

# Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training: Schools Should be Ready for Round Two

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It's been five years since Act 126 of 2012 became effective, which means educators and school officials may be coming up on an important date for training on recognizing and reporting child abuse.

The law requires all school entities and independent contractors of schools to provide their employees who have direct contact with children specific training on child abuse recognition and reporting. Act 126 was one of many pieces of sweeping legislation that changed the reporting of and response to suspected child abuse in Pennsylvania.

The law became effective January 2, 2013, and requires a minimum of three hours of employee training every five years. Since it's now more than five years since the effective date, most public school entities are now entering into the second five-year cycle that renews the three-hour training requirement.

At its core, Act 126 requires employee training on child abuse recognition and reporting that specifically addresses but is not limited to the following components:

- Recognition of the signs of abuse and sexual misconduct and reporting requirements for suspected abuse and sexual misconduct in Pennsylvania.
- Provisions of the "Professional Educator Discipline Act," including mandatory reporting requirements.
- The school's policies related to reporting of suspected abuse and sexual misconduct.
- Maintenance of professional and appropriate relationships with students.

For those public school entities that include Act 126 training as part of a professional development program or in-service training for their employees - particularly if Act 48 continuing education credits will be awarded - particular attention should be given as to whether the training course selected completely satisfies the requirements of Act 126.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education maintains [a list of Act 126 Approved Act 48 Course providers](#). Some of the approved courses do not provide training on all of the required components of Act 126. Consequently, even if your employees complete a three-hour, PDE-approved course, they may not have completed all elements of the child abuse recognition and reporting training that are required by Act 126. In budgeting and planning for upcoming professional development programs, public school entities should ensure the training provided fully addresses Act 126.

If you have any questions, or if we can provide any assistance as you review your training materials, please do not hesitate to contact any of the attorneys in [Barley Snyder's Education Practice Group](#).