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ABSTRACT

Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG) Evaluation Report

By

Maureen Oginga

4/23/2020

Georgia is the 35th state to pass a version of Erin's Law, a law that requires all public schools to implement a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program that is directed at students, school personnel, parents, and guardians. Critical components of Erin's Law were used to revise Georgia's Quality Basic Education Act (Code Section 20-2-143), which relates to student sex education and AIDS prevention instruction. Currently, the most comprehensive tool educators have available to them to implement this law is the Georgia Child Sexual Abuse Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG), which was published by the Georgia Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force Workgroup titled Youth Aware and Safe. Through this capstone project, the TARG was evaluated. The purpose of this evaluation was two-fold: (1) to provide the Human Trafficking Task Force with recommendations to update the TARG and (2) to provide best practices for the implementation of Georgia's sexual abuse mandate related to providing annual, age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education to students in kindergarten through grades 9.

**Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource
Guide (TARG) Evaluation Report**

by

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B.S., Public Health

University of South Florida

A Capstone Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Georgia State University in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

ATLANTA, GEORGIA
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APPROVAL PAGE

**Georgia’s Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource
Guide (TARG) Evaluation Report**

by

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Author's Statement Page

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Maureen Oginga

Signature of Author

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Executive Summary

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a significant public health burden worldwide. Often CSA is underestimated due to definitional differences, underreporting, and stigma, further making it challenging to capture the true magnitude of the issue. By examining and understanding risk and protective factors and evidence-based programmatic strategies, CSA is preventable. Georgia has made headway in addressing CSA by becoming the 35th state to pass a version of Erin's Law, a law that requires all schools to provide CSA prevention education and programs. Currently, the most comprehensive tool educators have available to them to implement this law is the Georgia Child Sexual Abuse Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG) published by the Georgia Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force Work Group 2, Youth Aware and Safe.

The TARG promotes evidence-based CSA prevention programs based on identified needs within the state. The overall goal of the TARG is to address CSA and exploitation and to equip youth-serving organizations, communities, and schools with existing sexual abuse prevention strategies and programs to improve the health and well-being of their youth population. This evaluation report aims to describe the CSA implications and prevention strategies and moreover, present findings from the Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Technical Assistance Resource Guide Survey and semi-structured interviews. The survey was sent out to individuals who previously downloaded the guide and the interviews included six key stake holders that provided insight on the implementation barriers. Outlined recommendations seek to improve the utilization and content of the TARG and practices related to the Georgia sexual abuse education mandate. Lastly, the report provides insight into the implementation of the new mandate and offer available best evidence for implementation.

Overview of Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is included in the World Health Organization's list of the 24 most substantial risk factors that contribute to the global burden of disease given its high prevalence and costly implications (Stevens, Mascarenhas, & Mathers, 2009). Although CSA definitions vary from state to state, the definition included in this report is from the World Health Organization (WHO). According to the WHO, Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is defined as:

The involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Under this definition, a "child" is anyone under the age of 18 years except where the legal age of majority is lower than 18 years. This definition includes commercial sexual exploitation and the use of children in pornographic performances and materials (Letourneau et al., 2018).

Furthermore, in Georgia, the law defines CSA as the exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult or older child and includes physical and non-physical sexual behaviors as well as the commercial sexual exploitation of children (O.C.G.A. 19-7-5).

CSA prevention is a form of violence prevention. It is critical to understand the risk factors that contribute to CSA to maximize and ensure comprehensive prevention strategies and activities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Social-Ecological (SEM) is a four-level framework that allows us to understand the wide range of factors associated with violence that put individuals at risk for violence or protect them from experiencing or perpetrating violence (CDC, 2020). This framework views violence as the outcome of interactions between four levels: individual, relationship, community, and societal. CSA persists through the complex and intermingling risk factors that exist within each level of the social-ecological chain.

Individual Level Risk Factors

The first level refers to biological and personal history factors that increase the likelihood of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence (CDC, 2020). Individual-level risk factors that put children at an increased risk of being sexually abused include children who are female, have a disability, are under the age of 13, and children experiencing mental health challenges such as depression (Murray, Nguyen, & Cohen, 2014). However, while these child risk factors exist, it is essential to note that adults should take responsibility for the burden of prevention and ensure that it is distributed across community members, organizations, and social structures.

Relational Level Risk Factors

The second level examines close relationships that may increase the risk of experiencing violence as a victim or perpetrator (CDC, 2020). Many studies have found that family environments exhibiting low family support, parental substance abuse, domestic violence, or little caregiver warmth contribute to relational risk factors (Murray, Nguyen, & Cohen, 2014). Indicators of parenting and parent functioning that involve poor family and parent-child relationships and low parental involvement have been commonly reported by victims of CSA. Additionally, findings from a study examining factors associated with CSA found that characteristics among younger adults reporting CSA often included high levels of exposure and experiences of marital conflict such as parental separation or divorce, resulting in the disruption of relationships (Horwood, Fergusson, & Lynskey, 1996).

Community Level Risk Factors

The third level explores the settings, such as schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods, in which social relationships occur and seeks to identify the characteristics of these settings that are associated with becoming victims or perpetrators of violence (CDC, 2020). Research has shown that physical and social environments such as high crime neighborhoods, high unemployment rates, and neighborhood violence are risk factors operating at the community level (Child Welfare Information Getaway, 2004). Other significant community-level variables associated with CSA include social isolation and low levels of social support (DePanfilis, 1996; Elliott, Cunningham, Linder).

Societal Level Risk Factors

The fourth level looks at the broad societal factors that help create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited (CDC, 2020). Jewkes et al., 2002, indicate weak laws and policies as potential factors functioning at the societal level. Moreover, they suggest that social norms and perceptions of tolerance of sexual abuse within communities also play a role as risk factors. While CSA is prevalent across all the levels of the social-ecological model, it appears to cut across all races and all economic levels and factors such as socioeconomic status and ethnicity are consistently identified as risk factors (Miller & Perrin, 2007).

Child Sexual Abuse Prevalence

Experts estimate that 1 out of 10 children will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday, specifically, 1 in 7 girls and 1 in 25 boys (Townsend & Rheingold, 2013). Risk factors slightly differ by victim gender; for instance, in girls, the risk increases with age, while for boys, age-associated risk peaks around puberty (Finkelhor, 1994). While there is a significant gender disparity, male victims should not be overlooked as the burden often goes unrecognized and is rarely addressed (Dhaliwal et al., 1996). Based on reported and confirmed cases, there are approximately 39 million adult survivors of CSA in America (Townsend & Rheingold, 2013). In 2018, known cases of CSA in Georgia accounted for 5% of the total known child maltreatment cases; however, underreporting, varying definitions, and the maltreatment classification systems within the state do not accurately reflect total cases (Georgia Department of Public Health, 2018).

CSA incidence and prevalence are often underestimated through several factors such as stigma, reporting, social norms, and varied CSA definitions. Sauzier (1989) mentions the unreliability of the data may be attributed to the victim being familiar with the perpetrator. In terms of disclosure, children who are victims of CSA are much more resistant to disclosing CSA incidents if the abuser is a family member rather than a non-family member. Furthermore, roughly 90% of the perpetrators involve someone known to the child and are often trusted by the child and family (Snyder, 2000; Finkelhor & Shattuck, 2012). The burden of shame, guilt, and fear experienced by CSA survivors often leads to underreporting. Holmes and Slap (1998) and Romano and De Luca (2001) suggest that low prevalence among male victims may be due to the possibility of greater shame and the fear that they will be labeled as weak depending on their aggressor's gender. Additionally, the inconsistent use of CSA definitions among states and countries result in discrepancies that affect the data's utility and reliability.

Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse

Exposure to CSA can lead to adverse outcomes throughout a lifetime. CSA impacts not only the survivors but also affects those close to them, as well as the surrounding community. CSA serves as a root cause of many social and health issues that influences all of us. Additionally, CSA is considered an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), which heightens a child's risk for negative health outcomes over the course of the child's life. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. Children growing up with toxic stress such as experiencing CSA, may have difficulty forming healthy and stable relationships (CDC, 2019).

The effects of CSA can be short- and/or long-term and are present at the individual and community level as well as affecting our collective society. Physical health effects associated with CSA may include physical injuries, STI's and chronic health conditions such as heart disease, obesity, and cancer. Furthermore, research demonstrates a clear association between CSA and adverse mental health outcomes among victims (Fergusson & Mullen, 1999; Walsh, Fortier, & DiLillo, 2010). Mental health consequences may include depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and substance abuse. For example, children who are sexually abused are at significantly higher risk for later posttraumatic stress and other anxiety symptoms depression and suicide attempts (Paolucci, Genuis, & Violato, 2001). When compared to individuals without a history of CSA, men and women who suffered from CSA are at a higher risk to attempt suicide – men are six times and women nine times more likely to attempt suicide over their lifetime (Briere et al., 1986). These psychological problems can lead to significant disruptions in healthy development and often have a lasting impact, leading to dysfunction and distress well into adulthood (Paolucci, Genuis, & Violato, 2001)

Evidence suggests that adult survivors are at a higher likelihood of becoming involved in criminal behavior, both as a perpetrator and as a victim (Felitti et.al, 1998). Additionally, adolescents who were sexually abused have a three to fivefold risk of delinquency (Darkness to Light, 2020). Many of the detrimental effects attributed to CSA can be monetized, showing a substantial cost at the societal level. The total lifetime economic burden of CSA in the United States, for victims counted in 2015 was estimated to be at least \$9.3 billion (CDC, 2019). According to recent economic impact analysis conducted by Letourneau and colleagues, calculations of the lifetime cost of one CSA victim was found to be over \$282,000. Major expenses included in the analysis were: health care costs (child and adult, including physical and mental health), productivity losses, child welfare costs, violence/crime costs (including costs associated with assault, robbery, burglary, and theft), special education costs, suicide death costs, and (separately) quality-adjusted life-year losses (Letourneau et al., 2018).

Notably, victims of CSA are more susceptible to sexual exploitation; 90% of children who are commercially sexually exploited have been sexually abused in the past (Taylor & Harris, 2018). Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) refers to a range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child for economic gains (OJJDP, 2014). A common misconception is that CSEC and CSA are separate issues. However, CSEC is one form of child sexual abuse. It is reported that, children begin to be at greater risk for trafficking between ages 12 and 14 (Adams, Owens, and Small 2010; Greenbaum 2014). Among youth, certain relationship factors, such as having a history of abuse, have been associated with an increased likelihood of being sexually exploited (Adams, Owens, and Small, 2010). Furthermore, other research suggests that exploiters fear contracting sexually transmitted diseases from older victims, so they target and exploit younger children (Adams, Owens, and Small 2010). Moreover, CSA survivors especially women, are vulnerable to later sexual re-victimization in life. Overall, CSA and CSEC victims experience a wide range of traumatization that impacts their health.

Child Sexual Abuse Prevention

The opportunity to prevent CSA through policies, protective factors, and evidence-based programs can greatly curtail CSA's significant burden and cost to society. Research suggests that social support and family characteristics that build resilience may be more influential than particular risk factors or characteristics of the experienced abuse in determining individual outcomes. (Marriott, Hamilton, & Harrop, 2013). Primarily, collective and coordinated efforts involving children, families, and professionals are critical in addressing the prevention of CSA. The effectiveness of the prevention efforts increases when the approach includes strategies that address individual, relational, community and societal level factors.

Individual Level Prevention

Individual-level prevention efforts such as parent education programs and support groups that focus on child development, age-appropriate expectations, and the roles and responsibilities of parenting provide optimal outcomes for the prevention of CSA (Prevent Child Abuse Georgia, 2020). As parents/ caregivers' knowledge and self-efficacy increases, they become better equipped to have conversations about CSA with their children, providing overall guidance. Moreover, educating adults on the signs and indicators of CSA has been demonstrated as a practical, cost-effective, and measurable approach to address CSA. It is essential that all individuals, especially those who work with and/or have responsibility for children and youth, such as in schools, youth-serving agencies, faith communities, and sports or club organizations are trained in preventing CSA. For instance, trainings such as Stewards of Children, help individuals prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. Most importantly, this approach places the responsibility on the adults and alleviates the burden for the prevention of CSA off the shoulders of children.

Relational Level Prevention

CSA prevention strategies at the relationship level include family-focused and family support strengthening programs that promote healthy communications and behaviors. Furthermore, programs that enhance the ability of families to access existing services and resources positively impact interactions among family members. Other programs and activities that extend beyond family setting such as mentoring and peer programs aid in conflict reduction, foster problem-solving skills, and promote overall healthy relationships. Ultimately, strengthening families and communities in providing social and emotional development ensures safe and nurturing relationships among adults and children.

Community Level Prevention

Community-level activities impact the social and physical environment such as schools, neighborhoods, and workplaces. Examples can include reducing social isolation, improving economic and housing opportunities in neighborhoods that work together to create supportive communities and environments. Moreover, assessing the climate, processes, and policies within the school and workplace settings are critical in protecting children. For instance, the promotion and creation of safe-child policies such as screening techniques for staff and volunteers and guidelines regarding one-child/one-adult situations at the organizational level further create safe and protective environments.

Societal Level Prevention

At the societal level, there are broader cultural and societal factors that can have influence that encourage or discourage CSA. Factors that involve health, economic, educational, and social policies can impact the ability of parents, communities, and organizations to care for children. Specifically, child and family policies related to parental leave, maternal employment, and childcare arrangements directly impact parents and caregivers, which can enhance or lessen the stresses associated with family life and influencing the resources available to families—on a much broader scale, ensuring adequate housing, access to health care and social services and equitable access and opportunities.

Overall, collaborative efforts among multiple sectors and addressing all levels of the social-ecological model can create safe, stable, and nurturing environments that are essential in preventing early adversity, including child sexual abuse and other adverse experiences (CDC, 2019).

Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG)

In 2015, Georgia's Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force, led by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC), developed Work Groups that support the statewide response to eradicating human trafficking. The Task Force's mission is "to protect the citizens of Georgia from perpetrators and systems of sexual exploitation while concurrently working to support the recovery of CSEC victims to ensure that they are ready for a successful future." The Task Force operates by a targeted, strategic framework that consists of nine individual Work Groups addressing the five elements of the trafficking continuum: Vulnerability - Recruitment - Exploitation - Withdrawal - Reintegration (CJCC).

The nine individual Work Groups include: Community and Awareness Education (Work Group 1), Youth Aware and Safe (Work Group 2), Detering Traffickers and Buyers (Work Group 3), Keeping At-Risk Youth Safe (Work Group 4), Apprehending, Investigating, and Prosecuting (Work Group 5), Examining Under-Served and/or Previously Identified Victims (Work Group 6), Survivors Supported and Protected (Work Group 7), Survivors Recovering and Thriving (Work Group 8), and Examining Domestic Adult Sex Trafficking (Work Group 9).

Specifically, the "Youth Aware and Safe" Work Group's "efforts are focused on increasing the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation prevention education being delivered to youth...[and] is comprised of dedicated local experts in child advocacy, child abuse prevention, and victims' services" (CJCC). In 2016, Work Group 2 began developing the Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG) to promote evidence-based CSA prevention programs based on identified needs within the state. The overall aim of the TARG is to address CSA and exploitation and to equip youth-serving organizations, communities, and schools with existing sexual abuse prevention strategies and programs to improve the health and well-being of their youth population (Georgia Center for Child Advocacy, 2020). Its creation consisted of a comprehensive review of specific child-focused abuse and exploitation prevention programs and captured programs that satisfied the criteria for the *Nine Principles of Effective Prevention Programs* (Georgia Center for Child Advocacy, 2020). The TARG provides best practices for sexual violence prevention, principles of prevention, identifying classroom resources, developing a prevention plan, age-appropriate teaching suggestions, program analysis, and guidelines for implementation and evaluation. It is important to note that the TARG does not endorse the programs listed but rather serves as a resource tool. The guide further provides tools to conduct assessments and evaluation plans to choose programs and implementation plans that best aligns with organizational needs.

Work Group 2 and the development of the TARG were instrumental in the passing of the recent mandate that addresses sexual abuse prevention education in schools. Georgia made a significant stride to address CSA through the 2018 amendment of SB 401 that was signed into law based on model legislation commonly referred to as "Erin's Law," named after CSA survivor and activist Erin Merryn.

Georgia Sexual Abuse Prevention Mandate

Georgia is the 35th state to pass a version of Erin's Law, a law that requires all public schools to implement a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program that is directed at students and school personnel and informs parents and guardians. Georgia utilized critical components of Erin's Law to revise the Quality Basic Education Act (Code Section 20-2-143), which relates to student sex education and AIDS prevention instruction. The revision to the Quality Basic Education Act requires that public schools in Georgia:

- Provide annual age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education in kindergarten through grades 9;
- Provide that professional learning may include participating in or presenting at in-service training on sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention (Code Section 20-2-200);
- Provide In-service training programs on sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention for professional personnel that will be providing instruction in annual age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education in K through grade 9 (Code Section 20-2-2)

With the passing of the mandate, Georgia schools have the opportunity to increase child and youth awareness of CSA and subsequently reduce child and youth vulnerability to CSA. Research shows two-thirds of teachers do not receive specific training in preventing, recognizing, or responding to child sexual abuse in either their college coursework or as part of their professional development (Darkness to Light, 2020). Critical goals of Erin's law are to provide sexual abuse prevention education in schools and equip instructors with skills and tools to better handle disclosures and appropriately discuss CSA topics with children in a relatable manner.

As a result of the Georgia mandate, professionals are using the TARG to guide the implementation of evidence-based practices to fulfill the requirements. To better suit educators who are charged with implementing the new mandate, the Human Trafficking Task Force Work Group 2, Youth Aware and Safe has chosen to evaluate the TARG's utility and practical application following the mandate. This report describes evaluation findings and makes recommendations for any updates of the TARG and provides the available best evidence for implementation. This report will also provide insight into the implementation of the new mandate and help inform and make further amendments to practices related to the GA mandate.

Method

The Youth Aware and Safe Work Group 2 from the Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force created a survey to assess opinions regarding the usefulness of the guide. Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Guide Survey was distributed via SurveyMonkey to collect quantitative and qualitative data from individuals who downloaded and read the TARG. Moreover, the survey also inquired about additional thoughts on child sexual abuse prevention programs in schools in their communities. The anonymous online questionnaire included a total of 18 questions and was sent out to users via email from August 1st to December 1st, 2019 through Prevent Child Abuse Georgia, Georgia Center for Child Advocacy, and The Stephanie V. Blank Center for Safe and Healthy Children at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. The analysis of the questionnaire included imported data from survey monkey to an excel spreadsheet. Once the data was imported, a descriptive analysis that included graphs and charts was performed.

Furthermore, there were additional semi-structured interviews conducted with six state and local level stakeholders who shared their thoughts on the utility of the TARG and provided insight into the implementation of the mandate. The interview questions used were the same as the survey questionnaire but were presented as open-ended questions. In all interviews, participants' responses to the questions typically led to more detailed questions and answers that followed. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for qualitative data analysis. Data were coded through an iterative process that involved reading all transcripts and identifying major themes. The stakeholders' information will be shared, following the description of the Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Survey.

Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Guide Survey Results

There was a total of 83 survey respondents, of which about 84% reported downloading and/or reading the TARG. Only about 13% reported they had a child sexual abuse prevention curriculum in place prior to the Georgia sexual abuse prevention mandate, compared to almost 70% at the time the survey was taken. Most of the respondents learned about the TARG through a link from a Georgia Department of Education notice (38%); attended a presentation on the topic (19%); from Georgia Center for Child Advocacy Website (13%); from PCA Georgia website (9%); or from other sources (21%, mostly through search engines)

Table 1 outlines a summary of the yes/ no questions asked throughout the survey. The data overall captures participants' responses on school districts' efforts in CSA prevention education in schools and parent engagement on the subject matter.

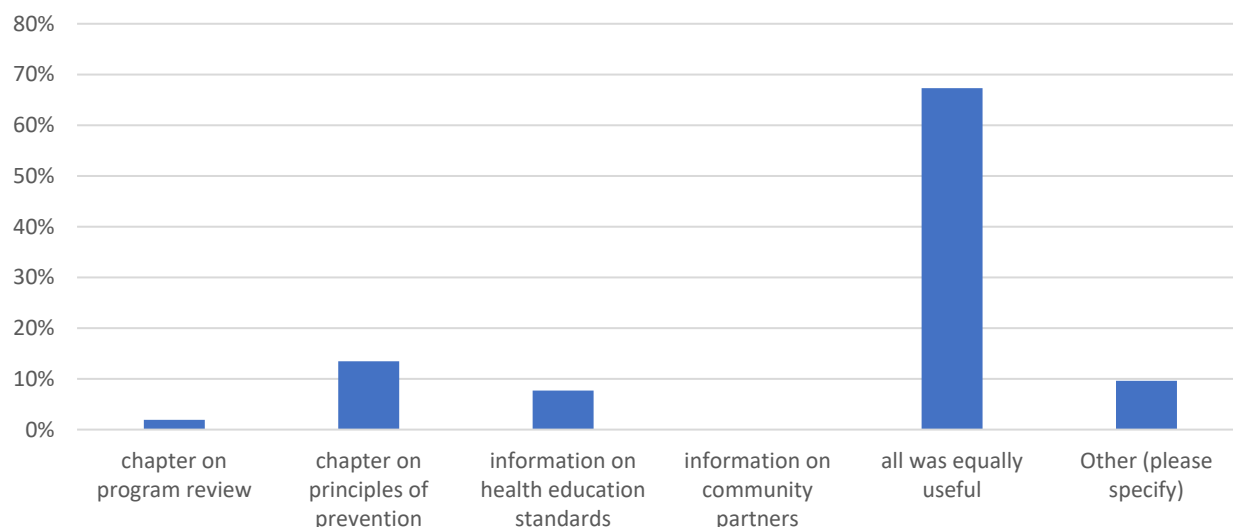
Table 1. TARG Yes/No Survey Questions (n=83)

Survey Question	% of Those Who Responded			Missing Data (n)
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't Know (%)	
Read and/or Downloaded TARG	84.34	15.66	-	-
Work in a school district and feel that CSA prevention training was provided	73.58	3.77	1.89	11
School districts currently providing CSA prevention education	69.81	11.32	18.87	-
Had CSA prevention programs prior to TARG being covered in totality	13.04	10.87	47.83	13
Notify parents and use opt out letters	80.00	20.00	-	-
Received parental resistance on CSA prevention education	22.86	77.14	-	-

"n" stands for "number" of respondents, and because of rounding, percentages do not always total 100. Additionally, because not every respondent answered every question, the number of respondents (n) may change between questions.

Most of the respondents found all chapters were equally useful rather than any one individual chapter, as seen in Figure 1. Additionally, respondents specified the following as valuable sections of the TARG: resources by grade level; classroom implementation suggestions; school resource lists; and advocacy tools for educators to receive training on CSA.

Figure 1. Information Respondents Found Most Useful within the TARG by Chapter (n=52)



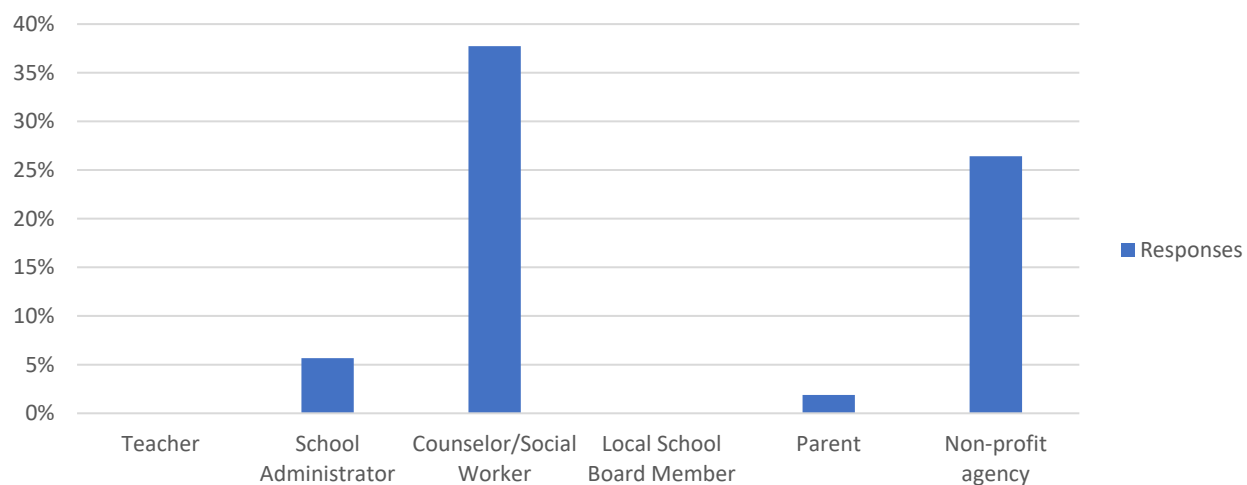
While most respondents referenced that the TARG was comprehensive and that there wasn't much missing, there were some additional themes that surfaced. Table 2 displays how educators heavily identified the need for teacher-friendly curriculums that involve scripts, lesson plans, and more consolidated content for individuals to reference quickly.

Table 2. Additional responses regarding TARG improvements

Other Responses
<p><i>None</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Really quite comprehensive</i>
<p><i>Instructional materials</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Specific script or language needed: give examples of age appropriate language to young kids</i> - <i>Lesson plans for detailed delivery of information would be helpful</i>
<p><i>Curriculum support</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Information on schools/programs using specific programs in the state.</i> - <i>More detail on curriculum for schools to implement</i>
<p><i>Additional program sources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Anything to help school districts find comprehensive resources that cover all requirements</i> - <i>Expand programs and resources that have been reviewed and have a great rating</i>

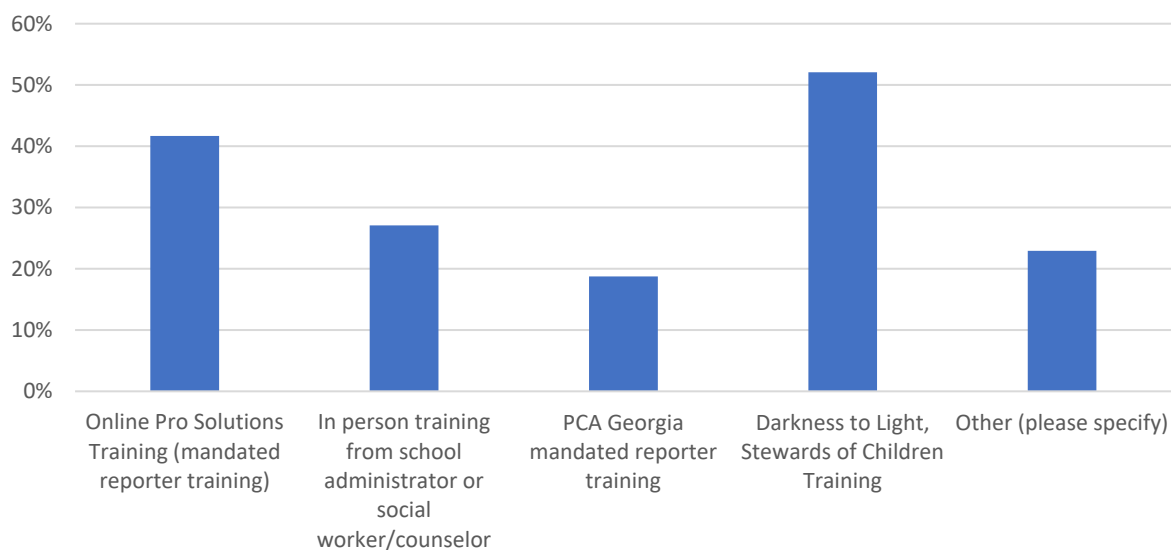
The majority of the respondent's roles in CSA prevention training in schools were counselors/social workers, as reflected in Figure 2. There were other roles mentioned in the additional responses, which included local and state administrators and coordinators, and director of student services. While the responses centered around school districts, law enforcement was a unique role that was also listed.

Figure 2. Percent of Respondents' role in CSA prevention training in schools, n=53



Respondents within the school districts reported information on trainings received. Figure 3 shows a variety of CSA prevention training programs and platforms they had experiences with. Darkness to Light Stewards of Children training had the highest number as the content and materials covered solely focuses on sexual abuse prevention. Most of the respondents indicated that participating in those trainings made them feel prepared to prevent, recognize, and report child sexual abuse.

Figure 3. Percent of training programs received by respondents, n=48



The program's respondents varied from grade levels. Many of the programs and curriculums are widely recognized, considered comprehensive, and are evidence-based. Some school districts are using a blended approach, creating their own in-house curriculums and combining them with some of the school-based curriculums. Table 3 contains the types of curriculums and programs used within the school districts.

Table 3. Name of programs offered

Specified Responses	
Program Name	# of responses
<i>Second Step, Child Protection Unit (K-5)</i>	7
<i>Childhelp Speak Up Be Safe</i>	4
<i>In-house developed curriculum</i>	4
<i>Family Life and Sexual Health (FLASH)</i>	3
<i>Good touch Bad touch</i>	2
<i>MBF's Child Safety Matters</i>	2
<i>Child Safety and Teen Safety Matters curriculum</i>	2
<i>Child Lures and Teen Lures</i>	1
<i>Safe Dates</i>	1
<i>Purpose Prep (6th-12th grades)</i>	1
<i>Keeping Kids Safe</i>	1
<i>Safe Touch</i>	1
<i>Think First, Stay Safe</i>	1

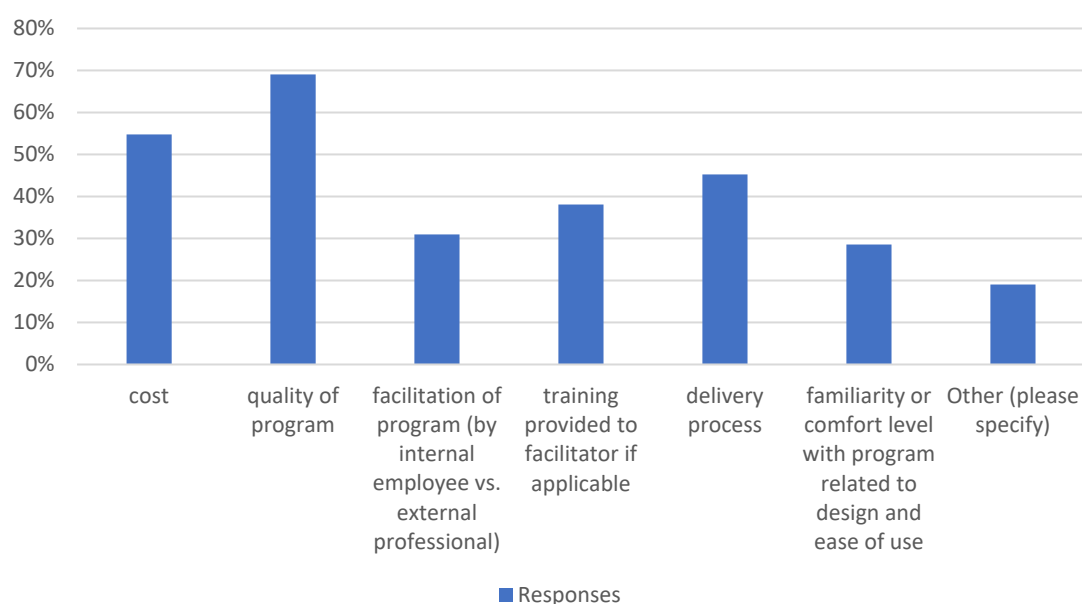
Some of the programs and curriculum mentioned above existed before the mandate. Respondents listed considerations for choosing those programs in Table 4. Overall, most of the respondents were likely to adopt a program/curriculum that was previously vetted. Guidelines and recommendations from the Georgia Department of Education heavily influenced their decisions in choosing the programs. Additionally, evaluating cost and program/curriculum alignment for their school district was also essential for sustainability. Lastly, some responses did not answer the question and are marked as unrelated.

Table 4. Factors influencing program selection

Specified Responses	
<i>Themes</i>	<i># of responses</i>
<i>Don't know</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I don't know. It's been here forever and has never been changed</i> 	12
<i>Recommendation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>We chose FLASH because FCAAP recommended it as a comprehensive sexual health program</i> 	5
<i>Alignment</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Because we are using a 1:1 approach with all our students K-12. In the elementary schools, we are giving 1:1 direction to our K-5 students and a blended learning approach with our 6-12th graders. Purpose Prep is an SEL program with the help of Edgenuity.</i> 	5
<i>Unrelated</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>I'm a Darkness to Light Stewards of Children Facilitator and trained numerous school system staff in numerous counties</i> 	3
<i>Ease of implementation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>After review, staff felt it met legal requirements and could be implemented with ease.</i> 	2

Overall, respondents ranked the quality of the program as high. Quality of program is essential for considerations to ensure that the students are receiving appropriate knowledge on CSA prevention and are comfortable discussing these topics. As shown in Figure 4, the cost and delivery process were also high considerations for new programs and curriculum implementation. However, it is essential to note that the respondents typically experienced more than one type of factor during this process.

Figure 4. Percent of decision-making process for program selection, n=42



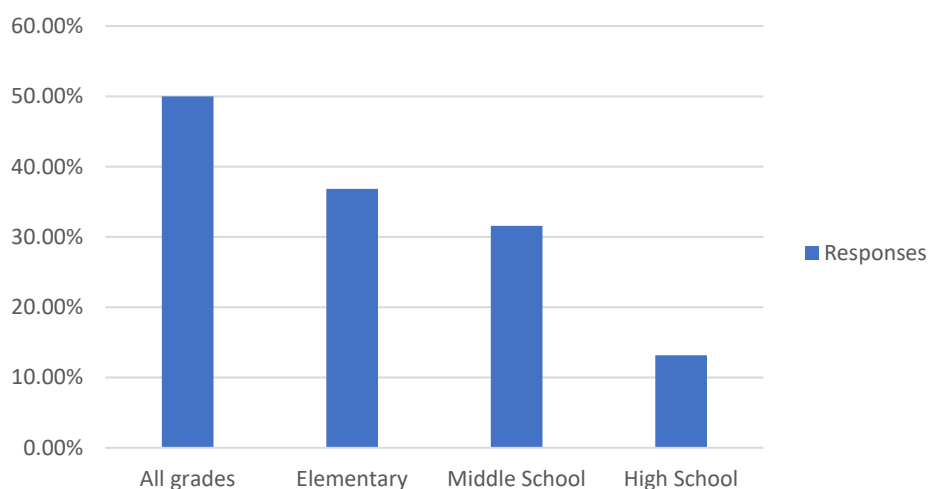
Respondents expounded on additional factors on influencing the process of delivering programs and curricula to the schools. Significant factors that consistently remain are time and cost in both the delivery and decision-making processes. As seen in Table 5, variables concerning time surrounded duration, length, and appropriate instructional time allotted for the curriculums/programs, developing new schedules to incorporate the curriculum and finding balance with existing programs. Also, factors that are considered around cost include consumables, workbooks, and ongoing expenses.

Table 5. Barriers affecting the delivery process

Specified Responses	
<i>Themes</i>	<i># of responses</i>
<i>Time</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Time to deliver the curriculum and the Second Step material is not being given the same amount of time and attention across all elementary schools in the same district, so there is a variance in the quality if a teacher chooses to skip it that day or rush through it, for example</i> - <i>Time is sometime a hindrance. By the time the children get comfortable with the topic there is no time for them to express questions for clarification</i> 	10
<i>Cost</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Cost of curriculum for secondary grades</i> 	4
<i>Unrelated</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The biggest barrier I see in addition to lack of consistent education is lack of focus on teaching kids not only how to identify, but also focusing on consent, ideas around gender roles, bullying, communication skills, and teaching kids how not to become future offenders.</i> 	3
<i>None</i>	3
<i>Access to students</i>	3
<i>Fear</i>	2
<i>Additional training for teachers</i>	1

Before the sexual abuse mandate, some school districts offered CSA prevention education. As indicated in Figure 5, pre-k-fifth grades had more in place than high schools.

Figure 5. Current CSA prevention education implemented by grade level, n=38



Responses regarding parental resistances on CSA prevention education in the classroom were incredibly low. The parents were typically not comfortable with the content being taught at school. Table 6 displays much of the concern regarded children's ability to comprehend the information at their respective ages and whether CSA prevention education is appropriate within the school settings. To better address the children's and parents' comfort level in mind, some parents would prefer to teach their children the subject matter. Lastly, some responses did not answer the question and are marked as unrelated.

Table 6. Responses on parental resistance

Specified Responses	
Themes	# of responses
<i>Comfort level</i> - <i>Parents have felt they should teach their children on these personal topics</i>	3
<i>Readiness and appropriateness</i> - <i>Parents do not think their child is ready or needs to know yet. They aren't sure it should be discussed in school</i>	3
<i>Unrelated</i> - <i>We are in the process of getting child sexual abuse prevention into the schools now</i>	3

Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Technical Assistance and Resource Guide Stakeholder Interviews

Six state and local stakeholders were interviewed about their perceptions of the TARG. The interview questions used were the same as the survey questionnaire but were presented as open-ended questions. Below is the stakeholder summary description of the Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Survey.

Strengths

Overall, the stakeholders found the TARG comprehensive. The TARG provides in-depth information on the following categories: program review, principles of prevention, health education standards and community partnership. While all stakeholders found all categories helpful and informative, there was an emphasis on a few select categories. Program review and age appropriate teaching suggestions for grades K-12 were highly regarded as useful. When the mandate took effect, the chapter on program review was ideal for the stakeholders to easily maneuver and identify programs for selection.

Barriers

Common barriers noted across all the stakeholders are time, cost, and delivery process. Typically, as part of the decision-making process, once identifying what is available and appropriate, the next phase includes reviewing the materials and finding alignment within their needs. During this time, questions regarding feasibility and how all these components fit into their schedule arises. Cost is a significant factor that affects whether a program will be implemented or not. Factors to consider around cost include consumables, workbooks, and ongoing expenses. Additional barriers include support, ease of implementation, and fidelity. When implementing a program, it is critical to consider the facilitators' needs, time, and comfort level. Facilitators considerations surrounding training requirements involve the length of training and the amount of time for participating in those trainings. School staff and individuals implementing the programs are essential for the execution of the mandate. With the right amount of structural and emotional support provided to the school staff, there will be positive outcomes on the delivery process and the success of the CSA prevention education. Since the sexual abuse mandate is relatively new, much of the focus has been on the implementation component. There is a challenging obstacle as to how and when to examine fidelity alongside implementation. Lastly, virtual and online availability was a potential barrier since a decent number of students are enrolled in online schools; this barrier needs to be examined further in the future.

Areas of improvement

Although the TARG has been deemed as comprehensive, there's a substantial amount of information for the reader to absorb. The stakeholders all mentioned how some chapters were directly applicable and relevant to them and their needs. An area of improvement of the TARG consists of focusing on and highlighting certain sections for specific readers. For instance, school district staff generally look for program reviews first. Thus, designing the guide in a manner that displays those components first would be advantageous. Also, including scripted curriculums provide individuals implementing the programs with comfort and confidence to facilitate and properly educate the students. Another recommendation is making the now downloadable document, a live web-based resource guide. As of now, to access the TARG, one must first sign up in order to download the guide and get the information. Creating an interactive web-based guide may increase the number of readers and improve reader experience. Moreover, an online platform yields opportunity for regular updates that can help inform audiences of revisions.

Discussion

Summary of Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Guide Survey Results and Stakeholder Interviews

Overall, the survey results and stakeholders' responses demonstrate that the TARG was a useful resource for individuals to refer to when understanding how to comply with Georgia's mandate to provide sexual abuse prevention education in grades K-9. The TARG offered comprehensive information on program review, principles of prevention, health education standards, and community partners. Several themes emerged among the stakeholders and respondents related to (1) the process of delivering training and curricula to the school districts and (2) the decision factors that most strongly affected the implementation of the CSA prevention education mandate.

Delivery process and decision-making factors themes:

Time

School districts and school personnel struggled to address how to schedule and incorporate the time for trainings while managing all the other required educational initiatives in place. Specifically, for school personnel, access to students and coordinating logistics for program and curriculum implementation proved to be an additional barrier. For instance, one school district had limited staff to appropriately and fully cover the lessons into regular scheduling for over 600 children.

Cost

Cost is a significant factor that affects whether a program will be implemented or not. School districts are faced with the financial burdens of purchasing programs and curriculums. While school districts are operating multiple grade levels and existing programs, finding additional funding for CSA education proved to be a barrier.

Facilitation of Program

Addressing curriculums' and programs' ease of use is essential for staff to facilitate and implement accordingly. School personnel addressed their needs to receive additional training so they can be confident and equipped to implement the programs and curriculums. While there was no indication whether there was of facilitator training in place, some of the school's personnel shared that they were unprepared and were not comfortable in addressing these programs and curricula. Using school personnel regardless of their title that have the

knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes towards child protection, can help increase and contribute to the safety of their student.

Quality of Program

Generally, all school districts and personnel express the need for obtaining comprehensive programs. One school district experienced the challenges in presenting the same program content across all the elementary schools due to variances among teachers scheduling. According to the respondent, there was variation and lack of consistency among teachers teaching the same curriculum, thus impacting the quality of the program. Additional concerns were raised regarding the quality of programs remaining relevant and impactful for the students as the year changes.

Future Directions of Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Survey

The results presented reflect only the views of individuals who downloaded/read the TARG, and who responded to the survey; these results cannot be generalized. The inability to generalize the results from the 83 survey respondents to over 300 individuals that the survey was sent out to is important because it means that the results cannot provide an estimate of the total number of individuals who downloaded/read the TARG. In the future, it would be helpful for the survey to have a wider time frame for responses. Perhaps sending two to three email notifications and reminders throughout the survey time frame would also help increase the response rates. Moreover, some responses on the questionnaire were misinterpreted and garnered an insufficient response which were categorized as unrelated. A suggestion would be to pilot the survey to a variety of stakeholders for feedback to improve on the clarity of the survey and better capture the responses. Such information may increase knowledge of how to better improve receive feedback to update the TARG in the long-term.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations for Youth and Safe Aware Work Group 2 to include in Georgia's Child Sexual and Exploitation Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG).

Recommendation 1

Adapt the TARG from a downloadable platform to a web-based resource guide. The website should be made publicly available and accessible to schools, communities, and youth-serving organizations. The web-based guide should also provide more on information on program implementation such as training and session logistics.

Discussion: To improve the utility of the TARG, a web-based version of the guide should be created and housed on a designated website. Doing so will allow readers to maneuver through the guide and obtain prevention education information in an interactive manner. Creating an interactive web-based guide may increase the number of readers and improve the reader experience. The web-based guide can include a section where individuals can enter their emails to track who accesses the materials of the guide. The web-based guide can serve as a one-stop-shop for links to resources, curricula, and organizations related to child sexual abuse prevention.

Recommendation 2:

Include ready-made template emails or template factsheets on ways to prevent, recognize, and report child sexual abuse

Discussion: Providing sample customizable and editable communications pieces improves the utility among users. Additionally, this helps promote awareness, educate the general public, and target specific audiences. Having clear stated information on how individuals, schools and organizations can work to prevent child sexual abuse, creates a common agenda and a collaborative effort.

Recommendation 3

Conduct an environmental scan of existing child sexual abuse prevention education programs implemented in the schools and provide the available best practices as a resource list.

Discussion: Delaware Department of Education created their first annual Erin's Law Implementation report. The report highlighted how school districts and charter schools are implementing the provisions of Erin's Law as well as information related to student and personnel training. It includes detailed information regarding the implementation of curricula

and programs. Using aspects of this annual report can help provide insight on programs being implemented statewide and inform the implementation process among school districts. School districts can develop a listserv for the schools in the district to ask questions related to program implementation and share knowledge and outcomes of programs being used.

Recommendation 4

Find and include successful implementation narratives for statewide or national child sexual abuse prevention education programs. Highlight the success stories as case scenarios on how their program implementation approach was effective.

Discussion: Reviewing success stories on implementation can help address school districts and school personnel delivery barriers to effective program implementation. For instance, one school district found that utilizing physical education class time and a social worker as a facilitator worked when implementing the program. Overall, seeing how other organizations handled issues such as session logistics, training requirements and curriculum implementation strategies used could be helpful and useful.

The following recommendations are to address barriers among schools, school personnel and school administrators to provide the available best practices for implementation

Recommendation 1

School-wide utilization of Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children online training modules for adult-focused child sexual abuse prevention education. The online training can be administered annually during the planning/development of all curricula, which will build foundational knowledge and practices throughout the school.

Discussion: According to the Journal of Teacher Education (2012), training is critical as CSA program evaluations have found that teacher commitment and quality has a significant impact on the success of a program. School districts and personnel have indicated time for training educators as a substantial barrier. Alleviating this barrier reduces the burden of stress and maximizes on time that is currently focused on teacher professional development. Accessible and available ongoing training opportunities provide tools and skills necessary to overcome these obstacles, equipping teachers to educate students on child sexual abuse prevention.

Conclusion

The goal of this report is to inform the Human Trafficking Task Force, Youth Aware and Safe Work Group 2, with recommendations to update the TARG and provide available best practices for implementation of Georgia's mandate to provide sexual abuse prevention education in grades K-9. The responses to the TARG survey questionnaire and semi structured interviews provided an overview of how the implementation process looked in practice and gave insight on what worked and what didn't work. Moreover, the TARG has been instrumental to individuals on identifying programs and resources and providing practical teaching suggestions. As the TARG is being updated, it is important to consider the readability and the usability for all readers. Recommendations to change to a web-based platform and tailor materials for targeted audiences can further maximize the readability and the usability for all readers and improve the TARG overall.

Additionally, findings from the results and analysis demonstrate the importance of time and ease of implementation as critical components in successfully delivering CSA education in schools. Potential new barriers such as fidelity and virtual schooling need to be further evaluated. While Georgia's mandate on sexual abuse prevention education is still new, there is potential for a significant impact on the prevention of child sexual abuse statewide with proper guidance, resources, and implementation.

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Georgia's Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG) Recommendations



The following represent key findings and recommendations from an evaluation report of the TARG. The outlined recommendations seek to improve the utilization and content of the TARG and the practices related to the Georgia sexual abuse education mandate.

	FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
TARG UTILIZATION	<p>Improvements could be made to increase utility and reach among schools, communities, and youth-serving organizations.</p>	<p>Adapt the TARG from a downloadable platform to a web-based version of the guide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The web-based guide can serve as a one-stop-shop for links to resources, curricula and organizations related to child sexual abuse prevention. <p>Provide additional program implementation guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation & session logistics: lessons/sessions characteristics, length, & training requirements. (example: www.etr.org/ebi/programs/)
IMPLEMENTATION BEST PRACTICES	<p>School districts and school personnel delivery barriers to effective program implementation of Georgia's sexual abuse mandate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low levels of familiarity/comfort level with program related content Lack of adequate time for planning, scheduling and training Great variability in foundational knowledge regarding CSA among respondent Several considerations regarding cost such as program purchases, consumables and ongoing expenses 	<p>School-wide utilization of Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children online training modules for adult-focused child sexual abuse prevention education to be administered annually during the planning/development of all curricula to build foundational knowledge and practices throughout the school.</p> <p>Include ready-made template emails or template factsheets on ways to prevent, recognize, and report child sexual abuse.</p> <p>Conduct an environmental scan of existing child sexual abuse prevention education programs implemented in the schools and provide the available best practices as a resource list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (example: Delaware Department of Education Erin's Law Annual Report) <p>Find and include successful implementation narratives statewide or national child sexual abuse prevention education programs to highlight as case scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A school in DeKalb County School District found that utilizing physical education class time and health funds worked when implementing the program. They worked with the school counselor who had more background and comfort with materials to deliver curriculum to children.

Georgia’s Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation Prevention Technical Assistance Resource Guide (TARG) Recommendations

The recommendations above are informed by data that includes recorded responses that assessed opinions regarding the usefulness of the resource guide and thoughts on child sexual abuse prevention education in schools in their community. The following data highlights themes, barriers and areas of improvement mentioned.

Table 1. TARG Yes/No survey questions (n=83)

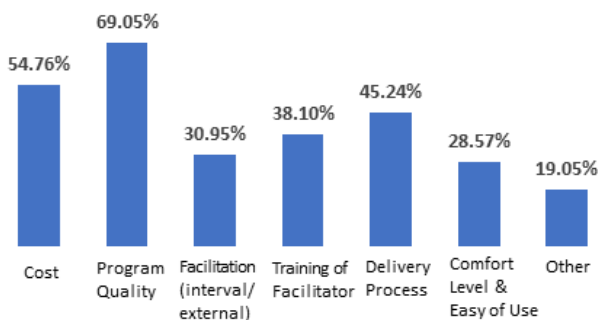
Survey Questions	% of Those Who Responded			Missing (n)
	Yes	No	Unsure	
Read and/or Downloaded TARG	84.3	15.7	-	-
Work in a school district and feel that CSA prevention training was provided	73.6	3.8	1.9	11
School districts currently providing CSA prevention education	69.8	11.3	18.9	-
Had CSA programs prior to TARG being covered in totality	13.0	10.9	47.8	13
Notify parents and use opt out letters	80.0	20.0	-	-
Received parental resistance on CSA prevention education	22.9	77.1	-	-

"n" stands for "number" of respondents, and because of rounding, percentages do not always total 100. Additionally, because not every respondent answered every question, the number of respondents (n) may change between questions.

Respondents had taken the following trainings:

- 42%** Online Mandated Reporter Training
- 27%** In-person Training from school
- 18%** PCA GA Mandated Reporter Training
- 52%** D2L
- 23%** Other, including: Dr. Greenbaum, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, ChildHelp Speak Up, Safe Schools Training, Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Modules

Delivery process and decision-making factors



Barriers affecting delivery process

- **Time** to deliver the curriculum and the Second Step material is not given the same time and attention across all schools in the same district, so there is a variance in the quality (if a teacher skips it that day or rushes it)
- **Additional Training for Teachers**
- **Access to Students**
- **Cost**
- **Content**
- **Fear**

Areas of improvement

Instructional materials

- Specific script or language needed: give more examples of age appropriate language to young kids
- Sample or overview of lesson plans for detailed delivery of information would be helpful

Additional program sources

- Examples of school districts that have implemented recommended curricula
- Expand programs and resources that have been reviewed and have a great rating

Curriculum support

- Information on schools/organizations using specific programs in the state
- Guidance regarding what information should be addressed at various grade levels to comply would be helpful along with suggested mapping and free resources
- More detail on curriculum for schools to implement

Summary

The data presented demonstrates the essential factors and considerations regarding the implementation process of child sexual abuse prevention education. Based on the TARG evaluation, the following should be considered for future editions:

- Adapt the TARG from a downloadable platform to **web-based version of the guide**.
- Conduct an **environmental scan** of existing child sexual abuse prevention education programs implemented in the schools and provide the available best practices as a resource list.