

Welcome to Erin's Law: Waterbury Public Schools Staff Training

A CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM



Erin Merryn

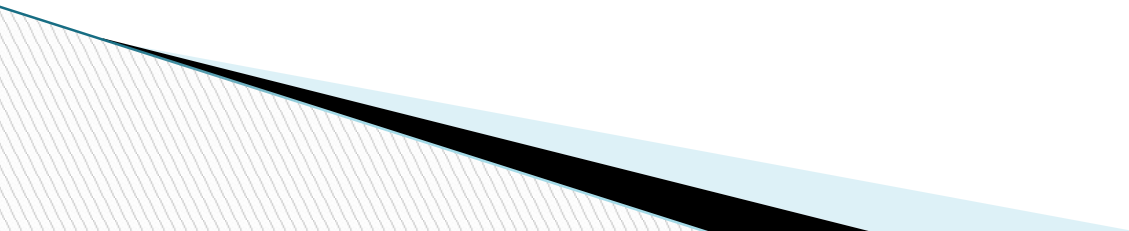
- ▶ Erin's Law is named after Erin Merryn
- ▶ She is a survivor of child sexual assault, author, speaker and activist.
- ▶ **Her Mission:** to get education in all 50 states on the prevention of sexual abuse by empowering children with their voice instead of allowing sex offenders to silence them
- ▶ The main intent of Erin's Law is to shatter the silence and stigma around child sexual abuse and to educate children and to empower them to recognize and to report abuse



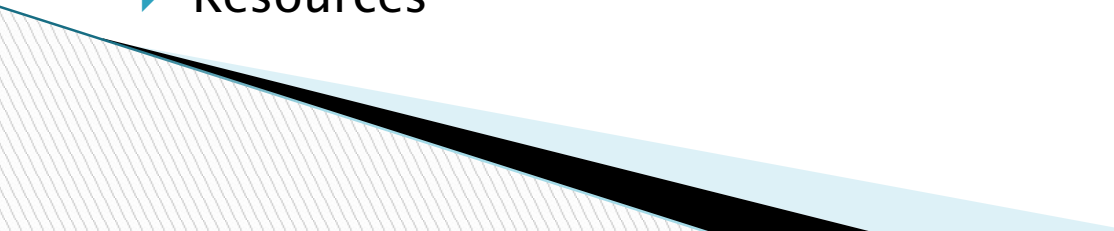
What this means...

- ▶ This law **requires** all public schools to implement prevention oriented programming K through 12th grade which includes:
 - Child Sexual Abuse and Assault Awareness Program**
 - Training for school staff**
 - Mandated Reporting**
 - Student Support**
 - Resources**

Staff Training



Staff Training

- ▶ Sexual Abuse Definition
 - ▶ U.S. Department of Justice Facts and Statistics
 - ▶ Offenders
 - ▶ Possible Warning Signs
 - ▶ Age of Sexual Consent
 - ▶ Student Disclosure
 - ▶ DCF Mandated Reporting
 - ▶ Student support
 - ▶ Awareness & Prevention
 - ▶ Resources
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Defining Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is a form of child abuse that includes sexual activity with a minor. A child cannot consent to any form of sexual activity, period. Child sexual abuse does not need to include physical contact between a perpetrator and a child. Some forms of child sexual abuse include:

- ▶ Exhibitionism, or exposing oneself to a minor
- ▶ Fondling
- ▶ Intercourse
- ▶ Masturbation in the presence of a minor or forcing the minor to masturbate
- ▶ Obscene phone calls, text messages, or digital interaction
- ▶ Producing, owning, or sharing pornographic images or movies of children
- ▶ Sex of any kind with a minor, including vaginal, oral, or anal
- ▶ Sex trafficking
- ▶ Any other sexual conduct that is harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare

U.S. Department of Justice

Facts and Statistics: Child/Teen Victims

- ▶ Victims who were sexually abused: 26% age 12-14 and 34% younger than 9 years
- ▶ Approximately 1.8 million adolescents in the United States have been the victims of sexual assault
- ▶ Approximately 1 in 6 boys and 1 in 4 girls are sexually abused before the age of 18
- ▶ 35.8% of sexual assaults occur between the ages of 12 and 17
- ▶ 82% of all juvenile victims are female
- ▶ 69% of the teen sexual assaults reported to law enforcement occurred in the residence of the victim, the offender, or another individual
- ▶ Approximately 1 in 5 female high school students report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner

U.S. Department of Justice: Abuse via Technology

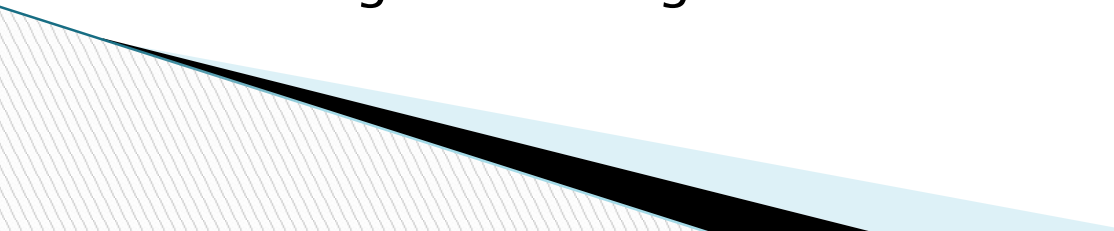
- ▶ Approximately 1 in 7 (13%) youth Internet users received unwanted sexual solicitations
- ▶ 1 in 25 youths received an online sexual solicitation in which the solicitor tried to make offline contact
- ▶ In more than one-quarter (27%) of incidents, solicitors asked youths for sexual photographs of themselves
- ▶ The most common first encounter of a predator with an Internet-initiated sex crimes victim took place in an online chat room (76%)
- ▶ In nearly half (47%) of the cases involving an Internet-initiated sex crimes victim, the predator offered gifts or money during the relationship-building phase
- ▶ 15% of cell-owning teens (12-17) say they have received sexually suggestive nude/seminude images of someone they know via text
- ▶ 26% of teenagers and young adults say they have participated in sexting

Who are the offenders?

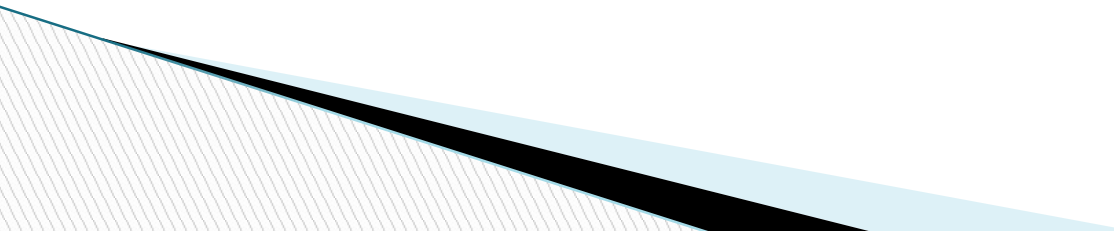
National Center for Victims of Crime Statistics:

- ▶ Offenders are overwhelmingly male, ranging from adolescents to the elderly
- ▶ Some perpetrators are female. It is estimated that women are the abusers in about 14% of cases reported among boys and 6% of cases reported among girls
- ▶ Approximately one-third of offenders are themselves juveniles
- ▶ 23% of reported cases of child sexual abuse are perpetrated by individuals under the age of 18
- ▶ Only 14% of children who suffered sexual abuse were violated by an unknown perpetrator
- ▶ 60% of children are sexually abused by someone in their social circle. Hence, the phrase “Stranger Danger” is misleading
- ▶ 40–80% of juvenile sex offenders have themselves been victims of sexual abuse

Possible Warning Signs: 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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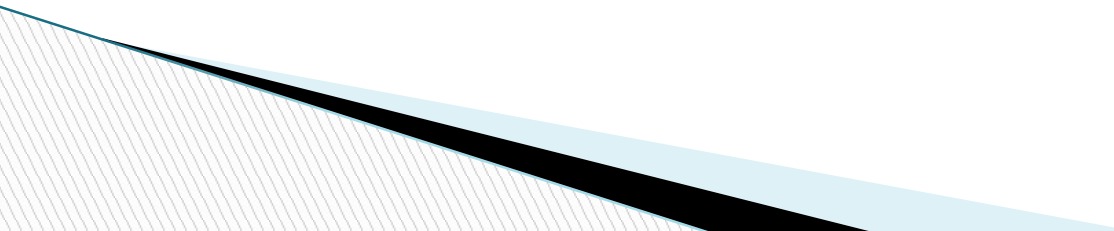
Possible Warning Signs: Adolescents

- ▶ 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
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Possible Behavior : 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
- ▶ Sudden mood swings: rage, fear, insecurity or withdrawal
- ▶ 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

Possible Warning Signs: Physical

- ▶ Chronic gastrointestinal complaints
 - ▶ Complaints of pain or injury to genital or rectal area
 - ▶ Pregnancy
 - ▶ Sexually transmitted disease
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Age of Sexual Consent

- ▶ The general age of consent in Connecticut is 16. This applies in most normal relationships. However, if any of the following apply, then the age of consent becomes 18:
- ▶ Where one person is a guardian, or responsible for the general supervision, of the other. *See C.G.S. § 53a-71(a)(4).*
- ▶ Where one person is an athletic coach or an intensive, ongoing instructor (e.g. piano teacher) *outside of* a school setting, and the other is being coached or instructed. *See C.G.S. § 53a-71(9)(B).*
- ▶ Where one person's professional, legal, occupational or volunteer status gives him/her a role of supervision, power, or authority, over the other's participation in a program or activity, and the older person is at least 20-years-old. *See C.G.S. § 53a-71(a)(4).*

Age of Sexual Consent

Age of consent is *irrelevant* in the following; as even consensual adult sexual activity is *criminalized* in these relationships:

- ▶ Where one person is a school employee (of the board of education, by extension excluding post-secondary schools) and the other a student. *See C.G.S. § 53a-71(a)(8)*.
- ▶ Where one person is an athletic coach or an intensive, ongoing instructor (e.g. piano teacher) in a secondary (high school) setting and the other a student. *See C.G.S. § 53a-71(9)(A)*.

Non-Disclosure

- ▶ Not all sexually abused children exhibit symptoms—some estimate that up to 40% of sexually abused children are asymptomatic
- ▶ Males tend not to report their victimization, which may affect statistics. Some men even feel societal pressure to be proud of early sexual activity, regardless of whether it was unwanted.
- ▶ Children do not tell for a variety of reasons. These include:
 - threats to the child
 - fear of the perpetrator
 - lack of opportunity
 - lack of understanding of child sexual abuse
 - relationship with the perpetrator
 - shame
 - fear of causing trouble in the family
 - fear their parent's reaction

Student Disclosure

- ▶ When children do disclose:
 - It is frequently to a friend or a sibling
 - Of all other family members, mothers are most likely to be told. Whether or not a mother might be told will depend on the child's expected response from the mother
 - Few disclose abuse to authorities or professionals
 - Of all professionals, teachers are the most likely to be told
- ▶ Provide a safe environment , safety is priority
- ▶ Provide reassurance and support
- ▶ Obtain facts, ask as few questions as possible
- ▶ You don't need to know specific details
- ▶ Obtain enough information to decide if abuse/exploitation *may* have occurred
- ▶ Don't need to be *certain* of abuse
- ▶ Make necessary DCF report; Careline 1-800-842-2288

DCF Mandated Reporting Procedures

When : As soon as practical, but no later than 12 hours after the mandated reporter becomes aware of or suspects abuse/neglect or imminent risk of serious harm or that a mandated reporter must notify DCF

To Whom : DCF Careline: 1-800-842-2288; or calling the local law enforcement agency

A written report (DCF 136) is required by law to be written and submitted within 48 hours of oral report

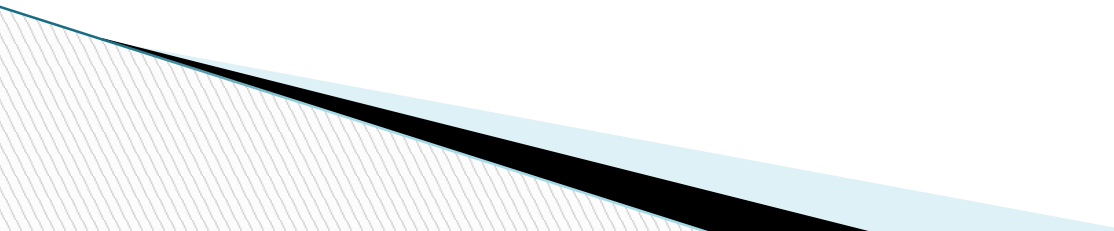
http://www.ct.gov/dcf/lib/dcf/policy/forms/dcf_136.pdf

ORAL REPORT TO CARELINE IS REQUIRED

DCF-136 will not be accepted without oral report being made

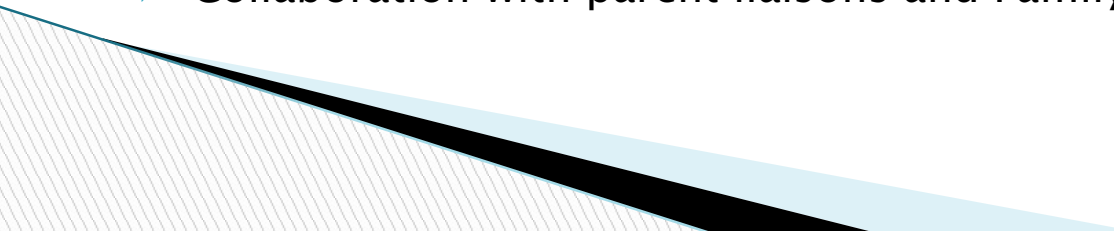
Student Support

Including but not limited to the following:

- ▶ Counseling support services in school for students
 - ▶ Student support plan
 - ▶ Age appropriate educational materials for students grades k-12
 - ▶ Referrals and collaboration with community agencies
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Awareness & Prevention

Including but not limited to the following:

- ▶ Board of Education Policy: Sexual Abuse Prevention & Awareness Program
 - ▶ K- 12 Sexual Abuse Awareness & Prevention Program (parent opt out form)
 - ▶ Annual presentations from Waterbury Police Department to middle and high school students and staff on sexual assault
 - ▶ Community agency student presentations
 - ▶ Resources and materials for staff, students and parents
 - ▶ Parent presentations during open house
 - ▶ Collaboration with parent liaisons and Family Resource Centers
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Resources

- ▶ Stop It Now!
- ▶ US Department of Justice
- ▶ Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network
- ▶ Northwest Center Against Sexual Assault
- ▶ Erin's Law
- ▶ Healthy relationships/teen dating <http://laurashouse.org/lhteen/>
- ▶ Teen Dating Violence Tip Sheet
<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/teen-dating-violence-2014-a.pdf>