



National Roundtable on Safeguarding Children and Prevention Education

Post-Roundtable Brief

- TO:** Administration for Children and Families (ACF) anti-trafficking grantees, organizations assisting populations at high risk for human trafficking, organizations providing human trafficking prevention education, local education agencies, state and federal partners, and other interested parties
- SUBJECT:** Summary of panels and topics discussed during the National Roundtable on Safeguarding Children and Prevention Education, co-hosted by the McCain Institute for International Leadership and the Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP)
- PURPOSE:** To provide information to all interested audiences on the challenges and successes of non-government organizations, local educational agencies, and state and federal partners in providing human trafficking prevention education to children and youth.
- BACKGROUND:** The first National Roundtable on Safeguarding Children and Prevention Education was held on November 1, 2018. On April 24, 2019, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announced a call for partnerships to strengthen the Nation's response to prevent human trafficking during the opening session of the 21st National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect. The National Human Trafficking Prevention Action Plan will include strategies and approaches for prevention education.

Introduction

On September 19, 2019, the McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) co-hosted the National Roundtable on Safeguarding Children and Prevention Education. The National Roundtable was the second in a series focused on strengthening human trafficking prevention education for children and youth by supporting dialogue between nongovernmental and governmental stakeholders.

More than 50 representatives from non-government organizations, state agencies, and federal departments attended the National Roundtable. Federal attendees included government officials from HHS, U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and U.S. Congress. State agency attendees included professionals from the education, health, and child welfare sectors, among others. Non-government participants represented a range of human trafficking prevention education strategies, curricula, and programs.

The National Roundtable was organized into eight panels and presentations, each of which ended with a question and answer session. A summary for each panel and presentation is provided below. The full agenda is included in Appendix A.

Remarks and Presentations

Opening Addresses

Cindy McCain, Chair of the McCain Institute Board of Trustees, and ACF Assistant Secretary Lynn Johnson presented opening remarks. Mrs. McCain announced the creation of a public-private partnership between the McCain Institute and ACF to support anti-trafficking efforts and to strengthen human trafficking prevention education. Assistant Secretary Johnson described the administration's commitment to integrating the prevention of human trafficking throughout ACF. By strengthening families, supporting schools, and working with the health care providers and systems, ACF aims to stop victimization before it occurs.

Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ) shared legislative updates regarding human trafficking. Rep. Smith highlighted the passage of the Frederick Douglass Trafficking Victims Prevention and Protection Reauthorization Act (2018). The Act authorizes the U.S. government to provide grants to local education agencies to partner with nongovernmental organizations to establish, expand, and support programs that enable school staff to recognize and respond to signs of sex and labor trafficking and teach students how to avoid becoming victims.

Rob Morris, President and Co-Founder of Love146, delivered the keynote address "Why Prevention Education?" Mr. Morris described Love146's "defiant hope" approach, which acknowledges the realities behind selling and buying children while remaining hopeful that individuals and organizations can make a difference.

Dame Sara Thornton, the U.K. Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, shared progress in providing prevention education in school settings in the U.K. Commercial sexual exploitation is addressed in curricula about healthy relationships in primary and secondary schools. Children in primary schools receive age-appropriate information about the grooming of children, sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, forced marriage, safe use of the Internet, exploitation by gangs, and healthy relationships.

Framing the Conversation

Katherine Chon, OTIP Director, and **Kristen Leanderson Abrams**, McCain Institute Senior Director of Combatting Human Trafficking, outlined the overall goals of the roundtable, including fostering dialogue between governmental and nongovernmental sectors to further expand human trafficking prevention education. The McCain Institute and OTIP are working to better equip more communities, schools, and families to intervene before a child becomes a victim of human trafficking.

Presentation of Research: Children Accessing Exploitative Material Online

Emily Cashman Kirstein, the Senior Manager of Government Affairs at Thorn, presented research and findings on the manner in which children are sexually exploited online. Thorn created an online toolkit to provide resources and information about what to do if they or someone they know experience sextortion. New research is examining child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and how youth are creating it, viewing it, and being exploited as a result of it.

National Roundtable Panels

Federal Agency Panel

Matt Wright, U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Investigations, Cyber Crimes Center
Steven Grocki, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section
Elaine Stedt, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office on Child Abuse and Neglect

Representatives from federal agencies discussed their role in combatting and preventing human trafficking. **Matt Wright** and **Steven Grocki** discussed strategies and gaps in preventing the online exploitation of children. The four major platforms used for online exploitation are messaging, social media, gaming, and live streaming. Panelists expressed the need to include technology companies in conversations about preventing child exploitation on their platforms. Mr. Wright described several of DHS' prevention education efforts, including the iGuardian program, created in partnership with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC). Panelists highlighted the need to educate parents and caregivers about online dangers and challenges engaging parents and adolescents on this topic.

Elaine Stedt announced that the ACF Children's Bureau is partnering with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on a series of technical bulletins that will provide information on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), evidence-based practices, and how to include nontraditional partners in prevention work. Panelists discussed how trauma increases the vulnerability of children to trafficking and acknowledged that trauma is often complex and multigenerational. Partnering with public health providers would increase the effectiveness of prevention work on topics such as internet safety. Panelists also discussed the need to deglamorize commercial sex as a means of preventing child exploitation.

State Agency Panel

Claire Merkel, McCain Institute for International Leadership in Arizona

Christine Shaw Long, North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission

Valerie Ellery, Florida Department of Education

Madeline Hehir, New York State Office of Children and Family Services

Beatriz Menanteau, Minnesota Department of Health

Todd Latiolais, Texas Office of the Governor, Child Sex Trafficking Team

Each panelist provided a synopsis of their state’s approach to preventing child trafficking as well as current challenges to expansion of prevention programs. Some states, such as North Carolina, Florida, and Texas, require children in schools to receive education about human trafficking. North Carolina requires children in middle school to receive education about sex trafficking.¹ In Florida, the State Board of Education approved a rule requiring instruction on child trafficking prevention for students in grades K–12.²

North Carolina and the Florida Department of Education did not set curriculum standards, causing debate over the need for a universal set of prevention education standards. Florida appointed an official to work with schools to set principles for best practices. Texas required the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force to work with the Texas Education Agency to develop a standardized curriculum.³

Panelists discussed how to overcome challenges implementing curricula in schools. In Arizona, the McCain Institute and Arizona State University created a free online middle school and high school prevention curriculum. Texas had success funding nonprofits to expand existing programs and integrating prevention efforts into existing programs, such as through Boys and Girls Clubs and rape crisis centers, to minimize duplication and reduce the time commitment for school educators.

New York and Minnesota described how their unique bureaucratic structures have enabled their states to tackle child trafficking in different ways. The New York State Office of Children and Family Services is situated within a division that focuses solely on adolescents. This structure allows New York to more comprehensively address the intersectionality that exists within the most at-risk populations.

In Minnesota, the central hub for anti-trafficking collaboration is within the Department of Health (DoH). DoH partners with the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Human Services, and others using a public health approach to prevent human trafficking. For example, Minnesota has capitalized on its collaborative public health approach by adding an exploitation indicator to an existing [Minnesota Student Survey](#) issued to 9th and 11th graders.

¹ <https://ncadmin.nc.gov/advocacy/women/human-trafficking>

² For more information on the announcement from the Florida Department of Education, please see [the press release](#).

³ [More information on Texas House Bill 1271](#).

Nonprofit Panel

Eliza Reock, National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

Robert Benz, Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives

Ashlie Bryant, 3Strands Global

Lisa Goldblatt Grace, My Life My Choice

Noelle Volin, Men as Peacemakers

Andrew Sanderson, 50 Eggs

Bill Woolf, Just Ask Prevention

Valerie Ellery, A21

Panelists from nonprofits and NGOs described their organizations' efforts to prevent child exploitation and trafficking. Some participants stressed the importance of addressing the historical and societal conditions that cause and sustain demand for sex and labor trafficking. Other participants emphasized prioritizing prevention education for children at higher risk of trafficking and tailoring education to the needs of different child audiences. In summary, human trafficking prevention education is not "one size fits all."

Many participants shared successes partnering with states, communities, local education agencies, parent groups, teacher associations, and schools. In effective partnerships, nonprofits help school leadership create policies, protocols, and procedures so that a curriculum is not implemented in a vacuum. Most participants included information on addressing healthy relationships and online safety within anti-trafficking curricula.

Group Discussions, Challenges, and Action Items

After the federal, state, and nonprofit panels concluded, all participants were invited to discuss a range of topics as a group, including partnerships, definitions, target audiences, quality standards, federal mandates, engaging parents and caregivers, and evaluation and data.

Partnerships

The decentralization and complex bureaucracy of school systems poses a challenge to establishing partnerships. Partnership occurs at different levels: statewide, school district-wide, and with individual teachers in schools who support prevention goals. Prevention programs find success collaborating with agencies that are already implementing prevention education in schools by integrating human trafficking content into existing curricula. Participants discussed a need for further inclusivity in discussions about prevention education. Potential collaborators include the Department of Education, the Federal Communication Commission, the Federal Trade Commission, the Department of Labor, tribal representatives, native communities and urban Indian communities, groups that work with immigrants, and education and secondary programs outside of schools (e.g., the National Association for PTA and the Boys and Girls Club).

Definitions and Priorities

Participants highlighted challenges to state-mandated approaches to prevention education, namely the concern that the curricula will provide awareness information as opposed to prevention education. Defining and understanding the difference between community awareness and prevention education that focuses on individual knowledge and skills is crucial for clear dialogue on the prevention of child trafficking. Several participants stated that prevention must go beyond education to ensure community agencies implement policies and procedures to respond to reported cases of human trafficking.

Research, Evaluation, and Data

More funds are needed for research, evaluation, and data around the prevention of child trafficking and corresponding curricula and programs. Participants called for baseline data and definitions for measuring success. OTIP reminded participants of its [Information Memo on Definitions and Principles of Human Trafficking Prevention](#) published in May 2019. OTIP agreed with participants that a webinar on the definitions and principles would be helpful for the public. Participants also highlighted the need for process evaluations and for participants to look beyond outcomes to determine if curricula are engaging all communities.

Other Challenges

Additional challenges discussed included the lack of awareness among parents and guardians about online platforms and their default settings. Generally, participants agreed there are challenges in engaging parents and guardians in the prevention of trafficking. Participants expressed a desire to better engage students, survivors, and marginalized populations as leaders in the creation and implementation of prevention programming.

Action Items to Address Challenges

- The federal government should identify who is not in compliance with existing federal mandates and bring them into compliance.
- Collect better data using existing tools.
- Identify how to better integrate human trafficking into existing statewide systems.
- Close the policy-to-practice gap.
- Create a shift in culture, music, and movies.
- Use social media platforms more effectively.
- Engage CDC and commercial partners.
- Demand Internet protections similar to physical protections.
- Integrate emerging threats into education quickly.
- Identify new pathways for prevention work outside of schools.
- Create prevention education positions within state Departments of Education.
- Convene regular gatherings for state agencies regarding prevention work.
- Increase funding to support human trafficking work in child welfare.
- Create a list of vetted prevention resources for providers.

Appendix A

National Roundtable on Safeguarding Children and Prevention Education

Thursday, September 19, 2019
11 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

DLA Piper
500 8th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

- 10:30 a.m.** **DOORS OPEN**
- 11–11:20 a.m. **Welcoming Remarks**
- Cindy McCain, McCain Institute for International Leadership
 - Assistant Secretary Lynn Johnson, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families
- 11:20–11:30 a.m. **Introductions and Framing the Conversation**
- Director Katherine Chon, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Trafficking in Persons
 - Kristen Leanderson Abrams, McCain Institute for International Leadership
- 11:30–11:40 a.m. **Keynote: Why Prevention Education**
- Rob Morris, Love146
- 11:40 a.m.–12:00 p.m. **U.S. Congressional Updates**
- Rep. Karen Bass (D-Calif.)
 - Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.)
- 12–12:10 p.m. **U.K. Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner**
- Dame Sara Thornton
- 12:10 p.m.** **WORKING LUNCH**
- 12:30–1:30 p.m. **Federal Agency Panel (working lunch)**
- Director Elaine Stedt, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect
 - Director Paul Kesner, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students
 - Chief Steven J. Grocki, Department of Justice, Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section
 - Unit Chief Matt Wright, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations, Cyber Crimes Center

1:30–2:30 p.m.

State Agency Panel

- Arizona — Claire Merkel, McCain Institute for International Leadership
- Florida — Valerie Ellery, Florida Department of Education
- Minnesota — Beatriz Menanteau, Minnesota Department of Health
- New York — Madeline Hehir, New York State Office of Children and Family Services
- Texas — Todd Latiolais, Office of the Texas Governor
- North Carolina — Christine Shaw Long, North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission

2:30 p.m.

BREAK

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Non-profit Panel

- Valerie Ellery, A21
- Robert Benz, Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives
- Ashlie Bryant, 3Strands Global
- Lisa Goldblatt Grace, My Life My Choice
- Eliza Reock, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
- Andrew Sanderson, 50 Eggs
- Noelle Volin, Men As Peacemakers
- Erin Williamson, Love146
- Bill Woolf, Just Ask Prevention

3:45–3:55 p.m.

Presentation of Research: Children Accessing Exploitative Material Online

- Emily Cashman Kirstein, Thorn

3:55–4:30 p.m.

Group Conversation – Collective Action Planning

4:30 p.m.

WRAP UP