



Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

No single law can prevent all child sexual abuse. The following policies have proven effective in protecting children.

SCHOOL-BASED PREVENTION EDUCATION

Require annual training for staff and volunteers with regular ongoing student contact, including warning signs of sexual abuse and responding to boundary-violating behaviors. **Establish age-appropriate sexual abuse prevention education programs for pre-K-12 students**, including healthy relationships, boundaries, and asking for help. **Provide prevention resources, information, and referrals** to parents and caregivers.

SCHOOL HIRING AND TERMINATION REFORM

Require screening of all potential hires, and volunteers with regular student contact, to determine whether the applicant has been the subject of an abuse investigation (unless proven false) or sanctioned for misconduct. **Protect schools from civil and criminal liability** when sharing information with another school about previous employee misconduct. **Prohibit confidentiality agreements** intended to suppress information about misconduct or avoid an investigation. **Prohibit aiding an employee suspected of sexual misconduct from securing a position** in another school or school system.

ELIMINATE CIVIL STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

Many adults who experienced child sexual abuse come forward well into adulthood, after the opportunity for criminal justice has passed. **Removing the civil statute of limitations** for child sexual abuse **identifies hidden perpetrators**, **shifts the cost of abuse** from the victim and taxpayers to the abuser, and **prevents future abuse** by building public awareness of the prevalence and common patterns of sexual abuse.

Strengthening Families

Every Iowan benefits when families and communities have the resources to nurture and support happy childhoods.

HEALTHY FAMILIES

Families who experience financial hardships and stress such as job loss, hunger, unstable housing, and lack of childcare or medical care are much more likely to become involved with the child welfare system. **Ensure access to family supports that have been demonstrated to reduce child maltreatment**, including **Home Visiting, Child Care Assistance, Medicaid coverage for new mothers** up to 12 months postpartum, and **expanded Child Tax Credit and other tax relief** for low- and middle-income earners.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Investments in child abuse and neglect prevention support a healthy and resilient Iowa. Every dollar spent on prevention leads to significant short- and long-term cost savings by reducing child welfare involvement and the social costs of child abuse. Preventing child maltreatment supports healthy lifetimes. **Build better childhoods through programs and services that connect communities, empower parents, and help children thrive.**

PCA Iowa recognizes that some legislative actions may disproportionately affect marginalized communities or groups. PCA Iowa will monitor and evaluate legislation affecting children and families to determine the potential impact on the children and families we are committed to protect.