

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/a-blueprint-for-change>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

Vera partnered with the Ms. Foundation in 2012 to launch a project to learn more about the factors that contribute to sexual abuse of children with disabilities and to determine what can be done to prevent it, as well as to recommend holistic responses that involve victim services, disability services, law enforcement, police, schools, and community members. This blueprint is the culmination of literature reviews, stakeholder interviews, roundtable discussions, and an overall collective effort among advocates from the fields of child advocacy, victim services, and disability as well as professionals from the criminal justice system to chart a course for ending sexual abuse of children with disabilities. The blueprint provides a brief summary of what Vera learned, and offers practical suggestions to integrate the needs of children with disabilities into prevention efforts, intervention efforts, and first responses.

This blueprint is intended to advance existing efforts to prevent and combat child sexual abuse by infusing them with a disability perspective.

Any community-based sexual abuse prevention campaign must overtly include the voices of children with disabilities.

Robust evidence on the incidence and prevalence of sexual abuse of children with disabilities continues to be scarce because of a lack of well-designed research studies, poor measurement of disability and violence, and reliance on cross-sectional research.

Vera's research points to three major shortcomings that limit the protection available to children with disabilities: a shortage of preventive measures, a lack of intervention for those affected, and a woefully insufficient legal response to incidents of abuse.

Transformative change, sent to your inbox.

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