

Erin's Law Task Force - Executive Summary  
(May 2012)

1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be the victim of child sexual abuse (CSA) by their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. There are more than 42 million survivors of CSA in the United States. 3 million of these survivors are still children. These children could fill 46 national football stadiums. CSA is commonly referred to as the "silent epidemic". Most Illinoisans do not know this is a major issue in our State and our country.

93 percent of the time these children are abused by a person who is supposed to protect them; a person in a position of trust or authority. In almost every case, the only witnesses to this crime are the perpetrator and the victim. Perpetrators often tell the child this is a secret and no one will believe them. Children rarely report abuse immediately. Often, they feel the abuse was their fault. In these cases, delayed disclosure is the norm. Most victims never tell anyone until several years after the abuse, if they ever tell at all.

Last year, Children's Advocacy Centers in Illinois served 9,850 victims of child sexual and serious physical abuse. A National Institute of Justice study reported CSA costs our country \$35 billion a year. While that number is staggering, it pales in comparison to the human casualties. Children who experience CSA have a multitude of adverse outcomes. They include: poor academic performance, dropping out of high school, self mutilation, persistent post traumatic stress disorder, drug and alcohol abuse, a "markedly" increased risk for abuse in subsequent relationships, difficulty in forming meaningful and trusting relationships, cognitive deficits, depression, dissociative symptoms, and suicide. Early identification of victims and strong maternal support can significantly reduce the likelihood of the aforementioned human costs.

On February, 14, 2011, Governor Pat Quinn signed Public Act 96-1524. The Act created the "Erin's Law Task Force". 19 members were carefully selected based on highly specialized experience in the field of child sexual abuse and academia. School administrators, teachers, counselors, researchers, academic curriculum experts, child protective services, children's advocacy centers, and law enforcement met for more than 9 months. They carefully examined a balance of research and real life experience, and have made recommendations to educate children, school staff, and families on CSA. It is the belief of this task force that age appropriate school-based curriculum in Illinois public schools, pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, will increase early reporting of CSA and in many cases prevent CSA.

The Erin's Law Task Force Recommends:

- Child sexual abuse prevention education should be taught in grades pre-K through 5. "Best Practices" should be included in this instruction (See page 16 of the task force report).
- Training for school administrators should be amended to include child sexual abuse as a selective strand under the Illinois Administrator Academy.
- Child sexual abuse training should be provided as a certified professional development unit (CPDU) for certified non-administrative school personnel.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chief Danny D. Langloss, Jr.  
Chairman – Erin's Law Task Force

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