



## Fact Sheet Series for the 133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly

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### House Bill 321

#### *Erin's Law*

### Require Age-Appropriate Sexual Abuse and Violence Instruction

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Sponsors: Representatives Lipps & Kelly

Introduced 8/19/19, House Primary and Secondary Education Committee

#### Under Current Law:

- Schools are not required to instruct students on sexual violence prevention and sexual abuse.
- Currently, **thirty-seven (37) states** have passed Erin's Law, legislation aimed at educating K-12 students on sexual violence prevention and the dangers of sexual abuse at an age-appropriate level.

#### This Bill Would:

Require that all public schools in Ohio implement prevention-focused child sexual abuse programs. Specifically, H.B. 321 would:

- Require all Ohio school districts, community schools, and STEM schools in Ohio provide **annual, age-appropriate** instruction on **child sexual abuse prevention** for students in **kindergarten through sixth grade**.
- Require all Ohio school districts to provide **age-appropriate** instruction on **sexual violence prevention education** for students in **grades seven through twelve**.
- Require the Ohio Department of Education website to provide **free curricula** addressing sexual violence prevention to **aid schools in developing their own programs**.
- Require each school district and educational service center to **incorporate child sexual abuse training** into its required **in-service training** for its teachers and other professionals.
- Require that the mandated child sexual abuse prevention instruction include information on available **counseling and resources for children who are sexually abused**.

#### Why This Bill is Important:

- Approximately 90 percent of children who are sexually abused know their abuser, and 60 percent of those children are abused by someone their family trusts. An additional 30 percent of children who are sexually abused are abused by a family member.
- The likelihood that a child who has been sexually abused knows, trusts, or is related to his or her abuser discourages the child from telling anyone about the abuse, often increasing the severity, frequency, and duration of the abuse.
- Providing education to children early about the dangers of sexual abuse increases the chance of children reporting abuse earlier, and in turn puts an end to the abuse substantially sooner than it may have otherwise.
- Teaching children and adolescents about the dangers of sexual abuse and sexual violence prevention also empowers students to better recognize unhealthy relationships and sexual abuse from a young age, leading to better ability to recognize these problems as adults.
- Providing students with age-appropriate education gives children the tools to talk about these issues on a level they understand, increasing the likelihood of long-term retention.

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