

MINIMUM EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUTH CURRICULUM (K-6)

This document will be used for these intended purposes:

- 1. To satisfy House Bill 286, Second Substitute Child Sexual Abuse Prevention, sponsored in the 2014 General Session of the Utah Legislature by Rep. Angela Romero, which enacted Utah Code 53G-9-207, provisions relating to child sexual abuse prevention training and instruction in public schools.*
- 2. As a guide for evaluation of possible curricula by the state and possibly by Local Education Agencies throughout Utah.*

TRAINER EXPECTATIONS

Have familiarity with law: Read and understand Utah's laws in regard to sexual abuse, Utah Code 53E-9-302.

Cultural differences and/or special populations: Be mindful of your own cultural upbringing, and teach to the individual in equitable ways. Consider more specialized instruction when needed, and use teaching aids and lessons that are adaptable for cultural relevance and special populations.

Understand cognitive development norms: Curriculum should highlight a brief overview of development norms, however at early ages; the youth's self-concept is limited. Curriculum should include activities that help the youth remember milestones, such as age of first memory and the norm of age of first memory. Other examples include:

- ages 2 to 3, use toys as symbols in play
- ages 3 to 4, begin to follow directions
- ages 4 to 5, begin to understand the difference between good and bad behavior
- ages 5 to 6, a youth's environment begins to shape his/her personality
- ages 6 to 11, begins to change the way he/she thinks about the world as he/she leaves the egocentric thinking. Youths this age are also now able to think of themselves in more sophisticated ways. This more advanced thinking brings about comparisons to others, self-examination, and changing self-concept and self-esteem.
(For additional information on age-appropriate development, see "Healthy Sexual Development" information attached at the end of this document.)

Curriculum adaptations for different ages: Curriculum content should be adapted for age groups dependent on cognitive abilities and special populations.

REQUIRED PROGRAM CONCEPTS

All bolded terms are minimum expectations. Accompanying information should be treated as explanatory to the bolded term.

Sexual misconduct: Any sexual act by an adult that makes a youth feel uncomfortable. This can include physical and non-physical contact, pictures, inappropriate jokes or communication and other grooming behaviors.

Appropriate adult behavior: Curriculum should focus on teaching youths what good adult behavior looks like so that it is clear that it is the responsibility for adults to keep youths safe. Youths should be taught that they have the right to ask an adult to stop and that youths can report any behavior that concerns them to a trusted adult. Modeling good adult behavior is a preferred method of teaching.

Examples include:

- Giving high-fives
- Respecting a youth's requests for more personal space
- Not touching private areas (unless medically necessary)
- Keeping doors open if a youth is alone with an adult
- Keeping windows clear of coverings
- Not telling jokes about private body areas
- Not sharing personal or intimate details of his or her home life
- Not forcing a hug

Practice saying “no”: Youths should be taught they should not keep secrets about touching or viewing private body areas. Remind youths that they have the right to say “no” in any situation that makes them feel unsafe, and have them practice saying “no.”

It’s okay to tell (secrets). No secrets about touching: If someone tells a youth to keep a secret about touching, instruct the youth to tell another adult. Give scenarios to youths that all have the same answer: “Tell an adult you trust!” Include activities to help youths outline a safety plan both physically and verbally.

Grooming: Talk about how grooming also means “getting ready” – you would get ready for having your school picture taken by making sure that your hair, face, and clothes were all set. In the same way, sexual abusers “groom” youths they want to abuse by “getting them ready” to abuse.

Groomers use tricks: Grooming is a subtle (hard to notice), gradual (slow), and escalating (more and worse over time) process of building “trust” with a youth and often the youth’s parent or other caregiver. Grooming tricks include:

- **Fake trustworthiness** – pretending to be the youth’s friend in order to gain their trust
- **Testing boundaries** – jokes, roughhousing, back rubs, tickling, or sexualized games (pants-ing, truth or dare, strip games, etc.)
- **Touch** – from regular, mostly comfortable non-sexual touch to “accidental” touch of private parts, often over time
- **Intimidation** – using fear, embarrassment, or guilt to keep a youth from telling anyone

- **Sharing sexual material** – capitalizing on a youth’s natural curiosity to normalize sexual behavior by showing pictures, videos, text messages, photos, websites, notes, etc., of a sexual nature
- **Breaking rules** – encouraging a youth to break rules, which establishes secret-keeping as part of the relationship and can be used as blackmail in the future
- **Drugs and alcohol** – breaking the rules (see above) and/or making the youth less able to stop the abuse because they’re under the influence of the substance
- **Communicating secretly** – texting, emailing, or calling in an unexpected way (parents don’t know about it, it happens a lot, the youth is told to keep it a secret)
- **Blaming and confusing** – making the youth feel responsible for the abuse or what could happen to the youth, his/her family, or the abuser if the youth tells anyone

For all of these tricks give examples of what an abuser might say or do at different stages in the grooming process, pointing out how it might be hard to recognize at first, the gradual pace, and how it escalates over time.

Abuse can affect anyone: Abuse can and does happen to anyone. Most often an abuser is someone the victim knows and trusts.

Victims are not at fault: Youths who have been sexually abused may likely feel the abuse is somehow their fault – that they brought it on themselves or encouraged it in some way. It is important to teach that the responsibility falls on the adult who committed the acts and that as youths they are in no way to blame for these terrible acts.

Trust your feelings: Youths should listen to themselves and trust their feelings. This includes anything from an uneasy feeling at being alone with an adult, touching or caressing that makes them feel uncomfortable, or inappropriate comments about their body or matters of a sexual nature, and more. They should communicate feelings with someone they trust, and keep telling them until they help. If one suspects a friend is being abused, one of the most powerful things to do is to check with them about their feelings and encourage them to express them to an adult they can trust. “Gut” feelings can be an indicator that something is wrong or headed in that direction.

Body ownership: Body ownership is the idea that one is in charge of their own body and may choose how they use their body, including deciding who may and may not touch their body. Include topic such as: the child being in control and the “boss” of their own body, “private zones,” and how to recognize and respond to inappropriate touch, or touches that make one uncomfortable.

Create a reporting plan: Youths should be provided necessary tools to know what sexual abuse is and what is normal and what is wrong. Help them create a strategy that is clear and concise. Questions they should be able to answer include: What do you do if you suspect someone is being abused or if it’s happening to you? What are the specific names you can write down today of people you know you can trust to help you?

PREVENTION AND DISCLOSURE

Recognize warning signs:

- Emotional signs: fear, sadness, mood changes, problems sleeping, acting out, refusing to be left alone with certain people, emphasis on keeping it a secret
- Emphasize that if a friend reports to them, they should tell a trusted adult. This is not breaking a promise, but being a good friend so that their friend isn't hurt.
- If a friend is acting differently, encourage them to check in on that friend.

How to recognize warning signs of a person who is in a position of power or trust:

- Behaviors of adults who molest include close personal relationships with students, time alone with students, time before or after school with students, time in private spaces with students, flirtatious behavior with students, and off-color remarks in class
- Reemphasize trusting intuition and that a person they like could still hurt them
- Person may be in a position of power, such as an older youth, teacher, coach, parent, sibling, or other relative
- Person shows increased interest in, or isolation of, a youth
- Person gives special attention and gifts to a youth or takes youth on special outings
- Person constantly texts/calls youth
- Person spends more time with youth than adults and tries to be alone with a youth
- Person tries to isolate the youth from his or her friends and/or parents
- Person displays behavior that may make a youth uncomfortable
- Person insists on hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, or holding a youth even when the youth does not want this
- Person shows pictures or videos to a youth that makes him/her uncomfortable
- Person emphasizes secrecy
- Person uses secrecy, blame, or threats to maintain control

What to do if you suspect a friend is being abused:

- Talk to an adult and tell them what you are worried about because they will know how to report to people that can help. Tell your own mom, dad, or grandparents so they can help. Talk to a teacher, principal or school counselor so they can help. Talk to a police officer so he/she can help.
- Let your friend know that you care about them and want to help them.
- Let your friend know that it isn't their fault.
- Listen to what your friend is telling you and believe them.

Why report?

- Telling an adult who can help about suspected abuse can lead to protecting the person being abused.
- You care about your friend and want him/her to be safe.
- No one deserves to be abused or afraid.