

2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY: HOME SCHOOL REGISTRATION



PCA Iowa asks the Iowa legislature to enact legislation to require parents wishing to educate their children through Private Instruction (Independent Private Instruction or Competent Private Instruction) to submit an annual notification of intent to home school to the superintendent of the school district of residence in Iowa Code Chapter 299A.

Iowa prides itself as a leader in education and a great place to raise a family. Iowans value a parent's right to determine the best educational setting for their children. Homeschooling can be a useful educational framework for Iowa children.

Many home school families collaborate with their local public school district to provide education supports for students and families as well as extra-curricular opportunities to participate in music, athletics, or other enrichment activities.

Risks of unregistered home schooled students

- ❖ Homeschooling can sometimes be used as a means to isolate, abuse, and neglect children, resulting in extreme trauma or even death.
- ❖ The 2012-2013 school year was the last time the Iowa Department of Education collected information about homeschool student populations. At that time 2.3% of Iowa school-aged children were homeschooled (10,732 students).

2.3% OF IOWA
KIDS ARE
HOMESCHOOLED

Registration benefits children and parents

- ❖ An annual notification by parents of intent to home school creates opportunity for collaboration between home school families and their district of residence.
- ❖ Annual home-school registration with a local public school superintendent's office improves child protection for the more than 10,000 youth who are home schooled in Iowa.

Prevent Child Abuse Iowa strengthens families for Iowa's future. We believe healthy, vibrant communities provide nurturing environments for kids. Prevent Child Abuse Iowa's statewide network provides expertise in child abuse prevention to create a stronger, healthier Iowa.

2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY: SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION



PCA Iowa requests the Iowa legislature to enact a sexual abuse prevention policy for Iowa's children.

Sexual abuse prevention in Iowa schools builds protective factors for Iowa children, creating safer learning environments and better student achievement for all children.

Safety from sexual abuse and exploitation begins by equipping adults working in a school system with knowledge and processes to recognize and respond to boundary violating behaviors, providing training on appropriate interventions, and developing internal school systems of reporting.

Prevent Child Abuse Iowa requests the Iowa legislature to enacting legislation requiring schools to provide training and supports for awareness and prevention of child sexual abuse and sexual assault in schools.

Recognizing and reporting

- Most teachers don't receive training in preventing, recognizing, or responding to child sexual abuse, either in their college coursework, or as part of their professional development.
- 87% of teachers say they would not report sexual abuse, even if a child disclosed to them, while only 11% of teachers said they would not report a case of suspected physical abuse or neglect.
- The most common reasons for not reporting suspected child sexual abuse was their lack of confidence in their ability to identify it, and to respond appropriately to suspicions.
- More than 80% of child molesters identified in schools or youth-serving organizations have no prior criminal records, according to national risk management experts.

**2 OUT OF 3 TEACHERS
ARE NOT TRAINED TO**



**PREVENT, RECOGNIZE, OR RESPOND
TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

Disclosure

- 60% of children sexually abused never report the abuse.
- In the year following training, educators in Texas increased their reports of child sexual abuse to authorities by 283%.

2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY:

SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION



Prevalence of Sexual Abuse in Iowa

- One in ten adults in Iowa report being sexually abused as a child.
- Four in ten Iowans diagnosed with HIV report being sexually abused as a child.
- According to the National Department of Education, one in ten K-12 students will suffer sexual misconduct from school personnel, coaches, or volunteers. This translates to 54,500 Iowa students enrolled in public or non-public education (not including home-schooled students).
- Children with special needs are at higher risk of sexual abuse.



Sexual abuse and exploitation impacts student learning outcomes

Childhood trauma impacts student learning. In a study of sexually abused children, cognitive ability, memory scores, and academic achievement, were lower than their peers.

- 48% reported below average grades
- 24% repeated a grade
- 15% were enrolled in remedial classes
- A higher percentage failed to graduate compared to their non-abused peers

The cost of sexual abuse of students in school

- Insurance claims of sexual assault by school employees or volunteers have increased more than 250% in the last 3 years from \$270,000 to over \$2 million, totaling more than \$4 million in claim payments.
- Sexual abuse of students by school teachers, staff and volunteers negatively impacts school reputation, and creates an unsafe learning environment for students.
- Sexual abuse affects the mental health and wellbeing of students and can lead to substance abuse, depression, and suicidal intentions.

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¹Iowa ACEs data published June, 2016, Central Iowa ACEs 360, Prevent Child Abuse Iowa

²The Impact of Child Sexual Abuse Training for Educators on Reporting and Victim Outcomes: The Texas Educator Initiative, January, 2016, Catherine Townsend

2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY: MANDATORY REPORTER TRAINING



PCA Iowa asks the Iowa legislature to enact a Mandatory Reporter legislative work group to provide policy recommendations to the Iowa legislature. A revision of Iowa's Mandatory Reporting guidelines will create a streamlined, comprehensive framework that effectively executes the intention of this important child and elder protection legislation.

Iowa Code section 232.67-232.75

- Child protection requires the coordination of many professional groups and a cohesive, accessible, training and certification framework for recognizing the signs of neglect, sexual abuse, and physical abuse and promptly reporting suspicions to agencies for swift response and intervention
- Iowa's child abuse reporting, assessment, and rehabilitation law, Iowa Code (IC) sections 232.67–232.75, is fragmented, having been enacted in 1978 and amended many times.

400,000 Mandatory Reporters in Iowa

- Iowa's Mandatory Reporter law requires professionals who have frequent contact with children, such as those working in education, health, childcare, social work, law enforcement, and mental health, to receive regular and frequent training in identifying and reporting concerns of child well-being.
- More than 400,000 Iowans are required to be trained as Mandatory Reporters in Iowa.
- Failures in quality Mandatory Reporter requirements place Iowa's most vulnerable populations at risk, clouds effective communication between Mandatory Reporters and the Iowa Department of Human Services, and puts professionals at risk for failure to report.

4,000 Trainers in Iowa

- Professionals from across sectors are dissatisfied in the current mandatory reporter training, and welcome comprehensive reform of Iowa's code.
- More than 4,000 providers offer Mandatory Reporter training in Iowa, many of whom charge a fee for the training.
- Revision of the mandatory reporter code in Iowa would provide more direction to mandatory reporter trainers in Iowa and improve the function of reporting with Iowa Department of Human Services.

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