

State K-3 Policies

What are the mental health and trauma training requirements for K-3 teachers?

September 2020

At least 27 states and the District of Columbia have provisions in statute or regulation to require or encourage teacher training and professional development on student mental health and trauma-informed practices.

The following information was gathered from state statutes and regulations only.

To view other data points, click [here](#).

STATE ▲	WHAT ARE MENTAL HEALTH AND TRAUMA TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR K-3 TEACHERS?	CITATION
Alabama	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Alaska	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Arizona	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Arkansas	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
California	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Colorado	Includes professional development concerning juvenile mental health issues to the renewal of professional teacher, principal and administrator licenses.	Colo. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 22-60.5-110

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Connecticut	Each local or regional board of education shall provide an in-service training program for its teachers, administrators and pupil personnel who hold the initial educator, provisional educator or professional educator certificate. Such program shall provide such teachers, administrators and pupil personnel with information on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. health and mental health risk reduction education 2. the growth and development of exceptional children 3. school violence prevention, conflict resolution, the prevention of and response to youth suicide and the identification and prevention of and response to bullying 4. the requirements and obligations of a mandated reporter 5. cultural competency training 	Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-220a(a) Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 17a-453h(a)
Delaware	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
District of Columbia	Requires teachers and principals in public schools and public charter schools, as well as staff employed by child development facilities to complete a training program that provides participants with the tools needed to identify students who may have unmet behavioral health needs, refer identified students to appropriate services for behavioral health screenings and assessments, and recognize warning signs and risk factors of youth suicide. This training may be counted as professional development upon approval of the superintendent.	D.C. Code § 7-1131.17
Florida	Youth suicide awareness and prevention training is required for K-12 instructional personnel, including training on how to identify appropriate mental health services and how to refer youth and families to appropriate services.	Fla. Admin. Code Ann. r. 6A-4.0010 Fla. Stat. Ann. § 1012.583 Fla. Stat. Ann. § 1012.584
Georgia	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Hawaii	Requires the department of education and the department of health to develop a memorandum of agreement to provide training and education to teacher, school counselors and parents.	Haw. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 321-174
Idaho	Not specified in statute or regulation.	

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Illinois	Requires that, at least once every 2 years, licensed school personnel and administrators who work with pupils in kindergarten through grade 12 to be trained to identify the warning signs of mental illness and suicidal behavior in youth and shall be taught various intervention techniques. Requires that, at least once every 2 years, in-service training of certified school personnel and administrators include training on current best practices regarding the identification and treatment of attention deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, the application of non-aversive behavioral interventions in the school environment, and the use of psychotropic or psychostimulant medication for school-age children.	105 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/10-22.39 105 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/34-18.7 105 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/34-18.25
Indiana	Requires the division of mental health and addition to develop and administer a mental health first aid training program, and make the training available to licensed teachers, school counselors, among others. Allows for the adjournment of schools to allow teachers, school administrators and paraprofessionals to participate in trainings, including basic or in-service courses and training on mental health first aid, the prevention of youth suicide and recognizing the signs that a student may be considering suicide. Requires teacher prep programs to consider using curricula that includes training on recognizing signs of trauma, understanding the impacts of trauma, and recommendations for running a trauma-informed classroom.	Ind. Code Ann. § 12-21-5-4 Ind. Code Ann. § 20-28-3-4 Ind. Code Ann. § 20-28-5-26
Iowa	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Kansas	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Kentucky	Requires each school counselor or school-based mental health services provider to provide training, guidance and assistance to school administrators, teachers and other staff on recognizing symptoms of trauma, utilizing interventions and implementing plans for a trauma-informed approach.	Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 158.4416
Louisiana	Teachers, school counselors, principals and certain other school administrators must participate in two hours of annual in-service training in suicide prevention, including mental health and trauma.	28 La. Admin Code. Pt CXV, § 1127
Maine	Not specified in statute or regulation.	

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Maryland	<p>On or before September 1, 2018, each local school system shall appoint a mental health services coordinator.</p> <p>Requires all certificated school personnel who have direct contact with students on a regular basis to complete in-service or professional development training each year in the skills required to understand and respond to student mental health, student trauma, student safety and other topics related to student social and emotional well-being.</p>	<p>Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 7-1511 Md. Code Regs. 13A.07.11.03</p>
Massachusetts	<p>Defines safe and support schools as schools that foster a safe, positive, health and inclusive whole-school learning environment that integrates services and aligns initiatives that promote children's mental health.</p> <p>Requires the department to establish a grant program, subject to appropriation, to assist school districts with the development and establishment of in-school regular education programs and services to address within the regular education school program the educational and psycho-social needs of children whose behavior interferes with learning, particularly those who are suffering from the traumatic effects of exposure to violence.</p>	<p>Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. 69, § 1P Mass. Gen. Laws Ann. 69, § 1N</p>
Michigan	District school safety plans must include provisions to train teachers on mental health.	Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 380.1308b
Minnesota	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Mississippi	Requires the department of education to require local school districts to conduct, every two years, refresher training on mental health and suicide prevention to all employees and personnel, including all cafeteria workers, custodians, teachers and administrators.	Miss. Code Ann. § 37-3-83
Missouri	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
Montana	Not specified in statute or regulation.	

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Nebraska	Requires the behavioral health regions to offer services to and work with agencies and organizations, including, but not limited to, schools, universities, colleges, the State Department of Education, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, law enforcement agencies, and local health departments, to develop a program that offers grants to implement the Nebraska Mental Health First Aid Training Act in ways that are representative and inclusive with respect to the economic and cultural diversity of this state.	Neb. Rev. Stat. § 71-3006
Nevada	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
New Hampshire	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
New Jersey	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
New Mexico	Not specified in statute or regulation.	
New York	Requires comprehensive district-wide safety plan be developed by the district-wide school safety team and shall include at a minimum policies and procedures for annual school safety training for staff and students provided that the district must certify to the commissioner that all staff have undergone annual training on the emergency response plan, and that the school safety training include components on violence prevention and mental health, such training may be implemented and conducted in conjunction with existing professional development and training; provided however that new employees hired after the start of the school year shall receive training within thirty days of such hire or as part of a district's existing new hire training program.	N.Y. Educ. Law § 2801-a
North Carolina	Requires the state board of education to adopt a school-based mental health policy for K-12 that includes a school based mental health plan and a model mental health training program for school personnel.	N.C. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 115C-376.5
North Dakota	Every two years, each school district is required to provide a minimum of eight hours of professional development on youth behavioral health to elementary, middle, and high school teachers, and administrators and encourage ancillary and support staff to participate in the professional development. Based on the annual needs assessment of the school district, these hours must be designated from the following categories: trauma, suicide prevention, knowledge of behavioral health symptoms and risks and current or new evidence-based behavior prevention or mitigation techniques.	N.D. Cent. Code § 15.1-07-34

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Ohio	<p>Requires schools to use the child wellness and success funds outlined in the school funding formula, for mental health services or professional development regarding the provision of trauma-informed care, among other options.</p> <p>Requires teacher preparation programs to include a course for all students pursuing a license to teach in pre-K through grade 5 on the impact of trauma, toxic stress, and other environmental variables on learning behavior, among other topics. Also requires each school district to provide professional development or continuing education in positive behavior intervention and supports.</p>	<p>Ohio Rev. Stat. Ann. § 3317.26 Ohio Rev. Stat. Ann. § 3319.237</p>
Oklahoma	<p>The teacher preparation system shall include an understanding of child and human development, among other competencies. Requires preservice programs to require teacher candidates to study, in existing coursework, mental illness symptoms identification and mental health issues and trauma-informed responsive instruction.</p> <p>The State Department of Education and the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, in consultation with school district superintendents and school district boards of education, shall develop and make available to school districts information, training and resources to help school employees recognize and address the mental health needs of students.</p>	<p>Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 70, § 6-185 Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 70, § 6-194.3</p>
Oregon	<p>Encourages state officers, agencies and employees whose responsibilities impact children and adults, including the state board of education, to become informed regarding the impacts of adverse childhood experiences, toxic stress and structural violence on children, adults and communities. Encourages these employees to become aware of evidence-based, trauma-informed care practices, tools and interventions that promote healing and resiliency.</p>	<p>2017 H.C.R. 33</p>
Pennsylvania	<p>Requires the professional education plan of each school entity to include a minimum of one hour of required training in trauma-informed approaches.</p>	<p>24 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 12-1205.1</p>
Rhode Island	<p>Not specified in statute or regulation.</p>	
South Carolina	<p>Not specified in statute or regulation.</p>	
South Dakota	<p>Not specified in statute or regulation.</p>	

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Tennessee	Requires the department of education to develop an evidence-based training program on adverse childhood experiences for school leaders and teachers that includes the effects of adverse childhood experiences on a child's mental, physical, social, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive development, and trauma-informed principles and practices in the classrooms, among other requirements.	Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-230
Texas	<p>Requires continuing education requirements for classroom teachers to provide that at least 25% of the training every five years include instruction regarding various components, including how mental health conditions, including grief and trauma, affect student learning and behavior and how evidence-based, grief informed, and trauma-informed strategies support the academic success of students affected by grief and trauma.</p> <p>Requires the state education agency, in coordination with the Health and Human Services Commission to establish and maintain an internet website to provide resources for school district or open enrollment charter school employees regarding working with students with mental health conditions. Information on the website must include grief-informed and trauma-informed practices; building skills related to managing emotions, establishing and maintaining positive relationships, and responsible decision-making; positive behavior interventions and supports; and a safe and supportive school climate.</p>	<p>Tex. Educ. Code Ann. § 21.054</p> <p>Tex. Educ. Code Ann. § 21.462</p>
Utah	Requires the state board of education to provide training that instructs school personnel on the impact of childhood trauma on student learning.	Utah Code Ann. § 53F-2-415
Vermont	Requires that within each school district's comprehensive system of educational services, each public school develop and maintain a tiered system of academic and behavioral supports. Requires the tiered system of academic supports to, among other provisions, provide professional development, as needed, to support all staff in full implementation of the multi-tiered system of support.	Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 16, § 2902
Virginia	Requires each school board to adopt and implement policies that require each teacher and other relevant personnel employed on a full-time basis to complete a mental health awareness training or similar program at least once.	Va. Code Ann. § 22.1-298.6
Washington	Requires districts to use one professional learning day every year to train staff in several topics, including: social and emotional learning, trauma-informed practices and consideration of adverse childhood experiences.	Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 28A.415.445
West Virginia	Not specified in statute or regulation.	

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Wisconsin	Requires the state superintendent to establish a mental health training support program for school district staff and instructional staff of charter schools. Requires the program to include evidence-based strategies related to addressing mental health issues in schools, including screening, brief intervention, referrals, trauma sensitive schools and youth mental health first aid.	Wis. Stat. Ann. § 115.28(63)
Wyoming	Not specified in statute or regulation.	