



CSEC Education

What is CSEC? Who is at risk? How can education help prevent it?

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) refers to a range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child for the financial benefit of another person or in exchange for something of value, such as money, drugs, food, housing, and so on (Murphy et al., 2016). CSEC is often used interchangeably with the term "child sex trafficking."¹ Each year, as many as 100,000–300,000 children are at risk of being trafficked for commercial sex in the United States. The average age a girl enters the commercial sex trade is

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12–14 years old; for boys, it is even younger—just 11–13 years old (Blue Campaign, 2020).

While child sex trafficking is far reaching and spans multiple demographic characteristics, some children are particularly vulnerable (Polaris Project, 2011). Children at high risk for trafficking include those with developmental and intellectual

¹ CSEC is sometimes also referred to as Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST). CSEC is the more prevalent term and will be used in this paper.

disabilities, those with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as poverty and abuse, and those involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems (Franchino-Olsen, 2019). Homeless, runaway, and foster youth as well as LGBTQ youth

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are at particularly high risk of child sex trafficking (National Center for Homeless Education, 2014). There are also racial and ethnic disparities among trafficking victims. Black and Indigenous girls, for example, experience higher rates of CSEC (Rights4Girls, 2021).

Research Questions

The US federal government has adopted a three-pronged approach to address human trafficking titled “3Ps: Prosecution, Protection, and Prevention” (US Department of State, 2021). This paper focuses on the third prong of prevention. The US government has taken the stance that training students and school personnel to understand, recognize, and respond to signs of child sex trafficking is invaluable in the effort to identify and prevent human trafficking before it occurs. Yet despite this emphasis on prevention, much more work needs to be done to implement and improve CSEC education programs for youth and educators.

This paper is guided by the following questions:

1. What rigorous, evidence-based research exists to support CSEC prevention education for children and educators? What works in CSEC prevention education in US schools?
2. What federal and state laws address CSEC prevention education for children and educators?
3. What legislative, policy, and practice recommendations should be implemented to improve CSEC prevention education efforts in US schools?

Summary of Research and Findings

This paper first summarizes a literature review conducted to determine what evidence-based research exists to identify effective approaches to CSEC education for youth and educators. The literature review shows that there is little available research on the subject. What is particularly lacking is quasi-experimental or experimental research on child sex trafficking curricula designed for students rather than adults. Most studies that do address CSEC prevention education programs for children involve one-off, customized, non-scalable

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intervention programs for high-risk youth (Harper et al., 2018). The remaining studies are not quasi-experimental and, at best, point to some potentially promising practices for at-risk youth. More research is needed on effective strategies for CSEC prevention education, particularly for universal, Tier 1 CSEC education programs for students.

Second, this paper summarizes US federal and state laws relating to CSEC prevention education. With the enactment of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, the federal government has taken a strong stance against child sex trafficking. The US Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act of 2018 emphasized the importance of CSEC prevention efforts, and for the first time, allocated funds to support child trafficking prevention education grants. At the administrative level, the US Department of Education also emphasized that schools are social institutions uniquely well-positioned to combat child trafficking (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, 2021b).

The federal government's increasing emphasis on the importance of CSEC education has not translated into widespread action on the ground at the state level. A review of state laws shows that only three states have enacted legislation to mandate CSEC education for children. Only a handful of additional states require educators to receive training on child trafficking awareness and identification (see Figure 1 and the Appendix for a map and summary of state laws on CSEC). Most state



laws are silent on CSEC education for students and educators. Policy advocates across the country have identified a need for education about child sex trafficking, but educators are left largely to their own devices to identify and implement CSEC curricula. Additionally, funding for implementing school-based CSEC education is scarce in most states. This paper concludes with eight recommendations suggesting additional research, legislation, and policy changes that should be implemented to improve CSEC prevention outcomes.

Research on CSEC Prevention Education for Youth

Literature Review on CSEC Prevention Education

This review sought to determine whether there is rigorous, evidence-based research on CSEC prevention education for youth. The review found few useful evaluations of primary CSEC education programs. Human trafficking education programs for students are emerging around the country, but these programs are rarely rigorously evaluated for efficacy, outcomes, and results. In addition, most of the CSEC education programs that have been evaluated to date are one-off, locally tailored programs that target populations at particularly high risk for child trafficking. Kruger et al. (2016) evaluated a highly customized, after-school intervention program targeting at-risk girls in Atlanta, and Pierce (2012) evaluated a CSEC intervention program for at-risk Native American teen girls in Minnesota. These programs are not easily scalable for adoption as universal school-based primary prevention education.

In a literature review, Rizo et al. (2018) found few peer-reviewed articles on CSEC education. Of 13 articles that broadly covered the topic, seven were think pieces that highlighted promising practices and policies but did not report on empirical research evaluating the efficacy of CSEC prevention programs (Rizo et al., 2018). Five articles were empirical, presenting formative research focused on generating findings to inform the development of CSEC prevention education materials. Only one empirical article identified in the literature review, however, consisted of a process evaluation. The researchers observed that “notably, none of the programs were rigorously evaluated (e.g., use of a comparison group, investigations of proximal and/or distal outcomes)” (p. 37). They also found that few studies “provided details about aspects of the programs that would help facilitate further evaluation, replication and dissemination, such as program structure, content, activities, delivery methods, and

underlying theory of change" (p. 39). The authors concluded that further research is needed to determine the "feasibility, acceptability and effectiveness of efforts geared at educating youth about CSEC" (p. 37).

Since the publication of Rizo et al.'s 2018 CSEC education literature review, there have been few additional studies evaluating CSEC education programs, despite growing calls from policymakers to educate youth about CSEC. There remains a dearth of research on CSEC education models that can be replicated in US schools. The few CSEC education studies that have been published since 2018 share the same shortcomings as the studies identified in Rizo et al.'s review. Most articles about CSEC education address awareness education for adults who work with children. Articles that do discuss human trafficking prevention education for youth tend to be think pieces rather than peer-reviewed, rigorous evaluations. For example, in an article discussing California's trafficking prevention curriculum mandates, Salas and Didier (2020) argued that though it provides "a model for other states," California's program is a "work in progress" and has not been rigorously researched (p. 17). Similarly, the US Department of Education's 2021 report

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on human trafficking in schools cited as a companion resource a practice brief on using positive behavioral interventions and supports as a framework for providing school-based CSEC prevention (Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, 2021; Asefnia et al., 2021). The practice brief identified by the US Department of Education, like many articles on CSEC education, is a think piece only. It is not evidence-based research evaluating a specific curriculum. At best, the article presents an argument for a potentially promising approach to a school-based CSEC prevention program. Thus, the resource has little practical use for school districts looking to find a readily available curriculum that is backed by research (Asefnia et al., 2021).

The only human trafficking curriculum that the US Department of Education points to in its 2021 report is a prevention program implemented by Virginia's Prince William County Public Schools (Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, 2021). The Prince William County child trafficking curriculum was presented at a 2020 webinar conducted by the US Department of Education on identifying and supporting students affected by trafficking



(US Department of Education, 2020). While the Prince William County program's internal data showed promising metrics on outcomes relating to CSEC awareness and increased reporting

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following CSEC prevention training, the program has not been formally researched and evaluated (Prince William County Public Schools, 2020). At best, the program shows promise.

One study published in 2019 conducted a mixed-methods evaluation of the adoption of *Bodies Are Not Commodities*, A21's human trafficking curriculum, in a Texas school district. The *Bodies Are Not Commodities* curriculum, however, is not CSEC-specific. Rather, it is a social studies curriculum that educates students about human trafficking in general using a social justice advocacy lens (Scott et al., 2019). The 2019 study did not evaluate whether the curriculum furthered awareness of CSEC specifically, led to increased identification of CSEC victims, or prevented child sex trafficking among students who participated in the program. Thus, it adds little to our knowledge of effective primary CSEC preventive education programs.

Most recently, in 2021, Rizo et al. (2021) published a study evaluating principals' perspectives and practices relating to educating students about child sex trafficking. The results highlighted schools' limited efforts to teach about and respond to child sex trafficking, and agreement among principals that school personnel should learn more about how to identify potential victims (Rizo et al., 2021). The study indicated that there is a demand for CSEC training and curricular resources at the school level, and concluded that, "although principals generally agreed that schools ... should be providing youth with sex trafficking education and responding appropriately to identifications and disclosures, few principals reported current efforts in their schools to address sex trafficking" (Rizo et al., 2021, p. 213).

To summarize the literature review, there is a paucity of evidence-based research on effective CSEC prevention education for youth. The vast majority of resources for CSEC education and awareness are directed at adults, such as law enforcement personnel, health-care and youth services providers, and, to a more limited extent, educators. The focus of the education efforts is primarily on CSEC awareness, recognizing red flags for identifying potential CSEC victims and teaching adults how to proceed once potential victims are identified. Largely missing from the available resources are materials for how to prevent CSEC (Office of Trafficking in Persons [OTIP], 2019b). The literature review shows that if a school district wishes to adopt a CSEC prevention curriculum that is backed and shown to work by peer-reviewed studies, no such curriculum currently exists.

Recommended Strategies for CSEC Prevention Education Programming

Despite the lack of rigorous research on specific CSEC prevention education programs for children and educators, there is significant consensus among researchers, government agencies, and child advocates that CSEC education is a promising approach to CSEC prevention (US Department of Education, 2017). Prevention education in school settings has been shown to work across a wide range of contexts. Kruger et al. (2016) noted that "school-based prevention initiatives can be models for public health programs and the need for school involvement in CSEC prevention has been established." In its 2020 Human Trafficking Youth Prevention Education (HTYPE) grant announcement, the Office of Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) reiterated the federal government's position that schools are uniquely positioned to provide trafficking prevention education and that educators can play a critical role in identifying potential victims of trafficking (OTIP, 2020c).

With bipartisan agreement that CSEC education should be happening in schools, what should that education look like? Without more rigorous evaluations of school-based CSEC prevention and awareness programs, we have only broad guidance on elements that should be included in CSEC education programs (see the table on page 6 for recommendations).

Recommended Elements for CSEC Education

While more research is needed on effective CSEC prevention school curricula, these six practice guidelines should be incorporated:

- 1 CSEC education is properly viewed as a component of child abuse education.** There is growing consensus that CSEC should be understood as a form of child abuse (Institute of Medicine & National Research Council, 2013, p.406). Child abuse education should therefore logically include CSEC education.
- 2 CSEC education needs to start by middle school.** The average age of a girl's first introduction to child sex trafficking is 12–14 years old; for boys it is even younger—11–13 years old (Blue Campaign, 2020). Therefore, CSEC education needs to start by middle school, if not earlier. Waiting until high school to initiate CSEC education is too late.
- 3 CSEC education should include prevention curricula.** CSEC education efforts need to go beyond only providing awareness information. Primary prevention education is needed as well (OTIP, 2019b). Awareness training is beneficial in teaching educators about red flags that identify potential trafficking victims and how to report and respond to possible trafficking. But displaying posters about trafficking red flags in teachers' lounges doesn't go far enough; educators also need the tools and training to prevent child sex trafficking. This primary, Tier 1 component of CSEC education is most frequently missing from or given short shrift in CSEC training programs.
- 4 CSEC education should be trauma informed.** CSEC victims typically have experienced multiple traumas. Children who score high on the adverse childhood experiences scale are particularly vulnerable to child sex trafficking. CSEC education, identification of victims, and any intervention should therefore be trauma informed and carefully designed to do no further harm to victims and survivors of child sex trafficking (Institute of Medicine & National Research Council, 2013).
- 5 CSEC education should be culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate.** While any child may be a victim of trafficking, certain children and communities are more vulnerable to CSEC victimization. The US government has taken the stance that to be effective, CSEC education should be culturally and linguistically informed in order to better reach populations that are at particularly high risk of trafficking (OTIP, 2020b). Some tailoring of outreach efforts may therefore be needed to support high-risk populations (Pierce, 2012; Harper et al., 2018). This must be balanced with the need for scalable CSEC prevention curriculum.
- 6 CSEC education should incorporate social-emotional learning (SEL).** SEL is a promising component of CSEC prevention education (Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, 2021). Primary CSEC prevention strategies include creating and strengthening healthy relationships, reducing risks within the student's environment, and increasing buffers to violence (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, 2021a; OTIP, 2019a). SEL has been shown to lay the foundation for abuse prevention education, teach children to ask for help, and strengthen protective factors that decrease a child's vulnerability to potential harms from abuse (Committee for Children, 2020). Strategies for teaching students social-emotional skills therefore fall into the primary prevention tier of CSEC education (Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, 2021).

Legislative Landscape: Federal Laws and Policy

Federal Human Trafficking Laws and Policies

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) was the first comprehensive federal act to combat human trafficking in the United States. Under the TVPA, victims of human trafficking include minors induced into commercial sex. The TVPA marked the beginning of serious governmental efforts in the US to tackle and prevent CSEC. Under the TVPA, if a person under 18 years old is induced to perform a commercial sexual act, the presence of force, fraud, or coercion is not needed for the act to be considered a crime. Simply put, under federal law a minor cannot legally consent to participate in sex trafficking.

Since the enactment of the TVPA, many states have approved similar legislation that targets adults engaged in CSEC and ensures that victims and survivors of child sex trafficking cannot themselves be charged with sex crimes. The US Department of Education summarized the philosophy behind "safe harbor laws" and this nationwide policy shift, stating that "children can never be responsible for or complicit in their own abuse" (Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, 2021, p. 2). Campaigns to educate law enforcement personnel and child service providers have been effective in helping implement this policy shift. There remains a gap, however, in getting this message across to educators and students.

In recent years, the US Department of Education and US Department of Health and Human Services have advocated for more CSEC education. In January 2021, the US Department

of Education published an update to its Human Trafficking in America's Schools report, which provides a three-tiered framework for trafficking prevention:

The primary or universal tier involves creating environments and fostering skills in children that prevent victimization. The secondary tier focuses on identifying victims, preventing further harm, and offering immediate help. The tertiary tier addresses long-term support to those affected by trafficking. (Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, 2021, p. 11)

Tellingly, the updated report on trafficking in schools provides districts with no specific guidance on how to deliver sex trafficking preventive education to students.

Federal Grants for Trafficking Prevention Education

The 2018 reauthorization of the TVPA bolstered the federal government's anti-trafficking agenda and included an appropriation of funds for schools to educate elementary, middle, and high school students about human trafficking through a federal grant program (Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act [FDTVPPRA], 2018). The new grants are intended to "educate school staff to recognize and respond to signs of labor trafficking and sex trafficking; and provide age-appropriate information to students on how to avoid becoming victims of labor and sex trafficking" (FDTVPPRA, 2018).

The grant program stemming from the 2018 reauthorization of the TVPA is a promising development in CSEC education. The Human Trafficking Youth Prevention Education (HTYPE) initiative is the first federal grant program of its kind. In 2020, OTIP awarded \$4.3 million for human trafficking prevention education. The grants, which averaged \$550,000 each, went to eight local education agencies (LEAs) to implement human trafficking prevention education at eight school districts across the country (OTIP, 2020b).

The HTYPE demonstration program requires participating districts to create and implement a human trafficking school safety protocol (HTSSP) for handling suspected cases of human trafficking in a "person-centered, trauma-informed, culturally

and linguistically appropriate manner" (OTIP, 2020b). The grant recipients must conduct the following activities:

- Provide human trafficking education to educators and other staff
- Deliver human trafficking education to students
- Train LEA staff to implement and replicate the program throughout the school district
- Implement the HTSSP in consultation with local law enforcement to facilitate reporting

Notably and regrettably, the HTYPE grant does not include requirements for an evaluation of the child trafficking education programs implemented by the eight districts. Instead, OTIP requires the participating districts to collect data and agree to participate if any future evaluation is conducted (OTIP, 2020b). The grant announcement states that such an evaluation could occur in the future:

OTIP may fund a formal evaluation of the HTYPE Demonstration Program . . . The study would utilize an outside, non-grantee evaluation team and would likely focus on the processes, implementation, progress indicators, products, outcomes, and quality improvement of funded activities. (OTIP, 2020b, p. 14)

The evaluation study contemplated by OTIP would provide the type of information that has been missing to date in CSEC education research.

HTYPE Grant Awards

The grants cover human trafficking education, including CSEC education, from 2020 through 2023 for school districts in the following locations:

- DeKalb County, GA
- Fort Worth, TX
- Grand Rapids, MI
- Oakland, CA
- Los Angeles, CA
- San Diego, CA
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Brentwood, NY

2021 Federal Trafficking Prevention Training Bill

In June 2021, US Senators Lisa Murkowski and Tina Smith introduced federal legislation specifically targeted at developing capacity for the implementation of human trafficking education in schools (Office of US Senator Lisa Murkowski, 2021). The Human Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention Training Act (HTEPTA) of 2021 seeks to provide federal grants to nonprofits and school districts to develop and implement training for students, teachers, and youth development personnel to “understand, recognize, prevent and respond to signs of human trafficking and child exploitation” (HTEPTA, 2021). In the “findings” section of the bill, the sponsors underscored the “urgent need for the expansion of training programs to increase awareness and prevention activities in communities across the United States” (HTEPTA, 2021). A prior version of the bill, which died in Congress in 2020, sought \$15 million in annual funding over five years for the trafficking education grant program. The current version of the bill does not yet specify a funding level.

If passed, HTEPTA would provide a major expansion of the type of programs implemented by the federal government’s 2020 HTYPE demonstration grants. In addition to increasing federal financial support for CSEC prevention education, the bill also includes a certification process that directs OTIP to approve a list of nonprofit organizations as “verified vendors” to develop or make available curricula and implement training (HTEPTA, 2021). This verified vendor program would serve as a way for school districts to ensure that the CSEC curricula they adopt has been vetted. A potential problem with the proposed program, however, is that vendors are required to have a “demonstrated expertise in developing age-appropriate, culturally competent, and gender-responsive human trafficking and exploitation prevention curricula for students, teachers, parents, or school personnel in elementary school and secondary school or community-based after-school or learning programs” (HTEPTA, 2021). The approved vendors must also have demonstrated expertise in training students and teachers about trafficking and creating a “scalable, repeatable” trafficking prevention program for schools (HTEPTA, 2021). These requirements, while desirable, will be hard for any organization to meet given the dearth of research on trafficking prevention programs in schools. There isn’t any peer-reviewed research, for example, evaluating a scalable CSEC prevention program for elementary students and teachers. For the demonstrated expertise requirement for approved vendors to be meaningful and useful to school districts, more research needs to be done on what works.

State Laws on CSEC Education in Schools

While the Department of Education has signaled the importance of education as a tool in CSEC prevention, the ultimate responsibility for educating students and school personnel on CSEC falls with the states. Thus, it is important to evaluate state-level policy initiatives on CSEC education to determine the extent to which states have embraced the federal government’s recommendation that education play a key role in CSEC prevention. For this reason, this paper includes a review of state education and human trafficking laws seeking to identify states that have laws or regulations governing (1) education of school personnel on child sex trafficking and (2) education of students on child sex trafficking. The results of the state law review are summarized in Figure 1 and the Appendix.

California, Florida, and North Carolina are the only states that require that CSEC prevention be taught to students. Several other states require that school personnel receive CSEC training. Others, such as Texas, Arizona, and Massachusetts, make CSEC training voluntary to school districts but provide state resources to support CSEC education. Most states do not mandate any type of CSEC training for students or school personnel (see Figure 1 for a US map of state laws on trafficking education).

Of the three states that mandate human trafficking education for students, California has the most robust program (Human Trafficking Prevention Education and Training Act, 2017). California has been active in implementing CSEC prevention programs, especially in high-risk child trafficking areas such as Oakland. California does not adopt one authorized CSEC prevention program but has partnered with three nonprofits to form Project PROTECT² to deliver CSEC education resources to California schools (California Department of Education, 2021). According to Project PROTECT, an estimated 500,000 students and 60,000 educators have received training through its curriculum. Project PROTECT recently added a licensing program that trains organizations to be licensed Project PROTECT educators (Project PROTECT, n.d.). Given California’s relatively high level of engagement in CSEC education and prevention efforts, it is not surprising that three California districts (Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Diego) received federal HTYPE demonstration grants.

2. Some websites refer to Project PROTECT as an evidence-based program. However, no peer-reviewed articles back up the assertion that Project PROTECT is supported by any rigorous research showing it is effective at preventing CSEC, improving CSEC victim identification and reporting, or increasing CSEC awareness among educators and children.

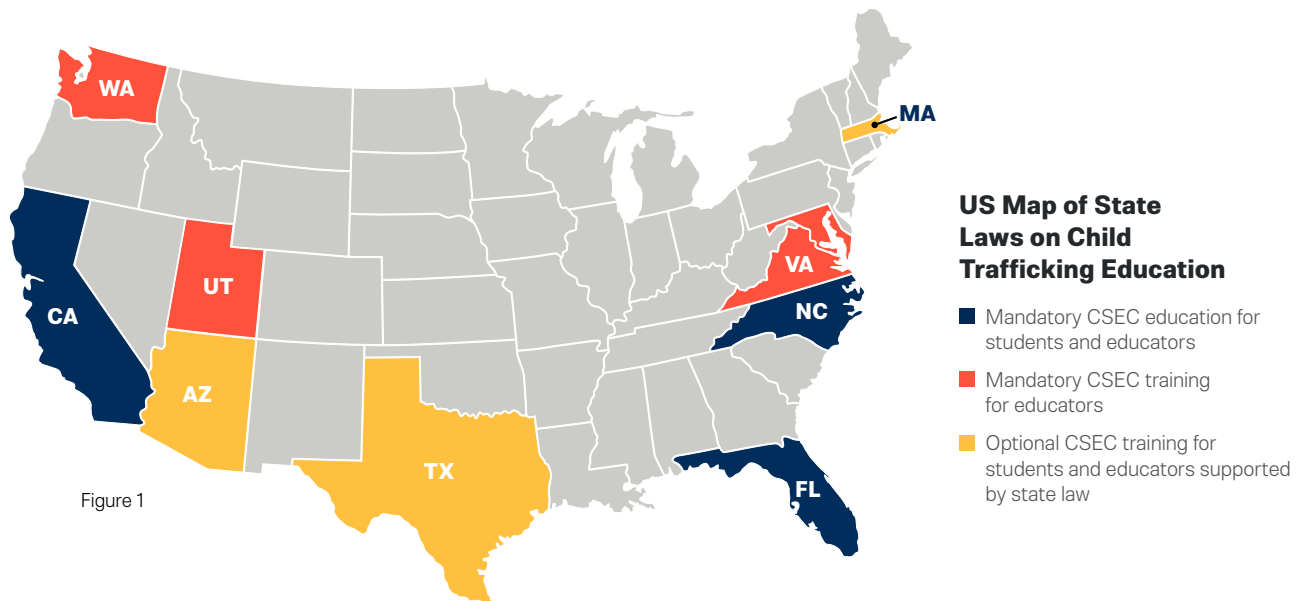


Figure 1

Florida passed a law in early 2021 mandating instruction to K–12 students on “prevention of child sexual abuse, exploitation, and human trafficking,” effective July 2021 (see Appendix). This mandate, however, is unfunded and the law provides no guidance to school districts on how to implement the required human trafficking curriculum for students and educators. In fact, an earlier 2019 Florida Department of Education rule, which was repealed in 2020, arguably provided more guidance to Florida educators on how to proceed with child sex trafficking education. It is not yet clear whether the new Florida law will spur significant action on CSEC education. For the new law to be more than aspirational, Florida will need to provide specific guidance, staffing, and resources to educators to support implementation of CSEC education in schools.

North Carolina requires mandatory child sex trafficking training for “school personnel” and for students (see Appendix). The North Carolina legislation requires that districts adopt training that includes “best practices” in the field of prevention. Districts must collaborate with law enforcement personnel and consultants “with expertise in trafficking education,” and the curriculum must be “based upon scientific research that is peer reviewed and accepted by professionals and credentialed experts.” In 2020, the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NCCASA) published a human trafficking prevention curriculum toolkit intended to assist North Carolina school districts in identifying and selecting the best available human trafficking prevention curricula for schools (NCCASA, 2020). The purpose of the toolkit is to help school districts identify child trafficking curricula that fit districts’ needs while also complying with North Carolina’s statutory mandates. This, it turns

out, is not possible. The authors of the toolkit pointed out that “only one human trafficking prevention curriculum is currently considered ‘evidence-based’ after sufficient peer-reviewed research (*My Life My Choice*), and that curriculum is gender specific . . . , focuses primarily on one specific model of sex trafficking, and is designed to be co-facilitated by a clinician partnered with a survivor leader” (NCCASA, 2020, p. 3). The authors of the toolkit also pointed out that the North Carolina trafficking education mandate faces implementation challenges because, like the mandates in many other states, it is unfunded. Essentially, North Carolina has mandated that school districts implement a child sex trafficking prevention education program that doesn’t exist but should. The North Carolina example provides a cautionary tale to other states looking to mandate and implement CSEC education in schools. Mandating CSEC education alone, without providing vetted curricula and staff to work with school districts on program implementation, will not lead to significant progress in CSEC education.

While they do not require student education on trafficking, Maryland, Ohio, Texas, Utah, and Virginia all have statutory mandates requiring that educators receive CSEC training. There are more readily available resources for teaching adults, including educators, about child sex trafficking than resources for teaching children. Training for adults who interact with children typically focuses on awareness, identification of potential trafficking victims, and reporting and referral resources. Missing from many of the CSEC resources available to educators is training on Tier 1 prevention of child sex trafficking and information about how educators should talk to and instruct children about sex trafficking.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Significant gaps in research, legislation, and policy have prevented the implementation of programs to educate teachers and students on the prevention of child sex trafficking. There is consensus among policymakers about the importance of CSEC education for children and educators. There is also consensus that schools are uniquely positioned to play a role in preventing CSEC. Yet, a gap remains between government policy on child trafficking prevention and what is actually happening on the ground in schools. One key recommendation from a recent roundtable on CSEC prevention education was to close this “policy-to-practice gap” (OTIP, 2019b). The following eight recommendations can help advance this goal.

- 1 Research:** Conduct evidence-based research aimed at identifying or developing universal CSEC prevention programs that can be used by schools. As a first step, the federal government should fund an experimental or quasi-experimental research study to evaluate the CSEC education programs developed under the HTYPE grants.
- 2 Federal legislation:** Increase funding for the research and implementation of CSEC prevention education. Pass the federal Human Trafficking and Exploitation Prevention Training Act of 2021, a bill recently introduced into Congress.
- 3 State legislation:** States should enact legislation to fund, evaluate, and implement CSEC education programs for students

and school personnel. These training programs should address CSEC awareness, prevention, identification, and response actions.

- 4 Administration and staffing:** Fund and create prevention education positions within state departments of education (OTIP, 2019b).
- 5 Timing:** CSEC education needs to start by early middle school. Waiting until high school to initiate CSEC education is too late.
- 6 Trauma-informed practice:** CSEC prevention programs need to be trauma informed and culturally and linguistically appropriate (OTIP, 2020b).
- 7 SEL integration:** CSEC prevention education programs should integrate SEL approaches.
- 8 Focus on prevention:** CSEC prevention efforts need to go beyond providing awareness information. Prevention education is needed as well (OTIP, 2019b).

In summary, schools are poised to play a frontline role in CSEC prevention education. School-based education is an underutilized, under-researched, and underfunded tool for CSEC prevention. For policies requiring CSEC education in schools to be more than symbolic gestures, more work needs to be done to identify and develop effective and developmentally appropriate CSEC education programs for children.

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Appendix

State Laws on Child Trafficking Education

California, Florida, and North Carolina are the only states that require CSEC prevention to be taught to students. Several other states listed below require that school personnel receive CSEC

training. Some, like Texas and Arizona, make CSEC training voluntary to school districts but provide state resources to support CSEC education. Most states do not mandate any type of CSEC training for students or school personnel.

State	Year	Law/Regulation	Who Is Taught	Comments
Arizona	2015	Executive Order 2015-12	Students and school personnel	Created the Arizona Human Trafficking Commission, which worked with Arizona State University to create Project STARFISH, an optional trafficking curriculum.
California	2015; 2017	AB 1227	"School district personnel" and Grades 7–12 students	Comprehensive sexual health education for Grades 7–12 is required to include human trafficking prevention education. The California Department of Education provides resources such as a collaborative of nonprofit organizations that provide such a curriculum, but the adoption of a specific curriculum is not mandatory (California Department of Education, 2021). The Commercially Sexually Exploited Children's Program (Sec. 16524.7) provides funding to educate foster youth and other children at risk of becoming CSEC victims (Tier 2).
Florida	2019	Florida Dept. of Ed. Rule 6A-1.094123 (repealed)	K–12 students	Administrative rule required K–12 child trafficking education. Repealed on December 22, 2020. Not yet replaced by a new rule.
Florida	2021	CS/HB 519	K–12 students	Requires K–12 education on "prevention of child sexual abuse, exploitation, and human trafficking." Effective July 21, 2021. No information to date on implementation plans.
Maryland	2011	HB 674	"Directors of student services in local education agencies"	The Maryland Department of Education must provide "awareness and training ... on human trafficking, including strategies for the prevention of trafficking to children" to local education agency directors of student services. Materials must also be made available to students, parents, and school personnel.
Massachusetts	2011	HB 3808	School administrators and educators	Instruction is not mandatory, but the law created the Massachusetts Interagency Human Trafficking Task Force to develop and recommend child trafficking training materials for educators. The task force's 2013 report recommended mandatory child trafficking training for educators, students, and parents. No state mandates have been implemented or are forthcoming.
North Carolina	2015	SL 2015-279	Students	Local boards of education must teach students about "sex trafficking prevention and awareness." The districts must collaborate with outside consultants "with expertise in trafficking prevention education," and the information conveyed must be "based upon scientific research that is peer reviewed and accepted by professionals and credentialed experts."
North Carolina	2019	SL 2019-245	"School personnel"	Mandatory child sex trafficking training program for school personnel who work directly with students must include "best practices" from the field of prevention.

State	Year	Law/ Regulation	Who Is Taught	Comments
Ohio	2013	HB 59	Teachers, counselors, school psychologists	"Human trafficking" was added to school safety and violence curriculum for educators.
Texas	2013	HB 1272	"School personnel"	Instruction is not mandatory, but the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force has done a significant amount of work supporting and promoting trafficking education in schools through its RISE to the Challenge curriculum.
Utah	2019	Utah Code 53G-9-207	"School personnel" (mandatory); students (optional)	Code mandates that school districts provide training on "child sexual abuse and human trafficking prevention and awareness" to "school personnel." Student instruction on "child sexual abuse and human trafficking prevention" is optional, but elementary curriculum must be approved by state board of education.
Virginia	2012	SB 259	School staff	The US Department of Education describes Prince William County's program as "promising" in its 2021 report (Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, 2021).
Virginia	2017	HB 2282	School staff	Legislation directed the Virginia Board of Education to publish child trafficking prevention training guidelines. The guidelines provide links to curricula but do not recommend specific curricula.
Washington	2013	SB 5563	School employees	Mandatory training on "commercial sexual abuse of minors."