



The INCREDIBLE You

An Information Guide for School Partners

Dear School Partner,

We are so pleased to be partnering with you to deliver *the INCREDIBLE You Program* to your classroom. The enclosed guide will provide you with information on program content & rationale as well as resources for parents & guardians.

Within this guide you will find optional resources to continue the conversation and learning around key topics with your students. We have also included templates for program permission forms & letters for messaging that can be sent home to parents & guardians in conjunction with this program.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about anything you read here please feel free to contact the **Association of Communities Against Abuse** at **education@acaahelps.ca** or phone **1-866-807-3558**.

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The Association of Communities Against Abuse has been the primary organization addressing sexual abuse and sexual assault in East Central Alberta for 30 years and is a member of the Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services. ACAA offers family support and system navigation, Specialized Police and Court Support, counselling, school based, professional and public education, and leadership in developing coordinated and collaborative approaches to service delivery across the region.

ACAA serves the East Central Region of Alberta, which includes over 104,000 people who live in a rural geographic area of 48,000 square kilometres including Drumheller in the south, highway 21 in the west, highway 14 in the north and the Saskatchewan border in the east. Communities include Tofield, Camrose, Stettler, Drumheller, Vegreville, Hanna, Consort, Coronation and surrounding areas.

The INCREDIBLE You

is a school-based Child Sexual Abuse Education program aiming to empower children and those in their lives to recognize their rights and ownership of their bodies, increase understanding of consent and enhance their support networks. *The INCREDIBLE You* is informed by research on development, learning and child sexual abuse education, evidence based programs delivered internationally and subject matter experts in sexualized violence and child education and utilizes a multi-level approach to reach students, school staff and parents simultaneously. *The INCREDIBLE You* uses activity based and tactile approaches over the course of 2-4 sessions for each class to reinforce learning outcomes that align with the Alberta Education Program of Studies from Kindergarten to Grade 6.

The Educational Program provides key messaging, activities, opportunities for questions/answers and the opportunity to speak with the facilitators one on one after each session.

The INCREDIBLE You is...

- **Aligned with Alberta Education Curriculum:**
Aligns with Alberta Education Health and Life Skills, and Wellness Education Program.
- **Engaging and activity based:**
The program uses a variety of participatory tools including books, videos, songs and skits.
- **Empowerment and Resilience based:**
The program content and pedagogy is designed to educate children about their rights, identify safe people in their lives, and to trust their own feelings and reactions.
- **Trauma Responsive:**
Facilitators are trained to respond sensitively to disclosures of child abuse and to follow mandated reporting protocols.



The INCREDIBLE You is designed to be delivered in two to four 30-45 minute sessions and has learning objectives tied to five key concepts: **Bodily Autonomy, Consent, The Felt Sense, Sneaky Stuff & Support Network.**

Program Content & Concepts Reinforced Throughout the Program:

Bodily Autonomy:

Bodily autonomy is a person's right to have choice over what does or does not happen to their body. Children learn that their entire body is their own, and that each person has a 'bubble' that can change in size, depending on context. They also learn certain parts of their body that are always considered private and may learn the names of them (if permitted by the school).

Student Learning Objectives:

- Your whole body is yours, and you get to decide who touches your body and how.
 - Everybody has a 'body bubble', and this can get bigger or smaller depending on how you feel, who you are with and what your feelings are telling you.
- Some body parts are especially private, and these are the body parts that are covered by your swim suit, and also includes your mouth.

The Felt Sense:

The felt sense is how we sense our internal state - it's all of the feelings inside our bodies. The felt sense plays a role in intuition, problem-solving, perspective taking, social understanding, empathy, self-awareness, and emotional regulation. Building a sense of what children's bodies are telling them through feelings and physical sensations can help them to recognize when something isn't right, and strengthens their sense of self.

Student Learning Objectives:

- Your body and feelings can give you messages, and let you know when you are having fun, feeling sad, mad or uncomfortable. You can have more than one feeling at once.
- Only you can decide what feels good to you, and this can change.

Consent:

Children learn that no one should ever look at, touch or take photos of their private parts, unless it's for a helpful or necessary reason. It's also important for children to trust the messages they get from their bodies and feelings. For example, if someone touches their arm or shoulder in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable, that counts as an unsafe touch. Just as others must respect a child's body autonomy, it's important to respect the same in others. If someone breaches a child's consent, it is never a child's fault.

Student Learning Objectives:

- You get to decide who touches your body, and how, with the exception of helpful and necessary touches.
 - No one should touch, look at or take photos/ images of your private parts.
 - Unsafe touch can happen to any part of their body. That means that if someone puts their hands on your shoulders in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, that counts as an unsafe touch too!
 - There are a lot of ways people say 'no'.
- Child abuse is never a child's fault
 - It is a grown-up's or older person's job to protect you and keep you safe.
 - Children are never to be blamed for the choices someone else makes.
 - Adults are responsible for ensuring that all children have safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments.



Sneaky stuff:

People who offend against children are often known to them, and use their position of trust and authority to confuse the child and ensure their silence. These 'grooming' tactics can include love, bribes, threats, persuasion, flattery and gifts. Children will also learn the difference between secrets and surprises.



Student Learning Objectives:

- Secrets vs Surprises: How to Tell the Difference.
 - Secrets can make you feel sad, scared or uncomfortable.
 - You may be told not to tell a secret – ever!
 - If someone asks you to keep a secret, you can say...
 - Surprises make you feel excited, happy or delighted.
 - There is a certain time for the surprise to be shared (birthday present, surprise party, new puppy).
- Gifts or Bribes.
 - When someone offers to give you something in exchange for something that makes you feel uncomfortable, sad, mad or icky.
- Threats.
 - When someone tells you they will hurt you or someone else if you do or don't do something.
- Love and trust.
 - Sometimes it is someone we trust or love who hurts us or makes us feel uncomfortable. This can be confusing.

Safety Network:


The process of creating a safety network helps a child understand the concepts of safe-people and reinforces the concepts of boundaries and choice. It breaks the culture of silence and teaches a child that their voice matters, they will be believed and that reporting unsafe situations will keep them safe from harm or continued abuse. Provides a blueprint for how a child can get help when needed and ensures they have access to safe people.

Student Learning Objectives:

- Who's in your support network?
 - There are lots of reasons you might not want to tell that someone hurt you, but it is really important that you do.
 - It is never too late to tell a grown-up.
 - You can tell someone that you had an unsafe feeling. It doesn't have to be a touch.
 - Tattling vs Telling.

It is important to note that experiencing child sexual abuse or other forms of trauma in the early years can erode any of the above areas for a child. We recognize the fact that some of the children participating in ACAA's child sexual abuse program may have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences prior to engaging in the program, so attention is paid to the language and concepts to ensure that sensitivity.

Sample Schedule:

Session 1 (35-45min)	Session 2 (35-45min)
<p>Bodily Autonomy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We all have a body bubble or personal space that can change in different situations and when we are with different people. • Your Body is your own. • People should only come into our body bubble / personal space when we say 'Yes'. • Areas of the body that are especially private, including correct names for Private Parts (if permissible by the school and parents). 	<p>The Felt Sense:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your body and feelings can give you messages. • These messages and feelings can be trusted. • Only you can decide what feels good to you, and this can change depending on who you're with, your mood, and where you are. • Just as our body gives us messages, we can also give our bodies the message that we are safe, which can help us calm ourselves down.
<p>Consent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body Boundaries (no one should look at, no one should touch, no one should take pictures of our private parts). • Ways to communicate a yes or no. 	<p>Sneaky Stuff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifts, threats, bribes. • Difference between secrets and surprises. <p>Support Network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students identify safe people in their lives. • Tattling vs Telling. • How do we know we need to tell someone? • How do we know someone is a safe person in our life?

Program Principles:

- When children know about messages their bodies communicate and trust their intuition, they are better equipped to understand situations where they are being hurt or harmed.
- Introduction to a child's rights to their own body, and what they have a say about (touching, looking at, and images) builds a sense of self and autonomy.
- Education may prevent children from breaching other peoples' boundaries and perpetrating in the future.
- Exposure to language and concepts related to bodies, boundaries and relationships decreases the silence and stigma surrounding child sexual abuse.
- Developing their own safety network provides children with options for talking about their experiences and opportunities for intervention and protection.
- Adult education promotes the continuity of messaging provided in *The INCREDIBLE You* school based program.
- Adult education reduces silence and stigma and promotes positive and protective responses to indicators or disclosures of abuse.

Program Rationale & Theoretical Approach

The following theoretical or conceptual approach provides the basis for understanding why sexual abuse occurs and the prevention pathway used to reduce sexual violence and its impacts.

- **Empowerment:** Teaching children about understanding how they feel in different encounters and to trust their own emotional and physical responses allows for a transfer of information and skills across different contexts. Identifying one's own emotional responses and those of others builds empathy.
- **Multi-level approach:** Focused on multiple levels of a child's ecology, including potential protectors and offenders (Rudolph et al., 2017).
 - Teaching children about sexual abuse is only one piece of prevention. People who offend use manipulative behaviours, power, coercion, love, bribes, threats, persuasion, flattery and gifts as part of the abuse (grooming), and many children are unable to identify or resist these tactics.
 - Parents/guardians and caregivers are the primary educators and focus of attachment for most children. Consistency in messaging, including exposure to language and concepts supports parents to continue conversations at home, model consent and create an environment where children can talk about all feelings and experiences.
 - School staff, including administration, teachers, educational assistants and custodians are well positioned to observe changes in a child's demeanor and behaviour. Confidence, skills and knowledge in responding to concerning shifts can provide children with a more robust safety network (Wells et al., 2013).
 - There are four preconditions for child sexual abuse to occur: The first is a perpetrator motivated to sexually abuse a child. The second is the perpetrator's ability to overcome personal internal inhibitions toward such abuse. Third, the perpetrator must be able to overcome the external barriers to committing CSA (such as parental supervision, strong parent/child relationship). The fourth precondition is that the perpetrator must be able to overcome the child's resistance. (Finkelhor, 1984). Of note, offenders report targeting children who are vulnerable and easy to manipulate, and lack of support, neglect, and poor relationships with caregivers 'erode a child's ability to resist'.

Thinking About Prevention:

Primary prevention: Before the problem starts

- Parents, guardians, caregivers and other adults are responsible for keeping children safe. It is the choice of the offender to abuse (Carmody, 2009) and primary prevention efforts must focus on the potential offender, and this may include teaching children and youth to respect the body boundaries of others. Increased vocalization about sexual abuse in communities, organizations and families may also prevent potential offenders from attempting to abuse, as sexual abuse thrives in secrecy and silence.
- Some research has indicated that a strong parental/guardian attachment can reduce the likelihood of a child being targeted for abuse by someone outside the family.
- The goals of primary prevention school-based education sessions are to improve knowledge, and attitudes that correspond to the origins of sexual violence (i.e., social norms supportive of sexual violence), build skills for respectful interactions and empower participants to be change agents (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009).
- Childhood exposure to sexual abuse and other forms of maltreatment is a significant risk factor for both adult sexual violence perpetration and victimization, it is reasonable to assume the prevention of child sexual abuse and maltreatment could potentially lead to a significant reduction in subsequent sexual violence (WHO, 2010).

Strategies may include:

- Monitoring and supervision by parents and guardians decreases opportunities for offenders to approach, groom or abuse and helps to identify indicators or risks of abuse. (Rudolph, 2017)
- Strong parent/child relationship – taking an interest in a child’s life, activities, concerns and feelings may deter offenders and increase a child’s safety network.
- Evidence shows that students in younger grades are important points of primary prevention for bullying, sexual harassment and healthy relationship programming (Taylor, Stein & Burden, 2010; Tutty et al., 2005 in Wells et al. 2013)
- Employing a whole school approach, promoting a consistent message and understanding of child sexual abuse; its dynamics, indicators and how to respond (Wells et al., 2013)
- Supporting families in accessing financial support, safe childcare, and parenting resources to foster attachment and bonding as a family can act as preventative measures.

Secondary Prevention: Once the problem has begun, early intervention

- Aims to stop violence from recurring (Carmody, 2009)
- Increasing disclosure and lessening trauma (Secondary prevention)
- Approaches targeted at individuals and groups who exhibit early signs of perpetrating violent behaviour or of being subject to violence (this is also called 'early intervention' in some instances) (VicHealth, 2007).
- Working with kids who have witnessed or been exposed to domestic violence, as this is a significant risk factor for future perpetration and victimization of violence (both sexual and domestic) (Wells et al., 2013)
- Targets individuals at risk of perpetrating or being victimized (Wells et al., 2013)

Strategies may include:

- Strong parent/child relationship may increase the likelihood of a disclosure.
- Positive and supportive responses to disclosure amplify support seeking behaviours and decrease trauma symptoms.
- Empowering children to trust their intuition and to listen to what their bodies and feelings are telling them creates a stronger sense of self and the knowledge to understand if something harmful is happening to them or someone else.
- Giving children the language to tell and information about secrets/abuse/body autonomy destigmatizes the issues and offers an avenue to ask questions or disclose.
- Promoting child's competence, well-being, and self-esteem (Rudolph, 2017) reinforces that they are valued and deserve to be treated with respect.
- Caregivers assessing comfort levels of children in social settings especially with adults (Babatsikos & Miles, 2015)

References

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- Rudolph, J., Zimmer-Gembeck, M., Shanley, D., Hawkins, R. (2018). *Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Opportunities: Parenting, Programs, and the Reduction of Risk. Child Maltreatment, 23*, 1, pp. 96-106.
- Wells, L., Claussen, C., Aubry, D., & Ofrim, J. (2013). *Primary prevention of sexual violence: Preliminary research to support a provincial action plan. Calgary, AB: The University of Calgary, Shift: The Project to End Domestic Violence*
- VicHealth. (2007). *Preventing violence before it occurs: A framework and background paper to guide the primary prevention of violence against women in Victoria.* Carlton, South Victoria: Author

Teacher Resources & Opportunities For Continued Learning:

Following the program teachers can look to reinforce messages and things learned throughout the program through the reading and discussion of various story books.

We have included a list of book recommendations:

Books:

Kindergarten - Grade 2

- My Body Belongs to Me (Jill Starishevsky)
- Some Parts Are Not For Sharing (Julie K. Frederico)
- Miles Is The Boss of His Body (Abbie Schiller + Samantha Kurtzman-Counter)
- A Hug (Nicola Manton)
- C is for Consent (Eleanor Morison)
- Can I Give You a Squish (Emily Neilson)
- ABC of Body Safety and Consent (Jayneen Sanders)
- My Body! What I Say Goes (Jayneen Sanders)

Grade 3 - 4

- The Trouble With Secrets (Karen Johnson)
- Amazing You! Getting Smart about your Private Parts (Dr. Gail Saltz)
- I Said No! (Zack King)
- The Right Touch (Sandy Kleven)
- My Body! What I Say Goes (Jayneen Sanders)
- That Uh-Oh Feeling (Kathryn Cole)

Grade 5 - 6

- Can We Talk About Consent? A Book About Freedom, Choices, and Agreement (Justin Hancock)
- Reena's Bollywood Dream (Jewel Kats)
- Amazing You! Getting Smart About Your Private Parts (Dr. Gail Saltz)
- Annabelle's Secret (Amy Barth)
- Changing You! A Guide to Body Changes and Sexuality (Dr. Gail Saltz)
- It's Perfectly Normal: Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, Sexual Health (Robbie Harris and Michael Emberley)

Questions You May Be Asking Yourself:

Q: Why should this program be in my class?

Educators are at the heart of change within schools and childcare facilities and have an incredible opportunity to make a difference in building resilience and preventing child sexual abuse. They have unique relationships with children and families and as such, can respond to early warning signs. Providing lessons in schools and childcare facilities ensures that all children learn strategies to prevent and disclose abuse.

Q: What should I say to parents?

Schools should expect parents to have questions about the program. Invite parents to attend a parent education session hosted and facilitated by ACAA. Parents can be assured that the information is designed to meet the developmental needs of children, empower children and build their confidence.

Schools can use the provided templates and tools as outlined in the resources section to easily communicate with parents about the program. Parent/Guardian tools included at the end of the package:

- Sample parent invitation letter to an information session.
- Suggested Program Permission Form.
- Take home messaging and discussion points for a post session follow-up at home.

Q: What if I receive a disclosure?

We have included a quick guide on responding to disclosures in the resource section (it is not your responsibility to be an expert in this area). Listen to the child and pay attention to what is being shared. Remember, it is not your job to confirm or investigate that abuse has or has not taken place. It is your job to report to Children's Services if you believe a child needs protection: **1-800-387-5437**

If you and/or your school would like more information & training in this area please feel free to contact ACAA to schedule a "Responding to Disclosures" workshop.

Questions you can ask your students to continue the conversations we've had throughout the program:

Grades K-4 Questions:

1. What does your body bubble look like in this situation?
2. What do you need to do before you go into someone else's body bubble?
3. How does your body feel when....?
4. How would you say "no" if you didn't want someone in your body bubble / or if someone was making you uncomfortable by crossing one of your body boundaries?
5. What are other ways of saying "no" (list different situations for students to think about)
6. Reinforce that nobody can touch their private parts in an unsafe way
7. Who are some people you trust (people in your support network) that you could talk to if you have a problem?
8. What's one clue that you should talk to someone in your support network about a situation that may be happening in your life?
9. Reinforce that if anyone ever asks your students to do something they are uncomfortable with, you want your students to tell someone he or she trusts.
10. How do you know something is making you uncomfortable? What messages does your body give you?
11. How do you know an adult is safe?
12. Do you remember what the body boundaries are? (no one should look at, no one should touch, no one should take pictures...and no one should ever ask us to do the same)

Grades 5-6 Questions:

1. How does your body feel when...?
2. How do you know if you like someone in your personal space? What are some clues your body gives you? How does it make you feel?
3. How do you know if you are uncomfortable with someone in your personal space?
4. What are some clues your body gives you? How does it make you feel?
5. Who are some people you trust?
6. What are some ways of saying 'no' to something or someone?
7. Do you remember what the body boundaries are?
8. How do we give consent?
9. How do you respect someone else's personal space?

Teacher Checklist:

We are so excited to be partnering with you! Here's a recap of all the things you may like to know and a few things we may ask you to do to help us facilitate this learning experience:

Pre-Program:

- Schedule two program sessions for each participating class in partnership with ACAA staff.
- Invite parents/guardians to attend a program information session hosted by ACAA (ACAA staff are happy to collaborate with you on this task) [*template in resource section*]
- Send out program permission forms (if applicable - we know that every school has a different policy around this) [*template in resource section*]

Post-Program:

- Send out take home messaging and discussion point letters for parents & guardians following each session. [*template in resource section*]
- Complete Program Evaluation Form (ACAA staff will email this to you after the program)
- Let ACAA staff know if you have any questions or concerns. Staff members are available to answer any questions or provide support as needed at any point during or after program delivery. We are here to help!

A note about Parent/Guardian & Teacher Education Session:

If you are planning to bring the program into your school we recommend hosting a parent/guardian & teacher session at least one week prior to the start of your student sessions. Prevention is a collaborative effort between schools and homes. Most schools have protocols for communicating with parents about sensitive curriculum topics. Parents, guardians and caregivers play a critical role both in prevention and reinforcing the concepts learned throughout the program.

We have provided a sample parent invite letter that you can customize to your needs [*can be found in the resource section*]

Below you'll find multiple resources and templates to pass on to parents or guardians, including pre and post-program resources, a **Parent Education Session Invitation**, a **Suggested Permission Form**, and a guide to **Responding to Disclosures of Abuse**.

AB Education Curriculum Alignment & Outcomes in the Program

The INCREDIBLE You covers required Alberta Curriculum outcomes in Health and Life Skills for each grade. The curriculum outcomes achieved in our core material include:

Kindergarten - Grade 2:

- **Wellness Choices** - Students will make responsible and informed choices to maintain health and to promote safety for self and others.
- **Relationship Choices** - Students will develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.

Kindergarten:

W-K.7 - identify unsafe situations, and identify safety rules for protection.

R-K.9 recognize that individuals are members of various and differing groups.

Grade 1:

W-1.7- describe actions to use in unsafe or abusive situations; e.g., say no, get away, tell someone you trust and keep telling until someone believes you.

R-1.4 compare and contrast positive and negative nonverbal communication and associated feelings; e.g., positive and negative touches.

Grade 2:

W-2.7 - identify and develop plans to use when dealing with pressure to engage in behaviour that is uncomfortable or inappropriate; e.g., handle such pressures as threats, bribes, exclusions;

W-2.10 - identify members of personal safety support networks and how to access assistance; e.g., family members, teachers, Block Parents, police, clergy, neighbours

R-2.4 develop communication strategies to express needs and seek support; e.g., if touched in a way that makes one feel uncomfortable, who and how to tell.

Grades 3 & 4:

- **Wellness Choices** - Students will make responsible and informed choices to maintain health and to promote safety for self and others.
- **Relationship Choices** - Students will develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.

Grade 3:

R-3.2 - Demonstrate safe and appropriate ways for sharing and/or expressing feelings through words and behaviour.

R-3.4 - Develop, with guidance, effective communication skills and strategies to express feelings.

R-3.6 - Demonstrate inclusive behaviours regardless of individual differences or circumstances; e.g., physical, emotional, cultural, economic.

Grade 4:

W-4.8 - Expand practices that provide safety for self and others; e.g., develop guidelines for safe use of technology/chat lines.

W-4.10 - Describe and demonstrate ways to assist with the safety of others.

R-4.1 - Recognize that individuals can have a positive and negative influence on the feelings of others.

R-4.4 - Demonstrate respectful communication skills; e.g., describe behaviours that show respect for the feelings of others.

R-4.6 - Identify and describe ways to provide support to others; e.g., help a friend deal with loss.

Grades 5 & 6:

- **Wellness Choices** - Students will make responsible and informed choices to maintain health and to promote safety for self and others.
- **Relationship Choices** - Students will develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.

Grade 5:

W-5.7 identify personal boundaries, and recognize that boundaries vary depending on the nature of relationship, situation and culture

R-5.4 practise effective communication skills; e.g. active listening, perception checks

R-5.8 develop strategies to address personal roles and responsibilities in groups

Grade 6:

W-6.7 identify and communicate values and beliefs that affect healthy choices

W-6.10 demonstrate responsibility for, and skills related to, the safety of self and others

R-6.4 identify, analyze and develop strategies to overcome barriers to communication



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(403) 742-3558
education@acaahelps.ca

[Date]

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

[SCHOOL NAME] is partnering with the Association of Communities Against Abuse to deliver ***the INCREDIBLE You program!***

The INCREDIBLE You is a school-based Child Sexual Abuse Education program to empower children and those in their lives to recognize their rights and ownership of their bodies, increase understanding of consent and enhance their support networks.

The INCREDIBLE You is informed by current literature, evidence-based developmental research and subject matter experts in sexualized violence and child education and utilizes a multi-level approach to reach students, school staff and parents simultaneously. *The INCREDIBLE You* uses activity based and tactile approaches over the course of 2-4 sessions for each class to reinforce learning outcomes that align with the Alberta Education Program of Studies from Kindergarten to Grade 6.

The INCREDIBLE You program is provided by the Education team at
the Association of Communities Against Abuse (ACAA).

As a parent/guardian of a child in [INSERT GRADE] you are invited to learn more about the program. ACAA Staff in collaboration with the school will be offering a parent/guardian education session on:

Date:

Time:

Place:

(ENSURE YOU INCLUDE ZOOM OPTION/INFO IF NEEDED)

Sincerely,

[Principal/Teacher/Counselor]



4804 - 50 Street • Stettler, Alberta • T0C 2L0
(403) 742-3558
education@acaahelps.ca

[Date]

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

The Association of Communities Against Abuse (ACAA) will be delivering *The INCREDIBLE You* education program to Grade [BLANK] students at [BLANK] School in [DATE RANGE]. *The INCREDIBLE You* is designed to be delivered in two to four (35-45 mins) developmentally appropriate education sessions and aligns with the Alberta Program of Studies outcomes.

Through *The INCREDIBLE You*, students learn about:

Body Autonomy - Bodily autonomy is a person's right to have choice over what does or does not happen to their body. Children learn that their entire body is their own, and that each person has a 'bubble' that can change in size, depending on context. They also learn about the parts of their body that are always considered private, and the names of them.

The Felt Sense - Building a sense of what children's bodies are telling them through feelings and physical sensations can help them to recognize when something isn't right, and strengthens their sense of self.

Consent - Children learn that no one should ever look at, touch or take photos of their private parts, unless it's for a helpful or necessary reason. No one should ask them to touch or look at the private parts of another person.

Sneaky Stuff - When someone a child knows, loves and trusts uses 'sneaky stuff' such as secrets, bribes, threats, gifts, and fun to abuse the vulnerability of a child, it can be very confusing. Children learn that anytime their body boundaries are broken, it is not ok, and they can tell someone.

Safety Networks - The process of creating a safety network helps a child understand the concepts of safe-people and reinforces the concepts of boundaries and choice

The parent component of *The INCREDIBLE You* includes an education session delivered via Zoom. The date and time of this offering will be announced.

The parent component of *The INCREDIBLE You* includes an education session delivered via Zoom. The date and time of this offering will be announced. If you have any questions about *The INCREDIBLE You*, please contact [SCHOOL CONTACT] or the **Association of Communities Against Abuse** at education@acaahelps.ca.

Responding to Disclosures:

Whether you're a child's parent, relative, friend, teacher or someone else they trust, the following points are important to keep in mind when a child is disclosing sexual abuse or assault:

- **Try to stay calm.** Child sexual abuse is a shocking thing to hear about. Try to keep your emotions to yourself until you can discuss them with another individual in your life. If you do express emotion around the child, be sure to explain to them what you are feeling and why you are feeling that way. Be sure to explain to the child that you are not upset or angry with them and what happened to them is NOT their fault.
- **Listen.** Let the child tell you how they are feeling and normalize their feelings (their feelings might be mixed and that's ok too). Avoid asking too many questions and do not press the child for details.
- **Tell the child you believe them.** The most important thing any adult can do for a child who discloses is to accept that what you're being told is the truth. No matter what your relationship with the child may be, clearly demonstrate, through your calm, accepting and encouraging responses, that you do believe them.
- **Tell the child that this was not their fault.** Reassure them that no matter what the situation, the abuse is not their fault. Sexual abuse is NEVER the child's fault. A child cannot hear this too many times.
- **Ask permission or check with the child before providing a hug or other forms of physical comfort (touch).** It's up to the child to decide whether hugging or holding will be comforting or stressful, so respond according to their words and body language. This is an opportunity for the child to know their body boundaries can and should be respected no matter what.
- **Remind the child that they are not alone and that you're going to help them.** Do not make any promises about what is going to happen next.
- **Report the sexual abuse.** You have a legal obligation to report the sexual abuse of a child to the authorities. To report sexual abuse you only need enough information to make you suspect that sexual abuse has occurred. It's up to the authorities to gather details and evidence to determine whether this has happened and what the next steps will be.
- **Support the child and remember to get support for yourself.**