

# The Massachusetts Legislative Task Force on the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse



**Who we are:** A statewide, multi-agency collaboration utilizing the collective experience of both public and private youth serving agencies, offices and organizations to create new frameworks, guidance and tools building on existing best practices and research for the safety and protection of our children and the prevention of child sexual abuse (CSA).

**Our Task and Membership:** As mandated by the Massachusetts State Legislature (see reverse).

**Task Force recommendations include:**

## Code of Conduct

- Ethics-informed guidelines and policies defining clear boundaries for the expected behaviors, actions and interactions of all staff, volunteers and partners who come into contact with minors.
- Clear protocols will outline best practices for responding and investigating.

## Responding and Reporting

- Strategies and tools to help ensure that all professionals, volunteers and participants working with children and youth can identify instances of CSA, including youth-on-youth offenses, and the obligations of mandated reporting.
- Ways to ensure that youth-serving organizations have clear policies and procedures on how to report and respond to suspicions, allegations or disclosures of CSA, and understand the role of law enforcement and/or of the Department of Children and Families in that response.

## Safe Physical Environments and Technology

- Strategies to ensure access to children and youth is monitored, all adults have a role known to staff and participants, maximum visibility of all youth, and that adults are present at all times.
- Ways to ensure appropriate supervision of youth in all places and at all times, and to ensure the privacy and protection of youth in the use of social media and technology.

## Screening and Hiring

- Guidance to organizations implementing background screenings to recruit and select skilled, qualified staff and volunteers and to screen out those who have, or are at risk to abuse minors.
- Rules that will help organizations determine who to screen, how to develop a consistent process for screening and establish policies for use of screening information.
- A Screening Toolbox to assist organizations in selecting the appropriate screening tools.

## Training

- A set of clear and attainable goals for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention (CSAP) Trainings.
- Essential elements for effective CSAP trainings, including information on implementation and choosing curricula.
- Resources that will help organizations address issues of access, content and sustainability.



# Task Force Charter and Current Membership

In 2014, the Massachusetts Legislature authorized the creation of a task force on child sexual abuse prevention (SECTION 34, Chapter 431 of the acts of 2014) to be co-chaired by the state child advocate and the executive director of the Children's Trust. The purpose of the task force is to develop guidelines and tools for the development of sexual abuse prevention and intervention plans by organizations serving children and youth.

The legislation designates certain elected and appointed officials (or their designees) and organizations (see below) to serve on the task force, and further states that the governor may appoint additional representatives from agencies serving children, law enforcement, religious organizations and others as necessary to fulfill the purpose of the task force.

- *Office of the Child Advocate, Co-Chair*
- *The Children's Trust, Co-Chair*
- *Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs*
- *Children's League of MA*
- *Department of Children and Families*
- *Department of Early Education and Care*
- *Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*
- *Department of Mental Health*
- *Department of Public Health*
- *Girl Scouts of Eastern MA*
- *House Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities*
- *House Minority Leader*
- *Massachusetts Adolescent Sex Offender Coalition*
- *Massachusetts Afterschool Partnership*
- *Massachusetts Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs*
- *Massachusetts Association for Treatment of Sexual Abusers*
- *Massachusetts Children's Alliance*
- *Massachusetts Citizens for Children*
- *Massachusetts District Attorneys Association*
- *Mass. Mentoring Partnership*
- *Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance*
- *Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children*
- *Office of the Attorney General*
- *Office of the Lieutenant Governor*
- *Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston*
- *Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities*
- *Senate Minority Leader*
- *Sex Offender Registry Board*

## Visit our Website: Safe Kids Thrive

Safe Kids Thrive is a first-of-its-kind website, developed by the Massachusetts Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Task Force, that helps child-serving organizations develop and implement prevention-focused policies and programs that stop sexual abuse before it happens. With customizable planning tools, online trainings, and learning modules, the site allows organizations to find relevant prevention resources for their specific needs. SafeKidsThrive.org was launched in 2020.



For more information about the Legislative Task Force on the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse, please visit [childrenstrustma.org/csap](http://childrenstrustma.org/csap).