

# Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Education in Utah K-6 Schools: A Statewide Program Evaluation

## Introduction & Background

One in eight children in the United States will be a victim of sexual abuse before the age of 18 (Swedo et al., 2023). In Utah, the statistics are higher than the national average at one in seven children (Swedo et al., 2023). Child sexual abuse (CSA) is not only traumatic and devastating, but it has long-term impacts that can last well into adulthood. A key way to keep children safe is by providing CSA prevention education. One study found that those who had not participated in a sexual abuse prevention program were twice as likely to report having experienced child sexual abuse compared with those who had participated in such a program (Kenny et al., 2020). Schoolbased programs specifically have demonstrated influence in CSA prevention. Utah students who were victims of previous abuse said that they did not fully understand what was happening to them until they received prevention education (Deseret News, 2024).

In 2024, the Utah legislature unanimously passed Senate Bill 205 (SB205), establishing requirements for CSA prevention across the education system. The law mandates that local education agencies (LEAs) provide CSA prevention training to all school personnel and parents of elementary students at least once every other year. Legislation related to student instruction notes that LEAs may provide age appropriate education using USBE-approved curriculum. Following SB205's passage, Saprea conducted this statewide evaluation to document implementation realities and identify opportunities for improvement.

This report examines how school personnel perceive current and planned CSA prevention efforts in their schools. Additionally, it explores how these perceptions vary across school types and regional groups and aims to generate insights to inform future improvements in CSA prevention education policy, communication, and implementation in Utah's K-6 schools.

## Saprea's Approach

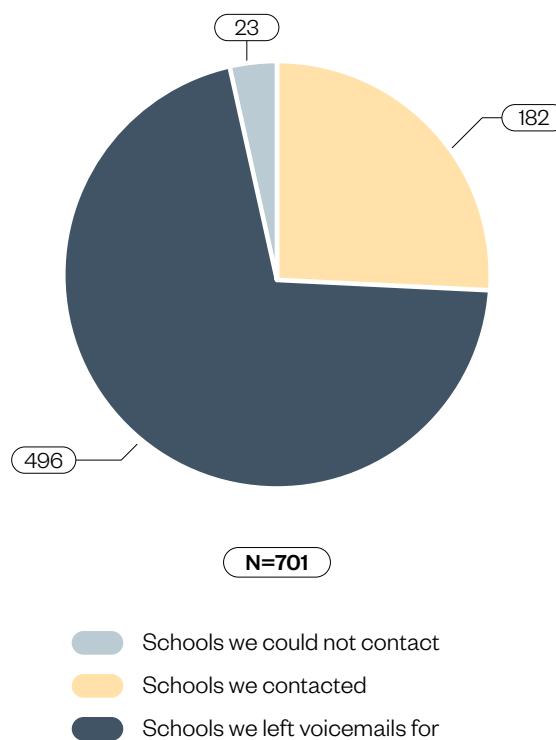
Saprea attempted phone contact with all 701 Utah schools serving K-6 students during November and December 2025 (see Figure 1).

Callers asked two questions:

1. Does your school offer CSA prevention training for staff?
2. Does your school offer CSA prevention education for students and/or parents?

Figure 1:

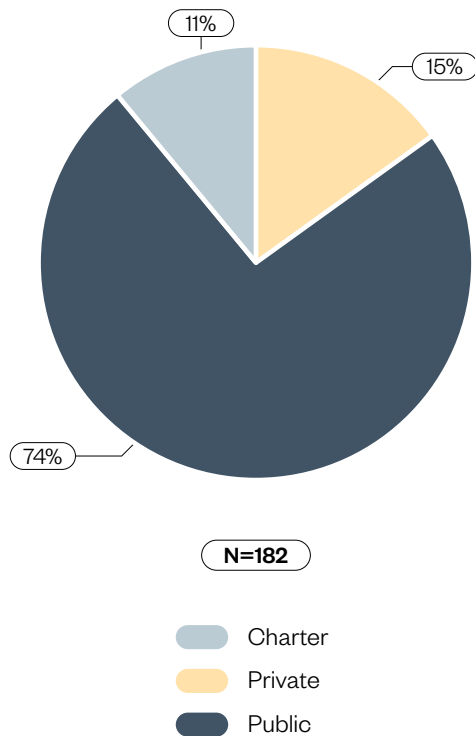
### Contact With Utah Elementary Schools



Of the 701 schools, Saprea employees completed conversations with 182 (26%), left voicemails with 496 (71%), and could not contact 23 (3%) (see Figure 2). They requested to speak with one of the following: principals, vice principals, counselors, or nurses. The data set comprised 135 public schools (74%), 27 private schools (15%), and 20 public charter schools (11%); of these schools, 78 were Title I (43%). This distribution closely aligns with the existing proportions of the K-6 landscape in Utah.

Figure 2:

### Type of Schools that We Collected Data From



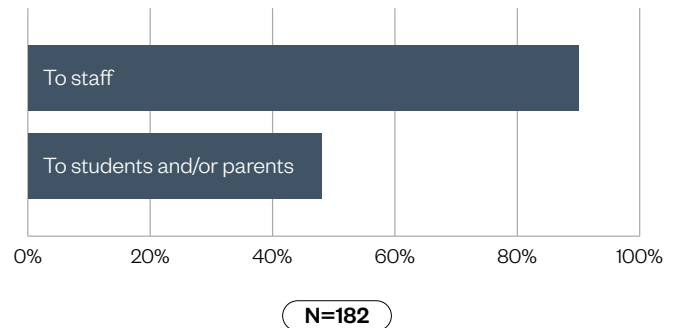
Details related to frequency, modality, provider, and communication or training protocols were provided by 152 schools for question 1, and by 90 schools for question 2. At the direction of some schools, district-level personnel were also contacted. The findings in this summary reflect the self-reported perspectives of school personnel rather than an official or independently verified account of current practice.

## Findings

Results reveal a clear divergence in CSA prevention education implementation. While an overwhelming majority of personnel report their school is providing staff training, fewer than half of interviewed schools offer comparable education for students and/or parents. Of the 182 institutions we communicated with, 90% (n=165) reported providing CSA prevention training for staff, demonstrating consistent and widespread compliance with legislative expectations. In contrast, only 48% (n=88) indicated they offer any form of prevention education for students and/or parents (see Figure 3). The following section examines these patterns in greater detail, outlining where implementation is strong, where there are gaps in educational offerings, and the contextual factors that help explain these incongruencies.

Figure 3:

### Percent of Schools that Report Offering CSA Prevention Education



### STAFF TRAINING

The consistency and frequency of staff-focused CSA prevention training indicate a strong understanding of and compliance with SB205 legislation. 90% of schools reported providing CSA prevention training for staff. This high rate of compliance remained stable across geographic, governance, and Title I contexts. First, urban and rural schools reported statistically equivalent training rates, suggesting that location does not meaningfully influence whether staff receive required instruction. Implementation was similarly consistent across school types. Public, private, and charter schools all reported comparably high levels of staff training, indicating that SB205's requirements are well understood and broadly adopted regard-

less of governance structure. Lastly, there was no statistically significant difference between Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools when comparing prevention training implementation for staff, suggesting that schools with fewer financial resources are performing comparably to their more affluent counterparts.

Among schools that provided details about training cadence, a majority reported delivering training annually, surpassing SB205's biennial requirement. A smaller subset of schools reported following alternative schedules ranging from every six months to every two or three years. Several respondents also noted that CSA prevention training is embedded into new-hire onboarding, ensuring that incoming personnel receive essential information outside the regular training cycle.

Training delivery for staff is overwhelmingly asynchronous according to reports, with most schools relying on video or online-based modules rather than face-to-face instruction. There is significant diversity in staff training providers; however, the *Child Abuse: Mandatory Reporting* module offered by Vector Solutions was the provider schools most often referenced.

## STUDENT AND PARENT EDUCATION

Fewer than half (48.4%) of schools report offering CSA prevention education to students and/or parents. Unlike staff training, patterns in the student and parent programming reveal meaningful differences across geographic and governance contexts. Rural schools, for example, outperformed their urban counterparts: 61.7% of rural schools reported offering student or parent education, compared to just 43.7% of urban schools. Similarly, implementation across school types varied substantially. Public schools reported the highest rates of offering student and/or parent education (approximately 56%), while private schools and charter schools reported 26% and 30% respectively. Despite these disparities, Title I status showed no statistically significant relationship with implementation. This finding aligns with patterns observed in staff training implementation and suggests that socioeconomic context alone does not predict whether schools provide CSA prevention education to families or students.

Saprea found student and parent education is overwhelmingly delivered through face-to-face instruction. Among schools that provided details regarding delivery methods, 46 reported in-person delivery compared to only 15 that relied on video-based programming. When callers asked who is providing this vital education, the most frequently cited

programs were Prevent Child Abuse Utah (POAU) and school counselors; however, a number of other organizations were also cited as providers.

When asked about student or parent prevention programming, 11.5% (n=21) of school personnel responded they did not know whether such education was offered. In addition, several interviewed individuals described persistent difficulties engaging parents regarding the topic. Both dedicated CSA prevention education nights and broader parent-fair formats draw low attendance. This insight reflects industry research which suggests that scheduling conflicts, discomfort with the topic, or misperceptions about children's risk levels make providing CSA education to parents challenging.

A smaller number of schools reported more acute obstacles. One school described community backlash following a proposal for CSA education, ultimately leading them to decline offering programming altogether. Another school expressed the belief that Utah law prohibits discussion of CSA with students—a misunderstanding of SB205's framework and available USBE-approved resources. Some schools, particularly private institutions, also expressed interest in SB205-established grant funding but lacked clarity on eligibility criteria or the application process, limiting their ability to pursue additional supports.

Finally, several schools described adopting a reactive rather than proactive approach to student education—offering instruction only after concerning incidents occurred within their community. Research consistently emphasizes the importance of proactive prevention education, as children may not recognize inappropriate or abusive behavior without prior knowledge or framing. The tendency toward reactive implementation underscores the ongoing need for clearer guidance, greater confidence in prevention curricula, and more robust communication within schools and communities.

## OTHER INSIGHTS

When contacting elementary schools, many school personnel expressed reluctance to answer detailed questions about prevention practices and frequently redirected callers to district offices. However, district contacts were often difficult to reach or uninterested in providing information. Among the thirteen districts contacted, only six provided responses. All six reported requiring annual staff training, and two noted that this training is also incorporated into new-hire onboarding; this aligns with the strong compliance patterns observed

across the state. However, district-level uniformity did not extend to student and parent education. Some district representatives indicated that, while staff training is standardized, decisions about student and/or parent-facing CSA prevention programming are commonly delegated to individual schools or principals. As a result, implementation could vary widely within the same district, reinforcing the decentralized nature of student and/or parent programming. In some cases, district personnel and schools within the district reported differing information, particularly in regard to parent education offerings. For this reason, it was important to contact each school individually to understand the context of CSA prevention education at their location.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Child sexual abuse prevention education infrastructure throughout the state of Utah has strong foundations. Our finding of 90% staff training compliance demonstrates commitment to adhere to SB205's requirement that all staff members are trained in CSA prevention. However, the 48% implementation rate for student and/or parent education represents a clear gap to address, particularly given research showing child-facing prevention education produces measurable protective effects (Walsh et al., 2015). Although the law presently designates student CSA prevention education as optional, parent education holds equal statutory weight along with staff training requirements. This finding suggests that strengthening parent-focused prevention education is a critical area to improve. Research further indicates that parental involvement can nearly triple the effectiveness of prevention programs (Gubbels et al., 2021), emphasizing the importance of prioritizing strategies that meaningfully engage parents and caregivers. Approaches such as embedding prevention content within existing high-traffic school events or providing take-home materials may help extend the reach of parent education.

We encourage school personnel at all levels to reflect upon their implementation of child sexual abuse prevention education in order to ensure that such practices both effectively safeguard Utah's children and remain fully aligned with the requirements set forth in SB205. Expanding access to CSA prevention education for students and their families has the potential to significantly enhance protective outcomes for children. Additionally, we urge educational leaders to offer clear and consistent guidance regarding K–6 CSA prevention

education, thereby enabling schools to more readily access and implement this essential instructional programming. Through collective and coordinated efforts at the state level, Utah can strengthen its capacity to protect the safety and well-being of its children.

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