy for dreams and nightmares treat a victim's tendency to hold secrets and not communicate with people, and there is also therapy for kids who have to go to court that helps them prepare to face the perpetrator of the CSA. A child may or may not get the help she or he needs and sometimes, whether a child gets help or not depends on how child sexual abuse is viewed by the community.

My interviews suggested to me that how the community sees CSA depends on the viewpoint of different generations in the community. For example, someone in their thirties might be more willing to talk about sexual issues or CSA than an elderly person. People in their forties were told not to talk about such things. The lack of communication about CSA seems to have lead to destructive circle after destructive circle.

According to the thirty-something people, CSA was something that happened to them and they were able to tell someone about it, but they could never see themselves asking

for therapy because there is so much shame and fear of being judged and gossiped about. They talked about the abuse, but it was mostly buddies telling secrets to buddies.

According to the people in their forties, CSA was something they absolutely could not mention when they were young. If they said they were sexually abused or molested, they were blamed by family and community members. It was their fault. For them, CSA was something they told someone about many years later. They never got any help at all, and the wounds of the sexual abuse and all the problems associated with it have just festered. These are the people who have spent much of their lives abusing drugs or alcohol because they were not allowed to talk about the pain they suffered.

People in their fifties either had no idea CSA occurred, or it was forbidden to ever mention child sexual abuse. The same goes for the people in their sixties and seventies.

Many of these people are unable to get help because of the shame, blame, guilt, and misconceptions that surround getting help for a problem that is so much more widespread than people are willing to admit.

It is very hard to admit to someone that you have been sexually abused, but it is the best thing a person can do for one's self. Anyone who has been victimized by CSA should get help through some type of counseling because it is important for the healing process. Norman Vincent Peale once said, "The secret of life isn't what happens to you but what you do with what happens to you."



Notes:

* Ann Wobert Burgess D.N.S.C. and Lynda Lytle Holmstrom, PhD. "Rape Trauma Syndrome" *American Journal of Psychiatry* 131:9, September 1974.

** Confidential interviews of various residents in the Bearing Straits region conducted by Karlene Sagoonick, March and April 2004.



D DARKNESS to LIGHT'S
5 STEPS
TO PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN™



A guide for responsible adults

DARKNESS TO LIGHT®

We are a national nonprofit organization that seeks to empower adults to prevent child sexual abuse. Our programs raise awareness and educate adults about how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse.



What is child sexual abuse?

- Any sexual act between an adult and a minor, or between two minors, when one exerts power over the other.
- Forcing, coercing or persuading a child to engage in any type of sexual act. It also includes non-contact acts such as exhibitionism, exposure to pornography, voyeurism and communicating in a sexual manner by phone or Internet.
- Often a traumatic experience for children and teens.
- A crime punishable by law.



This booklet is only the beginning.

Child sexual abuse is a complex problem and this booklet touches on only a small part of it. The information we provide is not a substitute for the advice of professionals or more thorough training. But, taking these *5 Steps* in families and youth settings creates safer communities and helps protect the wellbeing of the children we love.



7 Radcliffe Street, Suite 200, Charleston, SC 29403

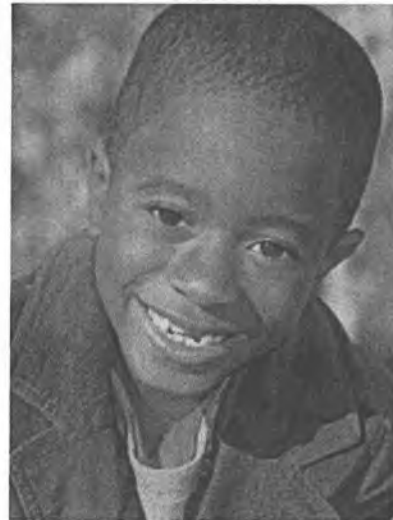
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5 Steps to Protecting Our Children™

We believe that protecting children from sexual abuse is an adult responsibility.

About 1 in 10 children experience child sexual abuse before their 18th birthday.

Child sexual abuse happens in families, but also in organizations. Children brave terrible abuses alone, and repeatedly, often with no protection. Sometimes adults have simply lacked prevention knowledge, or not had the awareness to recognize signs. Sometimes we've dismissed gut feelings, and missed opportunities for courage. Some have covered up sexual abuse at the expense of our children.



But this is only one part of the truth.

1 in 10 is a rate that is down from previous generations. Our culture is changing.

We're starting to face the pain of child sexual abuse and do what needs to be done.

We can uncover and prevent child sexual abuse – child by child.

We must act as a community.

1 in 10 children are sexually abused. This means realities rather than blind trust should influence our choices regarding children's safety from sexual abuse.

It is likely that you know a child who has been or is being abused.

- Experts estimate that about 1 in 10 children are sexually abused before their 18th birthday.
- Youth are the victims in 66% of all sexual offenses reported to law enforcement.
- Youth are 2.5 times more likely to be raped than adults.
- About 40% of victims are 11 years old or younger.
- 9% of 10-17 year olds receive a sexual request while on the Internet.
- Sexually abused children are at greater risk for psychological, emotional, social and physical problems, often lasting into adulthood.



**Child pornography is child sexual abuse.
All child pornography is illegal.**

A child is being abused whenever sexual acts are recorded in the production of child pornography.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children is also child sexual abuse.

- Anytime money or something of value is promised or exchanged, it is commercial sexual exploitation of children.
- 90% of children who are sexually exploited have a history of child sexual abuse.

Most child victims never report sexual abuse.

If you discover child pornography or commercial sexual exploitation of children, you must call your local law enforcement or the Cyber Tipline® 1-800-THE-LOST, operated by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Or visit <http://www.missingkids.com/CyberTipline> to make a report online.

It's also likely that you know an abuser. The greatest risk to children doesn't come from strangers, but from people we know and trust.

- 90% of children who are sexually abused know their abuser.
 - 30% are abused by family members.
 - 60% are abused by people the family trusts. Those who abuse gain access to the child in a school, church, sports club, etc. and often move into a position of trust within the family.
- Only about 10% are abused by strangers.
- 40% are abused by older or larger youth, like babysitters or cousins.

**People who sexually abuse children
often go out of their way to appear trustworthy.**

Research demonstrates that sexually abused children are more likely to experience serious consequences during childhood and *throughout their lives*. Some of these are:

- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Anxiety and depression
- Substance abuse
- Aggression, oppositionality, and defiance
- Criminal behavior and violent offenses
- Sexual Promiscuity
- Teen pregnancy and motherhood
- Self-inflicted harm
- Delinquency
- Decreased school performance and dropout
- Health problems
- Suicide

Eliminate or reduce isolated, one-on-one situations to decrease risk for abuse.

More than 80% of sexual abuse incidents happen in isolated, one-on-one situations with a child.

- Choose group situations and have multiple adults supervise children.
- Scan the physical environment for hidden areas and correct dangers.
- Make sure interactions can be observed and interrupted.
- Remember that older youth should not be in isolated, one-on-one situations with younger children.

Ask for these best practices in schools and organizations that serve your children.

- Background checks
- In-person interviews for new hires and volunteers
- Personal and professional reference checks
- A code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- A policy for responding to disclosures and discoveries of child sexual abuse
- A policy for responding to inappropriate behavior, breaches in policy, and suspicions of abuse
- Prevention training for employees, volunteers, parents, and caregivers



DARKNESS to LIGHT'S

STEWARDS of CHILDREN®

**Prevention training for staff, volunteers,
and parents creates a culture of awareness.**

**It gives people the skills
to create safer environments.**

**It makes them more willing to intervene
in unsafe behaviors by adults with children.**

**Prevention training for adults creates
an environment with much less opportunity
for those who may offend.**

***Stewards of Children* is a program that teaches adults to:**

- Prevent sexual abuse before it can happen.
- Recognize signs of sexual abuse in children.
- Recognize unsafe behaviors by adults.
- React responsibly when a child discloses, or when an adult discovers or suspects sexual abuse.

Empowering

Uplifting

Working Together

Visit D2L.org

- To find a facilitator who can bring
Stewards of Children to your organization.
- To take *Stewards of Children* online today.

Have open conversations with children about our bodies, sex, and boundaries.

Understand why children are afraid to tell.

- The abuser sometimes threatens the child or a family member.
- The abuser may try to confuse the child about right and wrong.
- Many abusers tell children the abuse is “okay” or “a game.”
- The abuser may shame the child, blame the child, or tell the child that his/her parents will be angry.
- Children are afraid of disrupting or hurting their family.
- Some children who did not initially disclose are afraid to tell when it happens again.
- Some children are too young to understand.

Know how children communicate.

- Children may ask questions about bodies, interactions, or sex, rather than talk directly about something they’ve experienced.
- Children may tell parts of what happened, or pretend it happened to someone else, to check your reaction.
- Children who disclose sexual abuse often tell a trusted adult other than a parent.
- Children will often shut down and refuse to tell more if you respond emotionally or negatively.

***One of the best protections is
our relationship with children.***

Talk openly with children.

Talking about boundaries and sex forges a protective bond between parent and child, and instills knowledge that makes children and teens less vulnerable. Other adults in the child's life can find ways to teach sexual and body safety as well.

- Talk with children when they are young, and use proper names for body parts.
- Tell children what sexual abuse is, and when age appropriate, about sex.
- Tell children what parts of the body others should not touch. Use examples with situations and people in their lives.
- Teach children that they have the right to tell any person "NO" to unwanted or uncomfortable touch.
- Tell children it is not OK for adults or older youth to use sexual words with them, or to act in a sexual way.
- Explain that secrets can be harmful, and if someone asks them to keep a secret, they should tell you about it.
- Teach children not to give out email or home addresses, phone numbers or other personal information while using the Internet or handheld devices.
- Ask children about their online experiences and learn about the sites and services they use.
- Explore with children who their trusted adults are in the settings they frequent.
- Speak and listen quietly and calmly. It's important that children feel safe and loved in all of these discussions.

"No one should touch you where a bathing suit covers."

***"Your whole body is private when you want it to be.
You get to decide who touches you."***

"Sometimes touch might just feel uncomfortable, even if you like the person. Whenever it's uncomfortable, you can say no."

Know the signs of abuse to protect children from further harm.

Learn the signs in children and teens.

Physical signs are not common, but the following should be carefully examined by a professional:

- Bruising, bleeding, redness, rashes, bumps or scabs especially around the genitals
- Urinary tract infections
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Abnormal discharge
- Chronic stomach pain, headaches or other ailments that can't be explained medically

Emotional and behavioral signs are more common.

- Withdrawal
- Depression
- Anger, rebellion, defiance
- Agitation or inability to concentrate
- Fear of situations or people
- Sexual behavior and language that are not age-appropriate
- Falling grades
- Use of alcohol or drugs, especially at a young age
- A change in behavior

Call child protective services or the police in your area.

Use a Children's Advocacy Center whenever possible. To find one, visit the National Children's Alliance at www.nationalchildrensalliance.org or call 1-800-239-9950.

Signs don't always mean sexual abuse, but signs can be a reason to take more interest in the child.

Understand how to respond to risky behaviors and suspicions or reports of abuse.

There are 3 reasons we need to react to sexual abuse.

- A child discloses it to us.
- We discover it ourselves.
- We have reason to suspect it.

Disclosure

A child has broken through secrecy, fear, and shame and has chosen you as the person he or she trusts enough to tell. Honor that with attention, compassion and belief.

- Listen calmly and openly.
- Don't fill in the gaps, or rush to "get to the bottom of it."
- Don't ask leading questions about details.
- Ask only open ended questions like, "What happened next?"
Or say, "It's ok to tell me more."
- Believe the child.
- Tell the child he's done nothing wrong.
- Affirm the child's courage.
- Seek the help of a professional who is trained to talk with the child about sexual abuse.

Few reported incidents are false.

Discovery

You've witnessed a sexually abusive act by an adult or youth with a child, or you know by some other way that abuse has taken place. For example, a friend or coworker may have told you something definitive.

In cases of disclosure or discovery, report immediately to local law enforcement or to child protective services in the county in which the child lives.

- Tell the child's name and where the child lives.
- Tell the facts. This may include what the child has told you, or behaviors from the alleged offender that you saw.
- Tell what signs you've seen in the child.
- Tell what access the alleged offender has to the child.

And remember, if you've discovered child pornography, you've discovered sexual abuse. Report child pornography to the police or to the Cyber Tipline at 1-800-THE-LOST.

Suspicion

You've seen signs in a child, or you've witnessed boundary violations by an adult or youth toward a child. ***Suspicion means, at a minimum, you need to set some limits or ask some questions.***

People who offend are rarely seen in the act of sexually abusing a child, but they are often seen breaking rules and pressing boundaries.

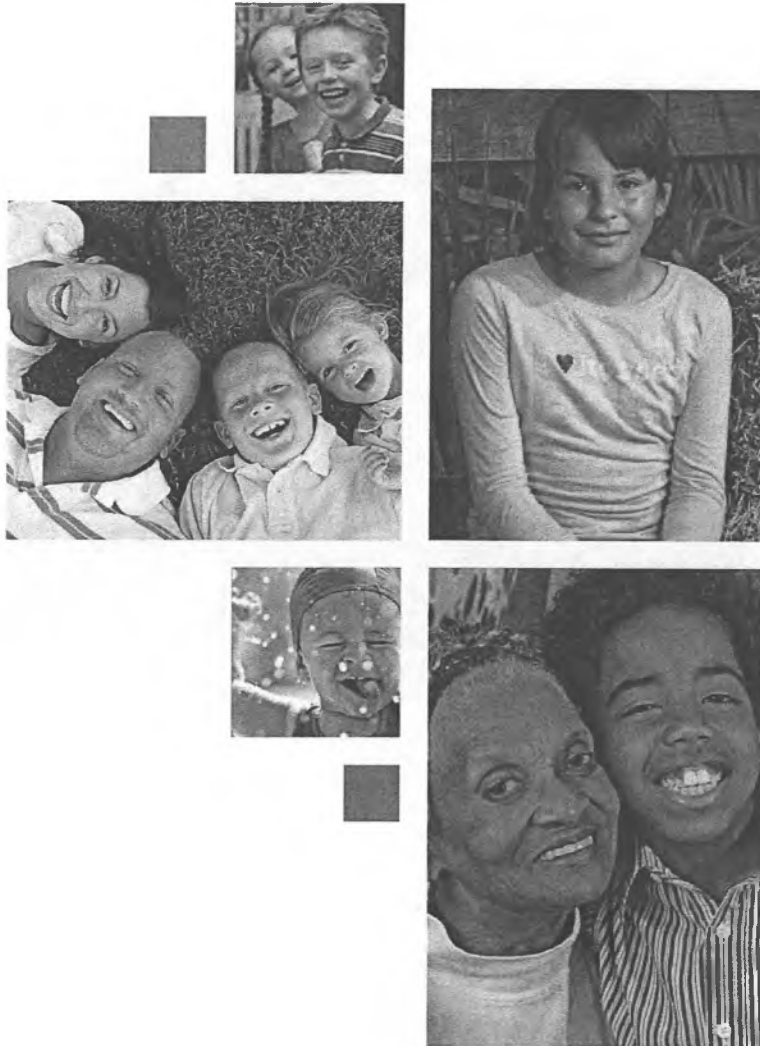
A bystander is a person who witnesses a boundary violation or sees a situation in which a child is vulnerable.

Bystander Intervention

- 1. Describe the inappropriate behavior or the boundary violation to the person who has crossed it.**
"It looks like you're forcing Chloe to kiss and hug. She looks uncomfortable."
- 2. Set a limit with the person who has crossed the boundary.**
"Please stop. We let Chloe decide who she wants to show affection to."
- 3. Move on.**
"Chloe, let's go see what the other children are up to."

If there is a pattern of boundary violations or you've intervened and boundary violations continue, you may have reasonable suspicion. Make a report to the police or child protective services.

***We can make a difference
step by step, and these steps add up
to happier, healthier children
and stronger communities.***



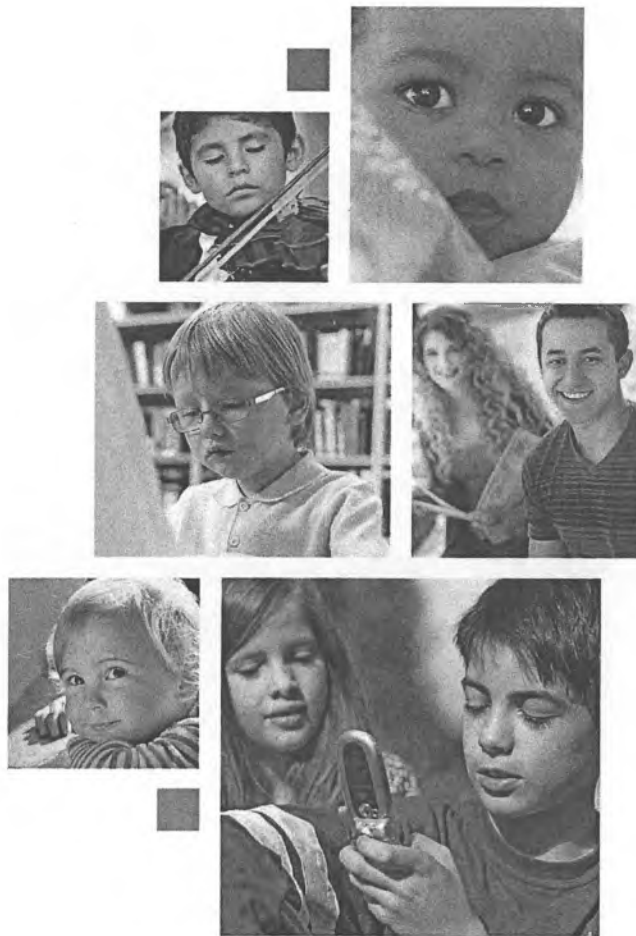
Child Abuse Helplines have staff who are trained to answer questions about suspected child sexual abuse.

Darkness to Light's helpline: 1-866-FOR-LIGHT to be routed to resources in your community.

Childhelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-4-A-CHILD

Children's Advocacy Centers coordinate all the professionals involved in a case (legal, social services, and medical.) If you're unsure about whether to make an official report or just need support, contact a children's advocacy center. The staff will help you evaluate your suspicions and next steps.

To find center near you, contact The National Children's Alliance at www.nationalchildrensalliance.org or 1-800-239-9950.



This *5 Steps to Protecting Our Children* booklet is part of a larger training program called *Stewards of Children*.

Visit D2L.org to take the *Stewards of Children* training online, or to find a facilitator to lead it as training for your organization.

The references for this booklet can be found at D2L.org/5steps



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NBER WORKING PAPER SERIES

DOES CHILD ABUSE CAUSE CRIME?

Janet Currie
Erdal Tekin

Working Paper 12171
<http://www.nber.org/papers/w12171>

NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH
1050 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
April 2006

We would like to thank Neil Guterman, Christina Paxson, Chris Ruhm, Joyce Tabor, Volkan Topalli, and participants in seminars at the City University of New York, Columbia's School Social Work, Columbia's Teachers College, 2005 Population Association of America Meetings, 2005 IZA/SOLE Meetings, 2005 SEA Meetings, Georgia State University, MDRC, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Koc University for helpful comments. Roy Wada provided excellent research assistance. The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Bureau of Economic Research.

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Does Child Abuse Cause Crime?
Janet Currie and Erdal Tekin
NBER Working Paper No. 12171
April 2006
JEL No. I1, K4

ABSTRACT

Child maltreatment, which includes both child abuse and child neglect, is a major social problem. This paper focuses on measuring the effects of child maltreatment on crime using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). We focus on crime because it is one of the most socially costly potential outcomes of maltreatment, and because the proposed mechanisms linking maltreatment and crime are relatively well elucidated in the literature. Our work addresses many limitations of the existing literature on child maltreatment. First, we use a large national sample, and investigate different types of abuse in a similar framework. Second, we pay careful attention to identifying the causal impact of abuse, by using a variety of statistical methods that make differing assumptions. These methods include: Ordinary Least Squares (OLS), propensity score matching estimators, and twin fixed effects. Finally, we examine the extent to which the effects of maltreatment vary with socio-economic status (SES), gender, and the severity of the maltreatment. We find that maltreatment approximately doubles the probability of engaging in many types of crime. Low SES children are both more likely to be mistreated and suffer more damaging effects. Boys are at greater risk than girls, at least in terms of increased propensity to commit crime. Sexual abuse appears to have the largest negative effects, perhaps justifying the emphasis on this type of abuse in the literature. Finally, the probability of engaging in crime increases with the experience of multiple forms of maltreatment as well as the experience of Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation.

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Full paper available at: http://www.nber.org/papers/w12171.pdf?new_window=1



February 12, 2014

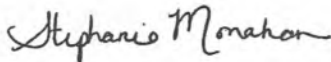
Dear Representative Tarr,

Child abuse in Alaska is a chronic and devastating problem. To overcome the high rates of abuse in Alaska, prevention efforts need to be deployed at multiple levels in order to break the cycle of abuse and give children in Alaska the tools they need to reach their full potential.

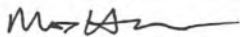
Unfortunately, the trauma and sustained stress associated with child abuse has been shown to undermine a child's development. Such factors damage the developing brain and adversely impact a child's learning and behavior, making academic achievement more difficult. Moreover, such factors increase susceptibility to physical and mental illness and put children at higher risk for involvement in delinquent and/or criminal activities. When children do not have equal opportunity for healthy growth and development, we are putting the future society of Alaska at risk.

The All Alaska Pediatric Partnership supports Erin's Law (House Bill No. 233) as one component of a statewide prevention system needed to help reduce child abuse and neglect. Alaska's schools need comprehensive health education standards that can compliment a statewide prevention system with funding to support improved outcomes.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Monahan
Executive Director



Matthew Hirschfeld, MD/PhD
Co-Chair—Executive Committee

Emily Stevens, RN, BSN, MSN

Emily Stevens
Co-Chair—Executive Committee

The All Alaska Pediatric Partnership
PO Box 230567
Anchorage, AK 99523
www.a2p2.com

February 13, 2014

P.O. Box 4105
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Re: HB No. 233

Representative and Senators,

I am writing to support Representative Tarr's HB 133, "Erin's Law". Unlike many Alaskans, I have first-hand experience working with students to raise awareness of sexual abuse and assault. For twelve years, I was an Assistant District Attorney for the State. For a decade I worked in the Palmer District Attorney's Office where I was the sole attorney working on all sexual abuse and sexual assault cases in the Valley. I now own a business where I routinely give internet safety education presentations to students of all ages, which includes awareness on sexual assault and abuse, and I have presented to staff and counselors on mandatory reporting issues. Finally, though this letter is my personal opinion, I do sit on the Governor's Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault as a public member.

School districts must be involved in educating our youth in these areas. Violence affects many children, which in turn affects their ability to learn. Schools need to teach not just reading, writing and arithmetic, but also issues that affect the emotional well-being and future of children.

Erin's Law is another tool for the State to use to reduce our ranking as the number one state in incidences per capita of rape and child abuse. Erin's Law is proactive not reactive, and the first step in prevention is being proactive.

I encourage and urge you to support HB 233 and help reduce sexual violence against our youth.

Sincerely,

Rachel K. Gernat



NEA-ALASKA

Affiliated with the National Education Association

February 13, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of NEA-Alaska's 13,000 teachers and education support professionals, as well as Alaska's 130,000 public school students, I am voicing support for HB 233, "Erin's Law."

As education professionals, student safety is of the highest concern. From the moment students step onto the school bus in the morning until the time they finish their extracurricular activities in the evening, Alaska's most precious and valuable resource is in our care. It is our job to make sure their learning environment is safe, and to prepare them to protect themselves in the wider world.

Sexual assault and abuse prevention and awareness programs are a key component of keeping Alaska's children safe. Such programs allow Alaskan educators to recognize the signs of such violence more quickly, and provide an immediate and direct route of aid for students. It is important that every Alaskan child knows that he or she can speak out to find safety from sexual assault and abuse.

As educators, our students' safety always comes first. We wholeheartedly urge the passage of HB 233, which would mandate sexual assault and abuse awareness and prevention in Alaska's schools. Thank you to Rep. Lynn Gattis and the House Education Committee for taking the time to address this most important issue.

Sincerely,

Ron Fuhrer
President, NEA-Alaska

Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

Re: H.B. 233, Erin's Law

Dear Legislators,

As representatives of numerous youth groups throughout Alaska, we are writing today in support of H.B. 233, Erin's Law. Child abuse in Alaska is a chronic and devastating problem. Many of us have been subject to or know someone who has been a victim of abuse, be it physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, or neglect. As children, we suffered in silence thinking that this was just how life was. We were rarely empowered to speak up for ourselves and, even if we were, we did not know who to talk to.

This bill requires Alaska public schools to create lessons teaching kids, teachers, and staff how to recognize abuse and know who to talk to. We think that if kids and the adults they spend most of their days with had this knowledge, a lot of kids can be taken out of situations that lead to other problems later in life. Child abuse frequently leads to other major societal problems, like criminal behavior, drug use, mental illness, and emotional instability. Kids who are abused are also more likely to become abusers.

We all visited the Legislators this year and work for our organizations in order to be part of the solution to these problems. Every day, we meet youth with addiction problems, emotional trauma, and criminal tendencies. Giving these kids the power to speak up for themselves and giving adults the tools to listen could really make a difference in how they live day to day. This is why we are writing to ask for you to think about how much better Alaska could be and support H.B. 233.

Sincerely,

Nate Bennett
Nate Bennett

Juneau, AK

Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

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Sincerely,



Roseann Agoney

My name is Roseann Agoney, I'm 20 years old, and I live in Anchorage, Alaska. I was in and out of foster care for three to four years. After my dad got my siblings and I back somewhere back in 2005/2006 we've all been struggling since. I've dealt with drug abuse and alcoholism since then, but I can say now that I no longer am.

Ever since I was little all I can really remember is being around alcoholics and drug users. Seeing my parents and other family members drink and smoke I thought it was okay that did those things too. At the age of ten I would often steal alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana from my parents. At first it was to get the approval of my friends, but later on I was stealing those things because I felt that I needed them. After my dad got us back from OCS we lived in Anchorage and for me it was such a dramatic change that I started to do poorly in school. I was in middle school when I decided to be homeschooled and after that all I was interested in was getting high, just so I could escape the reality I lived in. Because my dad was into drugs and my siblings and I couldn't be around each other for long without trying to kill one another. Since my dad is disabled he couldn't work and due to that we were always struggling day to day.

I was always being put down by my dad almost every other day. In his eyes I was never going to amount to anything because I was smoking weed every day and drinking from time to time. It had gotten to the point that I had tried to commit suicide, but I thought about my younger sisters and who was going to take care of them.

When I was sixteen I wanted to prove him wrong so I tried to cold turkey everything the first time and ended up doing the same old things. So I started smoking and drinking less each time until I was like nope I don't feel like doing that. Because I realized how much of a better person I was when I wasn't high or drunk. I learned how to love myself; I saw how much I improved afterwards. I did better in school I graduated on time; I even had an internship with the RAISE Program! My younger sisters look up to me. But I'm still trying to be a better person, a good role model for my sisters. I'm trying to get a higher education so that I may get a good paying job so I can give them a home where they can grow and put roots down instead of drifting from place to place.

I hope that you keep supporting counseling, treatment, and job support for the youth in Alaska, so we can have a better brighter future. And to show that there are people out there who care, who are willing to help. Thank you for listening to my story.

Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

Re: H.B. 233, Erin's Law

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This bill requires Alaska public schools to create lessons teaching kids, teachers, and staff how to recognize abuse and know who to talk to. We think that if kids and the adults they spend most of their days with had this knowledge, a lot of kids can be taken out of situations that lead to other problems later in life. Child abuse frequently leads to other major societal problems, like criminal behavior, drug use, mental illness, and emotional instability. Kids who are abused are also more likely to become abusers.

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Sincerely,

Brooke wes
Brooke wes
nightmoonbw@gmail.com

My name is Brooke wes I'm from Juneau
I fully support the passing of this bill. when
I was a child I was sexually abused
by my father and my older sister. I think people
who sexually abuse others learned it from
someone else. so I think it is a learned
behavior I would really like to break the cycle
Thank you

Story Practice Sheet

- Is your story short and to the point? Is it only 1-3 minutes and only one page?
- Is it "real"? Does your story come from your heart and inspire others?
- Does your story let listeners know what outcome or action you're asking for – the "ask"?
- Use the reverse side, or a separate piece of paper, if you need extra space.

Introduce yourself – your name and residence, subject, and purpose. (2-4 sentences)

Hello my name is Brooke and I am 22 years old. I was in foster care until I was 13 and then I got adopted.

Tell Your Story – the experience or challenge, the action, the result. (5-15 sentences)

I don't remember most of my childhood. I do know that a lot of the time my siblings and I did not have food or water or blankets. We did not have heat or blankets. We went days in our dirty clothing. I was born at home I was born into a family that badly abused drugs and alcohol we got beaten so badly that I could not sit for days we got taken away a few times but for some reason they would put us back but when I was six years old I was in a very bad accident and we got taken away for the last time.

Wrap it up – state your "ask" and say thank you. (3-5 sentences)

I think kids should be seen and heard you never know what goes on behind closed doors and the disabilities that might be even more affected by it so take the time to see and hear. Thank you!

Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

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When I first was meeting with a social worker in 2nd grade, I was asked why I didn't tell anyone about the abuse. I told that social worker that I did, I had told my teacher. I don't know why the teacher didn't help me.

Ciara Goodman
Ciara M. Goodman

Story Practice Sheet

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Introduce yourself – your name and residence, subject, and purpose (2-4 sentences)

I am born & raised Alaskan Native, Ciara Goodman. I am a college student @ UAF in Anchorage. Currently 22 yrs old. I aged out of foster care, graduated residential treatment, and lived in many places of Alaska. I consider myself an intelligent, empathetic, and genuine person and I want to help make a difference.

Tell Your Story – the experience or challenge, the action, the result (5-15 sentences)

My childhood was filled with inconsistency, multiple homes & schools, rejection from family, early medication and a loss of my will to live. Addiction, manipulation, greed & lack of love contributed to the trials of my childhood. As much as it hurt to feel like nothing more than a file it was more painful to witness that I was not alone. That many, hundreds more, children carried the same burden as me, if not worse. And more so we could not see a light at the end of this dark & confusing tunnel. As I realized the depths of the issues concerning many homeless youth I felt the need to do something. Yet I was powerless then. The change that is seriously needed can only source from the power in charge, & unfortunately they didn't know the problem existed. These painful truths gave me the drive to carry on in hopes that I can find a way to break light into that tunnel and see that no foster kid walks through it alone, again.

Wrap it up – state your "ask" and say thank you (3-5 sentences)

It is my desire to join the forces that will aid these youth and to help influence change for a better & brighter tomorrow. I hope to minimize the number of children facing the same sorrows and pain as I did and to increase those filled with love, hope, & fulfillment. Thank you for listening and please join me in supporting Alaska's Youth.

Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

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Sincerely, Alex Krause
Alex Krause.

1/5/14

Story Practice Sheet

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Introduce yourself - your name and address, the subject, and purpose (2-4 sentences)

Hello My Name is Alexandra Krause, I'm From North Pole Alaska, I currently live in Fairbanks, I work at QuizNoz and I live in my car with my fiancée, who is a college student, and my Dog Romeo

Tell Your Story - the experience or challenge, the action, the result (3-5 sentences)

I grew up rough, never around positive influences. Drug addicts and moving from home to home. I've struggled with homelessness my whole life. Growing up I had 13 Child Protective Services cases on me and my younger sister. But we never got taken from my mother. I often wonder if life would have been better if they did take us. A Gang through that I learned to lie about things so I could stay with my mom, they made it too easy. I moved out well, ran away at 11. And no one noticed, we was long gone. There I found S.O.A.P. They helped for a long time. then they started losing funds.

Wrap it up - state your "ask" and say thank you. (3-5 sentences)

I can't receive help from S.O.A.P any more because they have too many clients, and too little money. I'm not worried about myself, this has been my life... But those kids are me and local homeless programs need much more funding and services available to them.

THANK YOU!

Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

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Sincerely,

 2/4/14
James LeBlare - Tweedy

Story Practice Sheet

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Introduce yourself - your name and residence, subject, and purpose (2-4 sentences)

My name is James Alexander LeBlanc - Toucan. My name before adoption was James Robert LeBlanc. I am 19, only year old and live in Juvenile A.K. I. Was placed in foster care when I was 10 and was in and out of treatment and jail till I was 19.

Tell Your Story - the experience or challenge, the action, the result (5-15 sentences)

I can always remember when I was young, the street and state, I was always getting into trouble. When I was placed in foster care with my two younger brothers I (6) and August (8) I was in foster care I never wanted but accepted + after being placed in residential treatment I was sent to treatment at the age of 14 for a crime I did not commit. I was then placed on probation. Now I have been between jail and treatment since I was 19. I was then homeless until now although I am now living in the city hall.

Wrap it up - state your "ask" and say thank you (3-5 sentences)

I hope the story I have presented to you will help you look at the youth systems and make the changes that would make young children lives happier and something they can be proud of. Thank you for reading my story, I hope it helps you make the needed changes that are needed. Thank you for your time.

Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

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Sincerely,

Deborah

Deborah
Yunak

Yunak

Scammon Bay

Scammon Bay

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My name is Deborah Yunak, I'm 19 yrs. old, and I live in Scammon Bay Alaska. I went to a residential treatment in the year of 2010 to Fairbanks for 9 months for substance abuse and depression

once I got into Junior high I started to get into trouble with marijuana use and alcohol. I thought it would make me cool and have more friends by doing substance abuse, I used it daily to where I got addicted. I started to miss school more often because I was so depressed missing my aunt that passed away. I'd always let my friends make me alcohol. I use to think doing substance abuse would help me go to my aunt, but nothing happen, my mom finally realize that I haven't been home, so she called the school attendant to see if I've been going school, she told my mom that I haven't been to school for a week now. when I finally went home I went home drunk, my mom scold me, I took it the wrong way and hung my self.

I hope that the support of our community programs help our young people with counseling, treatment, and jobs so they can be close to our loved ones, and our friends to stay out of big trouble. And I want to say thank you for listening to my story.

Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

February 5, 2014

Re: H.B. 233, Erin's Law

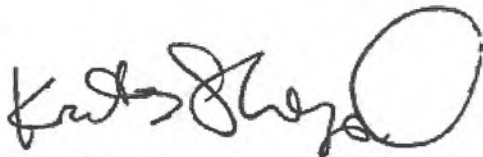
Dear Legislators,

As representatives of numerous youth groups throughout Alaska, we are writing today in support of H.B. 233, Erin's Law. Child abuse in Alaska is a chronic and devastating problem. Many of us have been subject to or know someone who has been a victim of abuse, be it physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, or neglect. As children, we suffered in silence thinking that this was just how life was. We were rarely empowered to speak up for ourselves and, even if we were, we did not know who to talk to.

This bill requires Alaska public schools to create lessons teaching kids, teachers, and staff how to recognize abuse and know who to talk to. We think that if kids and the adults they spend most of their days with had this knowledge, a lot of kids can be taken out of situations that lead to other problems later in life. Child abuse frequently leads to other major societal problems, like criminal behavior, drug use, mental illness, and emotional instability. Kids who are abused are also more likely to become abusers.

We all visited the Legislators this year and work for our organizations in order to be part of the solution to these problems. Every day, we meet youth with addiction problems, emotional trauma, and criminal tendencies. Giving these kids the power to speak up for themselves and giving adults the tools to listen could really make a difference in how they live day to day. This is why we are writing to ask for you to think about how much better Alaska could be and support H.B. 233.

Sincerely,



Kristie Lynn Sheppard 2.5.14

Mountain Village, AK

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT First Committee of Referral

DATE: 3/28/14

FURTHER: Finance

Date of 5-Day Notice: _____
(in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 4/4/14

Education Committee considered SENATE BILL NO. 216

SB 216 SEXUAL ABUSE/ASSAULT PREVENTION PROGRAMS

"An Act relating to sexual abuse and sexual assault awareness and prevention efforts in public schools; establishing a task force in the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- be replaced with CS SB 216 (EOL) [] Same Title [] New Title
- [] adopt previous CS _____ (_____) [] Same Title [] New Title
- [] attached amendment(s)
- [] adopt _____ Letter of Intent
- [] further referral to _____ Committee

Dept Abbr.	
ADM	LWF
CED	LAW
COR	LEG
CRT	MVA
EED	DNR
DEC	DPS
DFG	REV
GOV	DOT
DHS	UA

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #
EED			✓	1

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #

[] APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	PRINTED LAST NAME	Do PASS	Do NOT PASS	No REC	AMEND
	Gardner	X			
	STEIMAN				
	DUNLAP				
CHAIR:	STEVEN	X			