

Sex Trafficking and Special Education Resources



Spreading awareness and preventing sex trafficking of special education students



22%

Victims of sex trafficking
received special education
services in school



Homepage



What We're Doing to Help

Youth in special education services are at incredible risk for being targeted by sex traffickers. The Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research (STIR) at Arizona State University, created this website to support special educators and those working with special education youth to be able to identify high risk behaviors and situations and to provide prevention activities and information to the youth in their classrooms and the community that supports them.

[Learn More About STIR](#)

Information Tailored to You

Students with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to victimization. To help caregivers tackle this weighty subject, we have crafted position-specific information to provide better support you.



1st-5th Grade



6th-8th Grade



9th-12th Grade

Homepage

Information Tailored to You

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1st-5th Grade
Teachers



6th-8th Grade
Teachers



9th-12th Grade
Teachers



School
Administrators



School Social
Workers &
Psychologists



Transportation
Staff



Parents

Story of the Starfish

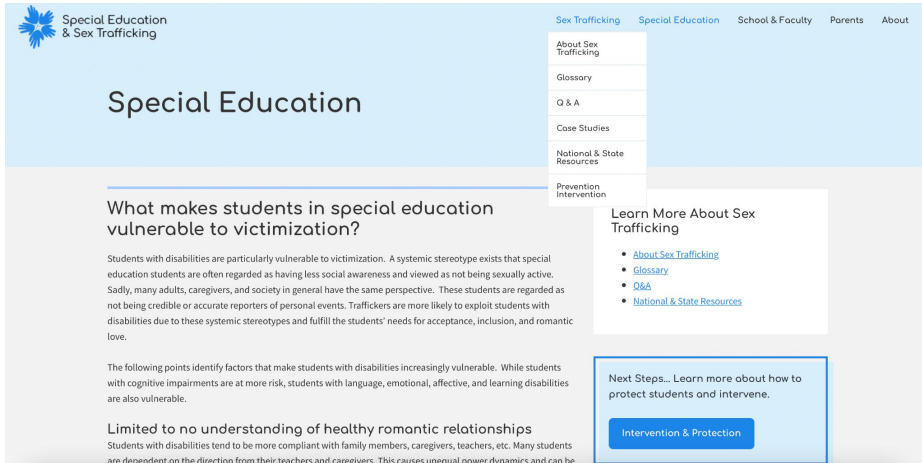
The Starfish Story, an adaption from "The Star Thrower" by Loren Eiseley

A little girl was walking along a beach with thousands of washed up starfish. Each starfish she came across, she picked it up, and threw it back into the ocean. An older man called out to her and asked, "Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!"

The girl heard what the old man was asking, but she continued to bend down, pick up another starfish, and threw it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied, "Well, I made a difference for that one!"



Special Education page/drop down tabs



Special Education & Sex Trafficking

Sex Trafficking Special Education School & Faculty Parents About

Special Education

What makes students in special education vulnerable to victimization?

Students with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to victimization. A systemic stereotype exists that special education students are often regarded as having less social awareness and viewed as not being sexually active. Sadly, many adults, caregivers, and society in general have the same perspective. These students are regarded as not being credible or accurate reporters of personal events. Traffickers are more likely to exploit students with disabilities due to these systemic stereotypes and fulfill the students' needs for acceptance, inclusion, and romantic love.

The following points identify factors that make students with disabilities increasingly vulnerable. While students with cognitive impairments are at more risk, students with language, emotional, affective, and learning disabilities are also vulnerable.

Limited to no understanding of healthy romantic relationships

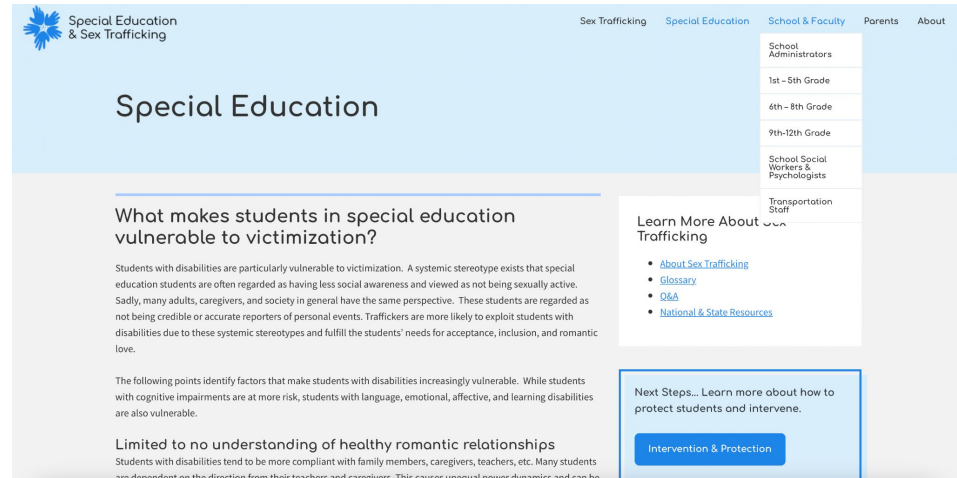
Students with disabilities tend to be more compliant with family members, caregivers, teachers, etc. Many students are dependent on the direction from their teachers and caregivers. This causes unequal power dynamics and can be

Learn More About Sex Trafficking

- [About Sex Trafficking](#)
- [Glossary](#)
- [Q&A](#)
- [National & State Resources](#)

Next Steps... Learn more about how to protect students and intervene.

Intervention & Protection



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Intervention & Protection

School & Faculty tab: 6th - 8th Grade



Special Education & Sex Trafficking Information for 6th – 8th Grade Teachers



Relationships

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships – Middle schoolers want to be more independent and spend more time with friends. As their independence grows, it is common to also explore romantic relationships. The below information can be used to engage the student in conversation about healthy relationships and to teach about sex trafficking.

Having romantic relationships can be a lot of fun, but they can also feel overwhelming and stressful if the

Topics on this Page:

- [Relationships](#)
- [Consent](#)
- [Disability and Sexuality](#)
- [Sexting](#)
- [Substance Abuse](#)

School & Faculty tab: 6th - 8th Grade Video



How to prevent your child from becoming a victim

Taken from ASU STIRs Parent Brochure

- **Listen and Be Proactive** | Talk to your teenager and ask questions about how they feel about their peers and the people around them. Teens sometimes struggle with peer pressure, bullying, and other social pressures like drinking or using drugs. All of these issues will increase their vulnerability.
- **Encourage Extracurricular Activities and Hobbies** | Athletics, arts, and organized volunteer activities can all serve to help a child build their self-esteem, self-worth and to develop empathy.
- **Teach Media Literacy** | Teach your teen how to identify, analyze and evaluate media messages in TV shows, movies, song lyrics, magazine articles and photos, apps, commercials, slogans or social media posts. Teens should be able to understand that many images they see have been edited, and do not represent a “real” or healthy body.
- **Know Who is Reaching Out to Your Child** | Knowing who your teen is talking to regularly or spending time with will help protect them and allow you to give them guidance about someone who may be a negative influence. Traffickers have contacted their victims online through social media or in locations where teens gather.
- **Know It’s Okay to Say “No”** | Teach your teen that it is always ok to say “no” and there is no situation that is so terrible that you would not be there to help. Have a contact plan that includes a way for them to ask for your help to get out of a bad situation, without getting in trouble.
- **Teach Your Child About Sex** | By reinforcing and supplementing what your teen learns in school, you can help your teen develop important attitudes and information about healthy sexuality. Teens are naturally curious and are likely to search for information about sex online, and be exposed to sexually explicit pornography either as a search result or by accident. Also teach your child that it is okay to say “no” to sex and that it is not okay to have sex out of feelings of obligation or fear.
- **Spend Time With Your Teen** | Teens require quality time with their parents (without distractions) so they can talk about what is going on in their daily lives and so you can assure your child that you are there to help them



office of
**sex trafficking
intervention research**

<https://sextraffickingandspecialeducation.com>