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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Utah State Board of Education

FROM: Brad C. Smith
Chief Executive Officer

DATE: February 5-6, 2015

ACTION: Minimums Caregiver/Guardian Document Format

Background: House Bill 286 *Child Sexual Abuse Prevention* was passed during the 2014 Legislative Session. The bill states that the Utah State Board of Education shall approve instructional materials for child sexual abuse prevention and awareness training and instruction.

Board Vice Chair Jennifer Johnson is chairing a workgroup, in partnership with the Department of Human Services, organized to work on implementation of the legislative requirements. The group has been crafting minimum curricula for use by youth, caregivers, and educators.

Key Points: Vice Chair Johnson presented to the Board in January 2015 a draft template for a Minimums Caregiver/Guardian document. The Board directed that the document go out for public comment for twenty days to receive input on the following:

1. Is this type of formatting logical and will it help local school districts and charter schools in selecting a provider to provide sexual abuse prevention training and instruction?
2. Will this type of formatting help providers identify and demonstrate which minimum standards are met by their programs?
3. Does this type of formatting help parents and other members of the public understand the expected content of these trainings?

Anticipated Action:

The Standards and Assessment Committee will be updated on the input received and will make a recommendation to the full Board for approval of the document format.

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****INITIAL DRAFT – NEEDS FURTHER REVIEW INCLUDING
ADDITIONS, REFERENCES, EDITS****

MINIMUMS CAREGIVER/GUARDIAN - HB 286

This document will be used for two intended purposes:

- (1) a template for evaluation of possible curricula by the state and possibly by LEAs*
- (2) a planning document for laddering requirements for curricula over time*
- (3) a summary document for parents*

Trainer Expectations

Pedagogy expectations: The training of parents and guardians should be oriented to empower them as the primary trainers of their children. The training should include portions that are interactive so that participants can practice what they learn (e.g. - role-playing, scenario discussions in small-groups/pairs).

Trainer preparation: It is preferred that the trainer is specifically trained in the curriculum he or she will present.

Introduction/Education

Definition: Any act or acts by any person involving sexual molestation or exploitation of a youth including but not limited to incest, prostitution, rape, sodomy, or any lewd and lascivious conduct involving a youth. [Legal definitions for Utah including acts that are legally prohibited at certain ages or age differentials.]

Statistics:

It is estimated that more than 300,000 children in this country are sexually abused every year.

According to the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Study, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 18. Based on these numbers, in 2013, 74,107 girls and 52,164 boys in Utah will experience some form of sexual abuse before age 18.

Most cases go unreported. More than 88% of adults who were abused say they never reported the abuse to authorities.

Between 80 to 90% of all perpetrators are someone who is close with the family, most likely in the victim's "circle of trust".

Myth-busting facts: (There are many common myths related to sexual abuse.)

Prevention efforts do matter and by learning the facts, caregivers can make a difference.

Every day, adults miss important opportunities to prevent child sexual abuse because of misinformation and confusing stereotypes. An abuser takes on all shapes and sizes, regardless of social status, ethnicity, race, or creed.

An abuser is generally someone the family knows and trusts; someone who has easy and consistent access to the youth. The idea that the perpetrator is a "stranger lurking in a dark alley" is most often not the case.

Both boys and girls can be victimized.

Both men and women can be abusers.

Another common myth is that a victim will become a perpetrator, when in fact most victims do not become abusers.

Importance of Training: Every day, adults miss critical opportunities to prevent child sexual abuse because they are not armed with the tools to know what to look for, what to say, and what to do. By becoming educated, caregivers can become a powerful force in making the world a safer place for youth every adult is responsible for the safety of children. When a youth speaks up, it is up to adults to act. If someone approaches a youth in a sexual way, adults are the ones who need to take the responsibility to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to end sexual abuse. Caregivers need to remove this burden from their shoulders.

Signs: There are many different signs that may be given by a youth who is a victim of abuse. Many signs together could even mean other stressors are occurring in a youth's life that are affecting their well-being, such as divorce or bullying. However, if a caregiver is witness to a combination of these signs, they should pay close attention and make sure to address it immediately.

Behavioral signs:

- sleeping disturbances,
- sudden personality changes,
- older youth reverting back to younger behaviors,
- unexplained fear or refusal to be around a certain individual, or refusal to go to typical activities,
- sexual reactivity that is inappropriate for the youth's stage of development.

- self-harming behaviors, such as cutting
- participating in self-defeating behaviors or high risk, such as substance abuse
- tantrums and outbursts at home or school
- trouble with mood regulation
- decline in educational performance

Physical Signs

- difficulty walking or sitting
- torn clothing,
- stained or bloody underwear,
- pain or itching in the genital area,
- sudden weight gain, or loss

Effects – Sexual abuse is extremely prevalent and can cause many different physical and mental health problems. The effects of sexual abuse are numerous and widespread. Survivors report increased likelihood of substance abuse and mental health issues. The side effects include, among others, increased risk of suicide and eating disorders. Both male and female victims are more likely to engage in prostitution than if they had not been abused. The economic strain on the community represents the second most expensive crime behind murder, costing the U.S. billions annually. Many victims report that they feel their innocence was taken from them, and that the emotional effects are lifelong and devastating.

Terminology

Grooming: Extensive personal actions and behaviors that build trust with youth (and often their caregivers) can be a step in the process of abuse. This “grooming” typically takes place over time, and develops into inappropriate physical contact. Adults who know and recognize these behaviors are better prepared to prevent sexual abuse before it happens. If an adult or older youth seems overly interested or creates opportunities to be alone with another youth, it is important to be aware and stop the cycle immediately. [MORE NEEDED HERE]

Trafficking – Children are exploited through prostitution, pornography and sexual entertainment. Children are exploited through prostitution on average at the age of 13. At least 100,000 U.S. children are exploited in prostitution every year in America. (<http://sharedhope.org/trafficking/faqs>)

Power and Control: Perpetrators are masters of manipulation and control. They have a way of lulling victims and their families into a state of high regard and complete trust. As a family values their relationship and role in the family and community, they are carefully and masterfully planning their next move on youth. It is not uncommon for perpetrators to seek out positions of power over youth, such as coaching, teaching, and even mentoring. This not only allows for greater access to the youth but a dynamic of control.

Perpetrator Info and Traits: Perpetrators do their very best to look and act like every day people. Sexual abuse is predominately a “white collar” crime, and so these criminals go to all lengths to blend in masterfully into society. They are charming, charismatic, and oftentimes pillars in the community. They will go to great lengths to earn trust, thus challenging caregiver’s instincts and causing them to let down their guard. They are methodical in their efforts to keep up the image they have worked so hard to create. They will forever fall back on it to attest to their innocence if accusations ever arise against them.

Risk Factors: Certain traits or behaviors of a youth can put them at higher risk. Youth who are insecure, have low self-esteem; feel lonely or are disconnected are particularly vulnerable. Other points of concern are if he/she lacks access to information about sex and sexuality, or is exposed to videos, music, or video games that are violent, sexually explicit, or degrading to women. If there is unsupervised access to technology (e.g., the Internet, cell phone), or the youth has a disability (e.g., cognitive, physical, emotional and/or learning), they may also be susceptible.

Importance of Trust: A youth should feel safe when disclosing abuse or neglect; establish trust with a youth by following these important steps.

- help the youth feel comfortable,
- reassure the youth that is not his/her fault,
- don’t react with shock, anger, or disgust,
- don’t force a youth to talk,
- don’t force a youth to show injuries,
- use terms and language that the youth can understand,
- don’t “interview” the youth,
- ask appropriate questions, don’t ask “why” questions,
- don’t teach the youth new terms or words,
- find out what the youth wants from you
- be honest with the youth,
- confirm the youth’s feelings,
- be supportive
- remember, the safety of the child is the most important thing.

Healthy Sexual Development:

Infancy (0-2 Years Old)

HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

- Learn through relationship with caregivers
- Focus on developing a sense of trust
- Learn about body through sense of touch
- May be able to make basic distinction between males and females
- May explore genitals
- May have spontaneous reactions that appear sexual, such as an erection
- No inhibitions about nudity

Toddler and Preschool Years (2-5 Years Old)

HEALTHY BEHAVIOR

- Develop language to describe genitalia
- Should clearly know difference between males and females
- May know basics of human reproduction (e.g., babies grow inside mother's tummy)
- May touch themselves or appear to be masturbating; usually used as self-soothing technique
- Often engage in consensual genital exploration with same age peers
- May show curiosity about adult genitalia (e.g., may try to see Mommy nude)
- No inhibitions about nudity

Middle Childhood (5-8 Years Old)

HEALTHY BEHAVIOR

- Gender identity solidifies and stabilizes (understand physical, behavioral, and emotional distinctions between males and females)
- Should have basic understanding of puberty (some children, especially girls, will show early signs of puberty)
- Should have basic understanding of human reproduction
- May understand differences in sexual orientation
- Will develop more stable friendships
- May engage in consensual genital exploration with same age (and often, same sex) peers
- Will begin to be modest about nudity

Pre-teens (10-12 years old)

- In these years, children's sexual development is very active.
- These preteens continue to be curious about sexuality, usually because it is very important to them now.
- Some girls start having periods, and their breasts begin to develop. Boy's voices change, and they start to grow pubic hair. These changes can make young people feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, and suddenly very private.
- During these times of rapid change, children often have questions about the physical changes their bodies are going through.
- It can be hard for adults to discuss these things.
- The young people start looking grown up, but they are still children.

- Young people also feel embarrassed, but it is good both for children and adults to talk about sexuality.

POTENTIALLY UNHEALTHY BEHAVIOR

- Adult-like sexual interactions
- Overtly sexual and/or specific language or discussion about mature sexual acts
- Public masturbation

TIPS FOR FACILITATING HEALTHY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

- Respecting child's need for privacy
- Being clear with child about respect for people's boundaries and need for privacy
- Talking with child about bodily responses, especially those that are precursors to sexual response (e.g., "it feels good to touch one's body"), and about what is and is not appropriate during peer interaction
- Modeling healthy, intimate adult relationships characterized by effective communication
- Teaching child about male and female puberty (by 7-8 years old)
- Using everyday opportunities to teach child about sexuality, even the mechanics of reproduction (children should know the "birds and the bees" by no later than 9 years old—It's important to know that research shows that children whose parents talk with them about sexuality are less likely to become sexually active at an early age)

Prevention

School Policy: Each school has procedures and prevention policies set in place to protect its' youth against sexual abuse and sexual predators. Caregivers need to educate themselves on their school's programs and work hand-in-hand with school officials to reinforce these practices at home. It is important to coordinate efforts in both the school and home environments to provide a clearer and more unified discussion of abuse, its terminology and signs, and the proper ways to report when one suspects abuse.

Minimize Risk: There is a need to set clear boundaries and rules with a youth's time and ponder carefully about the safety of situations in which older youth have access to younger children. Caregivers need to make sure that multiple adults are present who can supervise. Think carefully about the safety of any isolated, one-on-one settings, and choose group situations whenever possible. Caregivers should monitor youth's Internet use because offenders use the Internet to lure youth into physical contact.

Trust your intuition: When reflecting on someone's behavior, consider the following: Does it seem odd? Does it make you feel uncomfortable? Does it seem to happen all the time or too often? Has anyone else commented or noticed? If the answer is yes, then trust your instincts and act. Confronting the person, or reporting what you suspect, may just save the life of a child.

Set and respect family boundaries: All members of the family have rights to privacy in dressing, bathing, sleeping, and other personal activities. If anyone does not respect these rights, an adult should clearly tell them the family rules.

Right to say no: Teach the youth plainly the right to say no when anyone wants to touch their vagina, penis, breasts, buttocks or anywhere that is normally covered if you put a swimming suit on. Teach the youth to say NO loudly even if to an adult, explain that doing this, under these circumstances, will not get the youth in trouble. Teach the youth about “bad secrets” and the difference between a surprise and a secret. Empower the youth with the right to privacy and to say no, but pair it with the understanding that the adults are the ones responsible for correct behavior.

Communication: Caregivers should talk to youth about sexual abuse with clarity and confidence. All prevention efforts are strengthened by the reinforcement of prevention concepts by caregivers/guardians. Practicing what to say will help to prepare for the conversations. Making sure youth have the words they need to describe situations that make them feel mixed up or uncomfortable. Experts suggest when talking to youth about body parts, that it is best to use the correct names, i.e. penis and vagina. When nicknames are used it can make it difficult or confusing for the youth to report.

Disclosure

How to React: When a youth approaches and discloses instances of sexual abuse, it is crucial that it is realized that the reaction plays an important part in whether they will continue to confide, or will shut off and never speak of it again. Is the reaction caring and loving, or quick to cast aside their experiences in response to uncomfortable feelings? Youth will pick up on everything from our mannerisms to our attentiveness (or lack thereof), and will judge themselves “guilty” or “dirty” according to how they feel caregivers perceive them. It is important to learn what to say, and what *not* to say as these youth entrust us with their darkest and most painful secrets. They must always feel believed at all costs.

How to Report: If you suspect that a youth is being (or has been) sexually abused, immediately call Utah’s 24-hour Child Protection Line: 1-855-323-3237. The hotline makes it easy to share concerns about a youth with a trained social worker. A person does not need to be certain abuse has occurred to call. Try to have as much information on hand as possible, including name, of the child and his/her parents/caretakers; the child’s date of birth, address, school or child care provider; and, the nature of the concerns. The system is set up to handle an investigation in a way that considers the well-being of the youth. By following the appropriate steps for reporting, chances are the youth will not be traumatized further by multiple interviews and the case will remain untainted by outside sources.

Mandatory Reporters: In the State of Utah, all citizens are mandatory reports. This duty does not just fall to teachers, social workers, and police. This means if anyone suspects any type of abuse to any child that they should call and report. Non – offending parent need to

understand the moral and legal duty to protect children regardless of the identity of the perpetrator. [There is legal immunity for reporters – legal citation]

Accountability: Youth shouldn't have the burden of preventing sexual abuse by themselves. Adults must act on their commitment to keeping youth safe by learning to recognize and respond to inappropriate behaviors around youth, before a youth is harmed, and reporting if something has occurred.

Safety Plans: Make a plan ahead of time about:

- 1 - What are the boundaries are for adult interactions with youth?
- 2 - What will be said if there is behavior that violates those boundaries?
- 3 - How will the caregiver report (what number to call, what information is needed, etc.)

Treatment:

Tools and Resources: Resources for Victims

Seeking Treatment is a very personal decision that belongs alone to the survivor. However, you may provide information or resources so he or she has options.

There are several national crisis lines you can call to get resource information and 24 hour support.

Darkness to Light 1-866-367-5444

National Rape, Abuse, and Incest Hotline – 1-800-656-HOPE, or www.rainn.org

National Helpline Hotline 1-800-4ACHILD, www.childhelp.org

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), provides an online directory of Victim Services throughout the country. OVC also provides information about victim assistance and compensation programs available in communities around the country.

Utah Office for Victims of Crime (UOVC)
350 East 500 South Suite 200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
(801) 238-2360
(800) 621-7444
Fax (801) 533-4127

Persons with health insurance can contact their insurance provider and request a list of covered mental health providers in their network. Generally there is information available on the provider's specialization and modality of treatment.

Persons with Medicaid can contact their local County Mental Health Department. There an assessment can be done to help link the victim with the appropriate treatment provider.

References

Douglas, Emily and D. Finkelhor, Childhood sexual abuse fact sheet, <http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/factsheets/pdf/childhoodSexualAbuseFactSheet.pdf>, Crimes Against Children Research Center, May 2005 (accessed 1/7/2010)

[OTHER DOCUMENTS ON THE GOOGLE DRIVE]