

Safe and Sound Schools Launches Crisis Response Training Addressing Those with Special Needs

Especially Safe program created in response to research that demonstrates a lack of school safety protocols inclusive of those with special needs.

SANDY HOOK, CONNECTICUT, UNITED STATES, February 2, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Safe and Sound Schools announces the launch of Especially Safe, a training program and companion teaching guide designed to help schools better meet the needs of students, teachers, and other staff with special needs facing a variety of safety threats in educational settings. The program was developed in response to research conducted by the organization that demonstrated a lack of focus on those with special needs when crisis response plans are developed. Especially Safe is available for download at safeandsoundschools.org.

“Especially Safe provides an inclusive approach to school safety,” said Michele Gay, co-founder of Safe and Sound Schools, whose daughter, Josephine, was a victim of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012. “Joey was an amazing child with many special needs as a student with autism, apraxia, and motor impairment. In hindsight, a painful lesson from Sandy Hook was that these students, among the most vulnerable, are often overlooked in the safety planning process. Whether it’s autism, those with temporary mobility challenges, individuals who have experienced trauma, or other physical or mental challenges, Especially Safe ensures crisis response and reunification plans work to protect everyone at every level of need.”

To support the launch of this critically important program, Safe and Sound Schools is hosting a webinar, sponsored by Raptor Technologies, on February 11 at 2:00 p.m. EST, called Especially Safe, an inclusive approach to safety preparedness in educational settings. Training tools and teaching ideas that expert practitioners have developed will be discussed in detail. To register, visit safeandsoundschools.org.

In addition, Gay recently hosted a podcast, part of the Safe and Sound’s Sound Off! series, with guest Nick Savarese, executive director of the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism. They explore how that organization helps individuals and families affected by autism and how staffing challenges in schools are impacting special needs programs. The podcast is available on the [Safe and Sound website](https://safeandsoundschools.org) or the podcast platform of choice for listeners, including Spotify, iTunes, and Google Podcasts.

National research, conducted in the fall of 2021 by Safe and Sound, in concert with Raptor Technologies and the Jeffco/Deangelis Foundation, found that more than 50 percent of students and more than 25 percent of parents felt there were no specific crisis plans in their schools for special needs students. To address this critical gap, the Especially Safe program offers planning, preparation, teaching, and training guidance and resources that address safety planning for this especially vulnerable group.

Especially Safe focuses on several core areas:

- Creating safety planning teams that include a variety of diverse perspectives and expertise from multiple disciplines such as educators, school resource officers, nurses, mental health providers, parents, and custodians.

- Identifying the special needs of individuals by regularly surveying parents and staff, including special educators, counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses, to help identify students, children, staff, volunteers, and families who may have additional support needs.

- Building individual teams to address individual needs. These should include parents, bus drivers, aides, paraprofessionals, teachers, nurses, counselors, emergency response providers, and any additional support staff who work with identified individuals.

- Creating the Individual Safety Plan (ISP) to document required safety accommodations and an action plan for different scenarios or safety threats.

- Sharing the plan with all staff working or interacting with identified individuals during a crisis.

According to Gay, Especially Safe addresses transportation and mobility; emotional, mental, and behavioral health; auxiliary communication; medical needs; and security and supervision. “The program is designed to evolve continually, and we welcome input and sharing of experiences, personal knowledge, and ideas that will make our efforts even stronger. This is a mission that requires all hands, hearts, and minds to ensure every member of our learning communities are safe and sound.”

About Safe and Sound Schools

Safe and Sound Schools is a nonprofit organization founded in 2013 by parents who lost children in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. The organization offers a variety of tools for crisis prevention, response, and recovery that are available to schools nationwide. Safe and Sound Schools works with school communities and mental health, law enforcement, and safety professionals to teach best practices and ensure the safest possible learning environments for children, educators, administrators, and parents. To access programs and the organization’s panel of top national experts who can address the multitude of issues impacting school safety, visit www.safeandsoundschools.org.

John Scroggins
Epic Strategies
[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/562168391>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2022 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.