



To: School Superintendents, Charter School and Renaissance School Project Lead Persons

Route to: Elementary, Middle and High School Principals, Health Teachers, School Nurses, School Counselors

From: Christine Norbut Beyer, Commissioner  
New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Date: March 5, 2020 (Update on March 9 to third paragraph)

Congratulations! New Jersey has been recognized as the *2019 leader in the nation for state education systems* and we applaud you and your school for the role you may have played in making this happen.

As you know, students' academic success is not purely based on high test scores. It requires attention to their over-all well-being, too. Research indicates that adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can lead to absenteeism, disruptive behavior, and failure to meet grade-level standards. But we also know that reducing potential childhood trauma and building resiliency will increase students' chances at academic achievement and a healthy and thriving childhood and adolescence.

Last summer, Erin's Law ([A-769/S-1130](#)) was signed into New Jersey law, requiring school districts to incorporate age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness prevention education in grades preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grades as part of New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Comprehensive Health and Physical Education. This legislation also allows the training of teaching staff on sexual assault awareness and prevention.

One resource to comply with this requirement is the [NJ Child Assault Prevention \(NJCAP\)](#), a primary prevention education project, funded by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families. You may already be familiar with NJCAP, as many districts throughout the state participate in the program annually. To date over 3.5 million school staff, parents and students have received its message of empowerment.

NJCAP uses a schoolwide approach, offering trainings for teachers, support staff, parents and students- grades PreK through 12 - to reduce and prevent trauma, with age appropriate workshops.

Planning for these workshops is already underway for the 2020-21 school year. Your [CAP County Coordinator](#) can answer any questions you may have about program implementation. They also are available to assist you with completion of [your application](#), which is due by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

We, at the Department of Children and Families, are hopeful that with Erin's Law, youth throughout the state will be informed and empowered. Collectively, we can work to help every family in New Jersey to be safe, healthy and connected.