Information Brief

Human Trafficking:
What Schools Need to Know
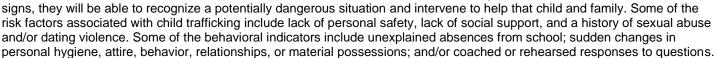
HUMAN TRAFFICKING STATISTICS

- There are an estimated 20.9 million victims (adults and children) of human trafficking worldwide. [1]
- Of those 20.9 million people, an estimated 5.5 million victims are children. [1]
- In Ohio, an estimated 1,000 children are being trafficked every year, and an additional 3,000 children are at risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking.[2]
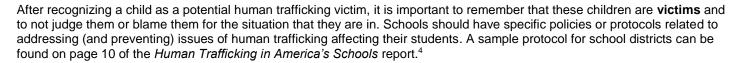- The Ohio Attorney General's Office reported 18,097 missing and runaway youth in 2014. [3]

RECOGNIZING AND ADDRESSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery, and it is an issue that impacts children and families in our communities. As such, it is an issue that school professionals need to understand because they have the potential to **recognize and advocate** for child victims by being aware of the **risk factors** and **possible behavioral indicators of human trafficking**.[4]

Human trafficking can be defined as **"exploiting a person through force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of forced labor, commercial sex, or both."**[4]

Some of the **risk factors** and **possible behavioral indicators** associated with child trafficking are listed in the box below. [4] If school personnel (e.g., administrators, teachers, bus drivers, food service staff, resource officers) are aware of these risk factors and warning signs, they will be able to recognize a potentially dangerous situation and intervene to help that child and family. Some of the risk factors associated with child trafficking include lack of personal safety, lack of social support, and a history of sexual abuse and/or dating violence. Some of the behavioral indicators include unexplained absences from school; sudden changes in personal hygiene, attire, behavior, relationships, or material possessions; and/or coached or rehearsed responses to questions.

After recognizing a child as a potential human trafficking victim, it is important to remember that these children are **victims** and to not judge them or blame them for the situation that they are in. Schools should have specific policies or protocols related to addressing (and preventing) issues of human trafficking affecting their students. A sample protocol for school districts can be found on page 10 of the *Human Trafficking in America's Schools* report.[4]

The following items are considered best practices in establishing an effective school anti-trafficking protocol: [4]
- Develop, adopt, enforce and implement a policy to address child trafficking;
- Make sure all school personnel are properly trained on the policy;
- Make certain campus security is in place so that all visitors are screened;
- Provide programs and roles for parents and guardians to make them part of their children's safety and security, both at school and while going to and from school;
- Assess the environmental structure and take every possible step to help make it safe;
- Partner with local law enforcement experts to provide a parent awareness program on the dangers and warning signs of child sex trafficking; and
- Partner with local law enforcement agencies to protect the routes that students use to travel to and from schools.

POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS OR INDICATORS ASSOCIATED WITH CHILD TRAFFICKING[4]

Risk Factors:
- Lack of personal safety
- Isolation
- Emotional distress
- Homelessness
- Poverty
- Family dysfunction
- Substance abuse
- Mental illness
- Learning disabilities
- Developmental delay
- Childhood sexual abuse
- Dating violence
- Sexual exploitation by others
- Lack of social support

Possible Behavioral Indicators (specifically in the school environment)
- Inability to regularly attend school and/or unexplained absences
- Frequently running away from home
- Talking about frequent travel to other cities
- Bruises or other signs of physical trauma, withdrawn behavior, depression, anxiety, or fear
- Problem behaviors, such as aggression or truancy
- Other school-related problems, including learning disabilities
- Severe physical, emotional, and/or psychological trauma

- Hunger, malnourishment, or inappropriate dress (based on weather conditions or surroundings)
- Signs of drug addiction
- Coached or rehearsed responses to questions
- Sudden change in personal hygiene, attire, behavior, relationships or material possessions
- Hyper-arousal (anger, panic, phobia) or hypo-arousal (daydreaming, inability to bond with others, forgetfulness)

The **Polaris Project**, a non-profit anti-human trafficking organization**,** recognized **Ohio** as one of the **Most Improved states** in 2012, in terms of anti-human trafficking laws. The **Safe Harbor Law** (HB 262) went into action in 2012, and the **End Demand Act** (HB 130) was enacted in 2014. As a result of these laws, juvenile courts in Ohio are working to prevent and protect children who have been, or might become, victims of human trafficking. Also, due to the Governor's Task Force, a screening tool was developed to identify potential victims (http://mha.ohio.gov/Portals/0/assets/Initiatives/HumanTraficking/2013-human-trafficking-screening-tool.pdf). The Task Force's 2015-2016 goals are to: 1) strengthen law enforcement and justice system knowledge of state and federal trafficking laws, 2) collect and disseminate reliable data, 3) identify solutions to timely recovery and shelter services, 4) identify evidence-based prevention strategies for youth, 5) support and build capacity of local partners to respond to trafficking, 6) monitor progress on the use of the screening tool, 7) create a Task Force Speakers Bureau to deliver human trafficking presentations, 8) increase public awareness, and 9) train local workers. *Task Force Report, 2015* [5]

Figure 1: Governor John R. Kasich signing HB 130, the End Demand Act, into law on June 20, 2014.

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

Schools can provide _professional development training_ opportunities for educators and other school professionals to help them:

- Understand human trafficking and child trafficking,
- Recognize the risk factors and possible behavioral indicators that students may be involved in trafficking, and
- Identify tangible steps they can take to advocate for child victims and intervene to help children receive support.

Amended Substitute House Bill 276 of the 126th Ohio General Assembly (2007) requires nurses, teachers, counselors, school psychologists and administrators at public elementary, middle and high schools to receive Safety and Violence Prevention Curriculum training once every five years. Substitute House Bill 59, passed in June 2013, added Human Trafficking to the required topics to be covered in the Safety and Violence Prevention curriculum in-service training. The Ohio Department of Education has developed a model Safety and Violence Prevention curriculum that can be viewed and downloaded here: https://saferschools.ohio.gov/content/k_12_schools_training.

Schools can support at-risk students by providing _programming and strategies_ to improve students' personal safety, enhance their social support network, and educate them about what to do if they experience sexual abuse and/or dating violence. The following resources are school and classroom-based curricula, resources, trainings and educational tips to support students who are victims of human trafficking or who may be at-risk for human trafficking.

An overview of human trafficking curricula for *middle and high school* can be found at http://nesteducators.org/curriculum-and-resources/curriculum-comparison-chart/ and an overview of human trafficking curricula for *elementary school* can be found at http://nesteducators.org/curriculum-and-resources/k-6-comparison-chart/.

Some of the no-cost resources include:

- Teaching Tolerance (Southern Poverty Law Center) has a webpage devoted to 'teaching tips' for educating young people about human trafficking: http://www.tolerance.org/toolkit/human-trafficking.
- Born2fly International, Inc. has a community-based awareness campaign that educates at-risk children (and their parents) about the dangers of human trafficking: https://born2fly.org/The-Born2Fly-Project.html.
- Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives has a 2016 *Human Trafficking Education Curriculum* that aims to reduce the vulnerability of children to the crime of human trafficking through a combination of classroom curricula, educator training and the coordination of community resources: http://www.fdfi.org/human-trafficking-education-curriculum.html.
- Abolishing Injustice in the 21st Century (A21) has a *Bodies Are Not Commodities* curriculum: http://www.a21.org/content/bodies-are-not-commodities-curriculum/gn4oz.
- Human Trafficking Prevention Education Guidance for Implementation of Youth Programs (prepared by the Education Subcommittee of Ohio's Human Trafficking Commission): http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Publications-Files/Publications-for-Law-Enforcement/Human-Trafficking-Reports/Human-Trafficking-Prevention-Education-FINAL.aspx.

REFERENCES

1. International Labour Organization, *ILO 2012 Global Estimate of Forced Labor*, Geneva, Switzerland, 2012. Retrieved from http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm.

2. Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study Commission Research and Analysis Sub-Committee Report on the Prevalence of Human Trafficking in Ohio to Attorney General Richard Cordray, p.4.

3. Ohio Attorney General's Office, *2014 Ohio Missing Children Clearinghouse Report*, 2014. Retrieved from http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Files/Publications-Files/Publications-for-Law-Enforcement/Bureau-of-Criminal-Investigation-Publications/Missing-Children-Clearinghouse-Annual-Report-(PDF).

4. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, *Human Trafficking in America's Schools*, Washington, D.C., 2015. Retrieved from http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/human-trafficking-americas-schools.

5. Ohio Department of Public Safety, Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force, *Human Trafficking Task Force Report*, 2015. Retrieved from http://humantrafficking.ohio.gov/OhioHumanTraffickingTaskForceReport-July2015.pdf.