



Comprehensive Sex Education

Planned Parenthood's "California Parent Activist Packet"

"I'm taking action because my teen deserves medically-accurate, age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality information about abstinence, contraceptive methods, condoms, and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, as well as a curriculum that includes respect for committed relationships and marriage and skill-building and decision-making activities to empower my teenager to make responsible and informed choices about sex."

-Concerned Californian Parent

You might feel confident that your local school would never teach inaccurate, biased information in their sex education program. **Knowing that the law (SB 71) forbids abstinence-only instruction, you might assume that all public schools comply with the law; however, this is not the case. Inaccurate abstinence-only education is being taught in many schools across California, and one of them may be yours.** Many of these schools won't change their programs without active oversight from parents and the community.

In this "*Parent Activist Packet*" you'll find:

1. California Sex Education Basics:

Information you need to understand the laws and California rules about sex education programs in our schools.

2. Comprehensive Sex Education Resources:

Know your research! The research shows the effectiveness of giving our young adults accurate and complete information, and the ineffectiveness of abstinence-only programs.

Actions Parents Can Take:

1. As a concerned parent you can use our "**Planned Parenthood Sex Education Curriculum Review**" form to find out what is going on in your local school.

2. If your local school district isn't teaching comprehensive sexuality education, you can take action! Please fill out the "**Planned Parenthood Sex Education Report Card**" to let us know how your local school program measures up, and so that we can collaborate with you to bring comprehensive sex education to your local school.



1. California Sex Education Basics

In January 2004, California adopted a new law on sex education and HIV/AIDS prevention education in public schools. This legislation, known as SB 71 (or Education Code sections 51930-51939) sets out important standards for all sexuality education programs that reach California's youth in our public school system.

Information about SB 71, California's Comprehensive Sex Education Law:

1. **Sex education is not required in California public schools.** HIV/AIDS prevention education is required once in middle school and once in high school.
2. **If schools choose to teach sex education, they CANNOT provide an abstinence-only program.** Abstinence-only programs present abstinence as the only option for preventing pregnancy or the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and may include misinformation about condoms, and use gender stereotypes or present religious beliefs as fact.
3. **If the school chooses to teach a sex education curriculum, that curriculum must meet these common-sense standards:**
 - Curriculum must be **medically-accurate**
 - Curriculum must be **age-appropriate**
 - After the 7th grade **it must cover abstinence as well as the effectiveness and safety of contraception**
 - Curriculum must include information on how to **protect oneself from sexually transmitted diseases**
 - Curriculum must encourage students to **communicate with their parents or guardians about human sexuality**
 - Curriculum must include **respect for marriage and committed relationships**
 - Curriculum must include **skill-building activities** to increase **responsible decision-making skills**
 - Curriculum must **respect and address the needs of students of all sexual orientations**
4. **Parents must be notified that their child will have sex education or HIV/AIDS education and be allowed to see the materials before classes start.** If parents don't want their child to take the class they may opt-out their child in writing.
5. **Teachers of HIV/AIDS education and sexual health education must be trained in the subject.** If an outside organization will be used to provide the information, those organizations must also follow the requirements of SB 71 and have training.
6. **English language learners and students with disabilities must get sex education and HIV/AIDS education that is right for them.**

2. Comprehensive Sex Education Resources

There are many online resources with studies and information on the effectiveness of comprehensive sexuality education, the ineffectiveness of abstinence-only education, and other information about taking action to ensure that the sex education programs in your local school comply with the requirements of SB 71.

Web Site Resources:

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/>
<http://www.siecus.org/>
<http://www.ncsse.org/>
http://www.aclunc.org/sex_ed_resources

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/se/>
<http://www.guttmacher.org>
<http://teenbirths.phi.org/>
<http://www.plannedparenthood.org>

Study showing ineffectiveness of abstinence-only programs:

<http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/impactabstinence.pdf>

What is being taught in my area - to my kids? You have the power - just ask...

1. Do you teach sex education in your district?
2. Who determines the curriculum for sex education?
3. Do parents have an opportunity to view the curriculum prior to it being taught?
4. Can I get a copy of the curriculum? Can I review a copy of the unit test? How do I do that?
5. Do parents have to sign a permission slip? If so, is it opt-in or opt-out?

Talking Points for Parents/Guardians at School Board Meetings:

- We are (I am) concerned that the sexual health education taught to students in _____ School District is not in compliance with California law.
- The California Department of Education is clear that it is the responsibility of local school districts to provide instruction that is in compliance with the law.
- California law requires that all sex education taught in public schools be medically accurate and objective, free of bias, appropriate for all students, and taught by appropriately trained teachers.
- This law was enacted to protect the health of California's students by ensuring that they receive the accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive sex education that has proven to be effective in preventing unintended pregnancy and STDs.
- _____ school uses _____ textbook to teach sex education. This textbook does not meet the requirements of California law.
- We (I) request that the school board thoroughly review all instructional materials and replace materials that are not in compliance.

You can contact the local Planned Parenthood public affairs director for support and additional resources:

Sacramento/Sierra Region,
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte
Email: sacramentopa@ppmarmonte.org,
or call (916) 446-5037 x131

North Central Valley Region,
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte
Email: stocktonpa@ppmarmonte.org,
or call (209) 473-8982 x104

Santa Clara, San Benito, Santa Cruz, and Monterey Counties,
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte
Email: sanjosepa@ppmarmonte.org,
or call (408) 297-9255 x217

South Central Valley Region,
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte
Email: fresnopa@ppmarmonte.org,
or call (559) 488-4908 x301



Sex Education Curriculum Review

Complete this checklist to review your school's sex education program!

1: Material the Comprehensive Sex Education Program SHOULD include:

In order for the program to be compliant with SB 71, ALL of these boxes should be checked, if not, the program is not compliant.

- Instruction and materials are age-appropriate
- Teachers/Instructors are knowledgeable and have been trained in the appropriate courses
- All information presented is medically accurate and objective
- Instruction and materials encourage students to communicate with their parents or guardians about human sexuality
- Does not teach or promote religion
- Include skill-building activities for decision-making
- Does not reflect or promote bias against anyone on the basis of any protected category, which includes: sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability
- Instruction is available on an equal basis for students who are English learners
- Appropriate for use with students of all races, genders, sexual orientations, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Accessible to and appropriate for students with disabilities
- Parents are notified prior to instruction, are given an opportunity to review the curriculum, and are given an opportunity to request in writing that their child not participate
- Teaches respect for marriage and committed relationships
- Teaches that abstinence from sexual intercourse is the only certain way to prevent unintended pregnancy and abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to prevent sexually transmitted diseases (required for grades 7-12)
- Provides information about the effectiveness and safety of all FDA-approved contraceptive methods, including emergency contraception (required for grades 7-12)
- Provides information about sexually transmitted diseases, including modes of transmission, all FDA-approved methods of prevention, and local resources for treatment and diagnosis (required for grades 7-12)
- Provides information on the law on surrendering custody of newborn infants (required for grades 7-12)
- Covers the nature of HIV/AIDS and its effect on the body
- Provides information on HIV transmission
- Discusses methods to prevent HIV transmission, must emphasize abstinence as the most effective means of prevention, must also include statistics based on the latest medical information citing the success and failure rates of condoms and other contraceptives in preventing sexually transmitted HIV infection, must also include information on methods to reduce the risk of HIV transmission from intravenous drug use.
- Discusses the public health issues associated with HIV/AIDS
- Provides information on local resources for HIV testing and medical care
- Discusses societal views of HIV/AIDS, including stereotypes and myths. Emphasizes compassion for people living with HIV/AIDS
- HIV instruction is provided at least once in middle school and high school
- Instructors receive periodic in-service trainings to learn new developments in the scientific understanding of HIV/AIDS

Sex Education Curriculum Review

Complete this checklist to review your school's sex education program!

2: Material the Comprehensive Sex Education Program should NOT include:

In order for the program to be compliant with SB 71, NONE of these boxes should be checked, if any are checked then the program is not compliant.

- Instruction and materials promote gender stereotypes
Example: Program suggests that girls are more emotional than boys, or that boys have a harder time controlling their sexual desire and girls need to know when to say no. Instruction suggests that girls are inviting sexual assault by wearing "suggestive" clothing.
- Instruction and materials are biased on sexual orientation
Example: Homosexuality is described as unnatural or wrong or in a negative light, and LGBT youth and adults are only mentioned in the context of HIV/AIDS.
- Instruction and materials include religious teaching or bias
Example: Christians are portrayed as more virtuous than people of other faiths
- Instruction and materials are NOT objective
Example: Program states that pre-marital sex will usually lead to heartache, and that abstinence leads to self-esteem. Suggests that condoms are very hard to use. Suggests that married couples are better parents than unmarried couples. Uses fear or shame as a way to dissuade students from sexual activity. Program gives extensive coverage of abstinence and barely mentions contraceptive options.
- Instruction and materials are NOT medically accurate
Example: Program falsely asserts that condoms do not protect against STDs, particularly HPV or HIV. Program falsely asserts that abortion leads to future problems with fertility or psychological problems. Program asserts that an embryo or fetus is a person from the moment of conception. Program falsely states and exaggerates failure rates of condoms/contraception.
- Instruction and materials uses culturally inappropriate materials
Example: Program assumes that all students have a white middle-class perspective. Illustrations depict only one racial/ethnic group.
- Program is taught by instructors with no special training
Example: The instructor teaching the course has never been trained or is inadequately trained in the curriculum and/or has outdated information.
- Information on contraceptives is incomplete
Example: The curriculum does not cover all FDA-approved methods (which include: the pill, male and female condoms, the ring, the patch, the shot, the implant, and emergency contraception)
- The program is based on an opt-in policy that parents must sign for their student to participate
Example: The program is opt-in instead of opt-out and parents must take action in order for their student to attend the lesson.
- Information is represented unequally on materials and tests
Example: All of the textbooks and testing materials only include abstinence, but the school claims that the contraceptive and STD information is "presented orally." This does not comply - the comprehensive information must be present on all materials, readings, and tests.



Sex Education Report Card

Contact Information

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

School Name: _____

School Address: _____

School Phone Number: _____

Does the school teach a sex education program? YES NO

Were you able to review the sex education program materials? YES NO

Is a specific sex education program used? If so, please list program title: _____

Does an outside group teach the sex education curriculum? YES NO

If an outside group teaches the sex education curriculum at this school, does that group have any affiliations that would indicate that they may teach a biased program? _____

In your review of this school's sex education program, do you have concerns about SB 71 compliance? If so, please list ways your local school's program is not meeting the comprehensive sex education requirements of SB 71:

Have you ever attended a local school board meeting? YES NO

Would you be willing to bring up your concerns about the sex education curriculum at an upcoming school board meeting? YES NO

Please fax or mail this form to the closest city listed below to connect to your nearest California Planned Parenthood public affairs director!

- Sacramento/Sierra** - FAX: (916) 446-2994 MAIL: Attn: Public Affairs, 201 29th St. Suite A, Sacramento, CA 95816
- North Central Valley** - FAX: (209) 473-8985 MAIL: Attn: Public Affairs, 415 West Benjamin Holt, Suite D-4, Stockton, CA 95207
- Santa Clara/Coastal** - FAX: (408) 297-9256 MAIL: Attn: Public Affairs, 1605 The Alameda, San Jose, CA 95126
- South Central Valley** - FAX: (559) 488-4940 MAIL: Attn: Public Affairs, 633 North Van Ness, Fresno, CA 93728