



Sex Education Standards

Recommendations from Medical and Public Health Organizations

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Medical Experts Recommend a Comprehensive Approach to Sex Education

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)¹⁻², American Medical Association (AMA)³, World Health Organization (WHO)⁴, and American Public Health Association (APHA)⁵⁻⁶ all recommend the following topics be covered in school sex education programs for the health and well-being of students:

- Abstinence
- Basics of reproduction
- Human development (puberty)
- Sexually transmitted infections
- HIV/AIDS
- Contraceptives and other barrier methods
- Communication and behavioral skills (negotiation, refusal, etc.)
- Relationships (familial, sexual, platonic)
- Information about access and/or condom availability
- Sexual violence*
- Sexual orientation and gender
- Decision-making, values, and responsibility
- Self-esteem and body image**

* only the American Academy of Pediatrics includes this topic

** only the American Academy of Pediatrics and American Public Health Association recommend this topic

Sex Education Programs Have Support in Illinois

Over 83% of Illinois voters and 92% of Illinois sex education teachers believe that whether or not young people are sexually active, they should be given accurate information about birth control and condoms⁷. Over 100 organizations in Illinois agree, including Protestants for the Common Good, Illinois Parent-Teacher Association, county public health departments, AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Jewish Children's Bureau, Illinois School Health Center Coalition, and American Academy of Pediatrics-Illinois.

Health Organizations Provide Guidance on Sex Education Best Practices

The **American Academy of Pediatrics** says...

- Sex education programs should begin in fifth and sixth grades to delay the onset of sexual activity¹
- Programs which promote abstinence and provide information on HIV/AIDS prevention and contraception work best¹
- There is no link between increased knowledge or access to birth control with increases in sexual activity²

The **American Medical Association** says...

- Schools should be urged to implement a comprehensive approach to sex education that is age-appropriate and based on peer-reviewed science³
- Sex education programs should make condoms available to students³
- Teachers and other involved staff should receive training for working with gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth³

The **American Public Health Association** says...

- Sex education should provide youth:
 - A positive outlook on sexuality⁶
 - Information and skills to make informed decisions regarding their sexual health⁶
- Research shows a comprehensive approach to sex education should begin in Kindergarten and go through twelfth grade⁶
- Research shows a comprehensive approach to sex education programs is effective at delaying the onset of sexual activity⁶
- No abstinence-only until marriage programs that meet the criteria set forth in Title V of the Social Security Act have been found effective at delaying or reducing sexual activity⁶

The **American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists** says...

- Sex education is a component of a comprehensive health education program⁸
- Sex education that provides accurate information has been found to increase prevention behaviors in those who are sexually active⁸

The **Society for Adolescent Medicine** says...

- There is no scientific data which say consensual sex between adolescents is harmful, like many abstinence-only programs suggest⁹
- Access to accurate and complete sexual health information, including information HIV/AIDS, is a basic human right⁹
- Abstinence-only until marriage programs ignore the needs of teens who are already sexually active, as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth⁹

With these recommendations in place, it is startling to find that...

- 66 percent of schools in Illinois are not providing students with a comprehensive approach to sex education¹⁰
- Close to 53 percent of schools in Illinois do not teach how to get birth control and sexual health services¹⁰
- Over 65 percent of schools in Illinois do not teach how to use a condom and over 60 percent of schools do not teach how to use other forms of birth control¹⁰
- Almost 25 percent of schools in Illinois do not teach about what to do in case of rape or sexual assault¹⁰
- There are no statewide standards for comprehensive sex education programs in Illinois¹⁰

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