



ARKANSAS

Arkansas received \$2,110,782 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2006.¹

Arkansas Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Arkansas law does not require schools to teach sexuality education or sexually transmitted disease (STD)/HIV education. If a school offers sexuality or STD/HIV education, it must stress abstinence.

Arkansas maintains curriculum standards for physical and health education; however, these do not include specific guidelines pertaining to the content of sexuality education courses. According to the Department of Education, course content is left to the discretion of the local school districts and varies widely from school to school. There is also no system of evaluation to monitor the subject matter covered in health education classes across the state.

School-based health clinics may teach sexuality education and may also prescribe and distribute contraceptives with written parental consent; however, no state funds may be used to purchase condoms or contraceptives. These school-based health clinics must maintain records of the number of condoms and other contraceptive devices distributed and prescribed, as well as the number of pregnancies and STDs in the school. This information must remain confidential. Clinics may not give information about abortions or refer students to where they might find such information.

Arkansas does not require parental permission for students to participate in sexuality or HIV/AIDS education nor does it say whether parents or guardians may remove their children from such classes.

See Arkansas Code 6-18-703.

Recent Legislation

Bill Creates an HIV/AIDS Minority Taskforce

House Bill 2615, introduced in March 2007, creates the Arkansas HIV/AIDS Minority Taskforce. The Taskforce will coordinate statewide efforts to combat the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS on women, African Americans, Hispanics, and other minority populations. HB 2615 passed both the House and the Senate and was signed into law by Governor Mike Beebe on April 3, 2007.

Bill Appropriates \$1.5 Million for Abstinence Education

Senate Bill 589, introduced in February 2007, appropriates \$1.5 million for grants and assistance for the Department of Health's "Abstinence Education and Unwed Birth and Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program." This bill was passed in Senate and the House, and became Act 1563 on April 9, 2007.

Events of Note

Book about Sexuality Allowed to Remain on Shelves

March 2005; Fayetteville, AR

After a materials evaluation committee of the school board ruled against complaints issued by a concerned parent, the Fayetteville school district decided to keep Robie Harris' book *It's Perfectly Normal* on library shelves.

During a school board meeting in late February 2005, a parent of a McNair Middle School student voiced complaints about three books—*The Teenage Guy's Survival Guide*, by Jeremy Daldry, and *It's So Amazing* and *It's Perfectly Normal*, both by Robie Harris—available in the school district's libraries. The parent suggested that they be removed from the collection. Interestingly, *It's Perfectly Normal* was not available in her child's library as it had been lost; however, the parent stated that she learned of the book from "Point of View," a Christian radio show, and later found out that it was available elsewhere in the school district. She felt the illustrations were too sexually explicit and that the book encouraged children to experiment with "both heterosexuality and homosexuality."²

As a result of her complaint, the school district created a seven-member committee to review *It's Perfectly Normal*. Each committee member received a copy of the book to review, in effect forcing the school to order six additional copies. The committee decided the book should be allowed to remain in general circulation in junior high libraries (though currently there are no copies available) and will be available in parent libraries in middle schools and elementary schools. In middle schools, a student may check out the book only with the approval of both an educator and a counselor or administrator.

Arkansas's Youth: Statistical Information of Note³

- In 2005, 54% of female high school students and 54% of male high school students in Arkansas reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 6% of female high school students and 13% of male high school students in Arkansas reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 16% of female high school students and 21% of male high school students in Arkansas reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 42% of female high school students and 39% of male high school students in Arkansas reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 49% of females and 65% of males in Arkansas reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 56% of females and 70% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 23% of females and 17% of males in Arkansas reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.

- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 17% of females and 27% of males in Arkansas reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, 84% of high school students in Arkansas reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, Arkansas's abortion rate was 12 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁴
- In 2004, Arkansas's birth rate was 60 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 41 per 1,000 nationwide.⁵

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Arkansas received \$587,519 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2006. The Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage grant requires states to provide three state-raised dollars or the equivalent in services for every four federal dollars received. The state match may be provided in part or full by local groups. Arkansas does not use state funds for the match; instead, sub-grantees provide the match. The Arkansas Department of Health has authority over the “Arkansas Abstinence Education Program.”

In Fiscal Year 1998, the Arkansas Abstinence Education Program was combined with the state's Unwed Birth Reduction Program, a more comprehensive effort that was created by the state legislature. The Abstinence Education Program targets young people and adults ages 12–29. The Governor's Steering Committee, made up of youth, state legislators, religious leaders, and community members, works in partnership with the Abstinence Education Program. The Abstinence Education Program staff reviews applications from potential sub-grantees and makes recommendations to Governor's steering committee. In turn, the steering committee makes its own recommendations for funding. All recommendations are reviewed for approval by the state legislature.

For Fiscal Year 2006, the Arkansas Abstinence Education Program distributed Title V funds to 13 sub-grantees including: Abstinence By Choice, Inc.; CALEB Initiative, Inc./Greater Fellowship Ministries; Earle School District; Excel Upward; Fountain Lake High School; Healthy Kids, Inc.; Lee County Family Resource Center; Office of Human Concern; Prim-N-Propor; Reality Check, Inc.; Shining Light Foundation; St. Bernard's Development Foundation; Stuttgart Public School; and Tree of Life Preventative Health Maintenance, Inc. The sub-grantees use a variety of curricula including *Baby Think it Over*, *Choosing the Best*, *A.C. Green's Game Plan*, *Heritage Keepers*, *Sex Respect*, and *Worth the Wait*.

SIECUS reviewed *Choosing the Best LIFE* and found that it names numerous physical and psychological consequences of premarital sexual activity, suggests that sexually active teens will never have happy futures, and implies that only teens with low self-esteem and poor judgment become sexually active. For example, *Choosing the Best LIFE* states that “Relationships often lower the self-respect of both partners—one feeling used, the other feeling like the user. Emotional pain can cause a downward spiral leading to intense feelings of lack of worthlessness.”⁶

SIECUS reviewed *Choosing the Best PATH* and found that it provides endless information on the negative consequences of premarital sexual activity and utilizes a variety of tactics to suggest that teens should feel guilty, embarrassed, and ashamed of sexual behavior. For example, *Choosing the Best PATH* asks students: “How does being sexually active as a teen affect how a person feels about

himself or herself?” The suggested answer is: “Can feel sad about losing virginity, loss of self-respect, blames self for getting pregnant or contracting an STD.” It goes on to say, “Sexual activity also can lead to the trashing of a person’s reputation, resulting in the loss of friends.”⁷

SIECUS reviewed *A.C. Green’s Game Plan* and found that in order to convince high school students to remain abstinent until marriage, the curriculum relies on messages of fear and shame, inaccurate and misleading information, and biased views of marriage, sexual orientation, and family structure. In addition, *Game Plan* fails to provide important information on sexual health, including how students can seek testing and treatment if they suspect they have an STD. Finally, the format and underlying biases of the curriculum do not allow for cultural, community, and individual values, and discourage critical thinking and discussions of alternate points of view in the classroom. For example, *Game Plan* states, “even if you’ve been sexually active, it’s never too late to say no. You can’t go back, but you can go forward. You might feel guilty or untrustworthy, but you can start over again.”⁸

SIECUS reviewed *Sex Respect* and found that in order to convince students to remain abstinent until marriage, the curriculum presents opinions and beliefs as universal truths; relies on messages of fear and shame; provides outdated and inaccurate medical information; and portrays a biased view of gender, marriage, family structure, pregnancy options, sexual orientation, and race and social class. The format and underlying biases of the curriculum do not allow for cultural, community, and individual values, and discourage critical thinking or discussions of alternate points of view in the classroom. For example, *Sex Respect* advises young people to “set [the] ending time for your date before you go out. Be home on time. Don’t invite your date in. Lead yourselves not into temptation.”⁹

SIECUS reviewed *Worth the Wait* and found that it covers some important topics related to sexuality such as puberty, anatomy, and sexual abuse, and that the curriculum is based on reliable sources of data. Despite these strengths, *Worth the Wait* relies on messages of fear, discourages contraceptive use, and promotes biased views of gender, marriage, and pregnancy options. For example, the curriculum claims that “teenage sexual activity can create a multitude of medical, legal, and economic problems not only for the individuals having sex but for society as a whole.”

Tree of Life Preventative Health Maintenance, Inc. is a faith-based organization that, according to its website, works under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰ The organization uses the *Choosing the Best* curricula. In addition to the problems found in these curricula, the organization’s website contains numerous medical inaccuracies. For example, the website explains, “the best way to diagnose Chlamydia is through a blood test.”¹¹ Chlamydia cannot be diagnosed through a blood test, but can only be detected through a urine test or a swab of the inside of the urethra for men or of the urethra or cervix for women. Their website includes other inaccuracies such as “AIDS is the result of HPV.”¹² In fact, HPV, human papillomavirus, can cause genital warts or cervical cancer. HIV, human immunodeficiency virus, leads to AIDS.

The “What about safe sex?” section of the organization’s website also includes misinformation. For example, it says “Youth and adults alike have been given the false impression that a condom can protect one from disease and unwanted pregnancy. . . . Did you know that the Center for Disease Control is now telling physicians to wear two latex gloves when examining patients? The thickness of two gloves is 11 times that of a condom. How can we then expect a condom to protect us from anything?”¹³ In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are highly effective in preventing transmission of HIV and can significantly reduce the transmission of other STDs.¹⁴ Moreover, research shows that when used consistently and correctly, condoms are 98 percent effective in preventing pregnancy.¹⁵

Tree of Life Preventative Health Maintenance, Inc. runs “Reality Check,” a six-to-ten day abstinence-only-until marriage program for schools that is “high on visuals.” The organization claims to have

reached over 16,000 people with this program since 2003. Reality Check’s website states, “Sex Is: Anything From The Top Of Your Head To The Tip Of Your Toes In Someone Else’s Underwear Zone!”¹⁶ (See the CBAE and AFLA section for more information on Tree of Life Preventative Health Maintenance, Inc.)

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are four CBAE grantees in Arkansas: CALEB Initiative/ Greater Fellowship Ministries, Centers for Youth and Families, Fayetteville Public Schools, and Tree of Life Preventative Health Maintenance, Inc. There are no AFLA grantees in Arkansas.

CALEB Initiative/ Greater Fellowship Ministries (also a Title V sub-grantee) conducts abstinence-only-until-marriage programming in Arkansas schools free of charge. The program, which is given to students in sixth through twelfth grades, uses *Choosing the Best* curricula.¹⁷ (See the Title V section for more information on the *Choosing the Best* curricula.)

Tree of Life Preventative Health Maintenance, Inc. is run by Cindy Crawford who also runs Hannah House, “a faith-based haven for pregnant women.” Hannah House residents attend biblical counseling and Bible study, and are required to attend church services twice a week. The admission application asks young women to “circle any occult activities in which they have been involved—including horoscopes, Ouija boards and yoga—and explain any involvement in eastern religions or groups such as Jehovah’s Witnesses.” Although Hannah House does not receive any federal funding, according to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, “federal dollars awarded for the abstinence program are paying for an apartment house that Tree of Life bought with the idea to expand Hannah House.”¹⁸ Essentially Tree of Life is both the landlord and the tenant, which appears to violate government regulations. When asked about this arrangement, Crawford denied that the organization was paying rent in a circular fashion, which is prohibited by governmental regulations. According to Crawford, Tree of Life pays the rent to the Tree of Life Foundation, a separate entity created by Crawford with a separate taxpayer number. Crawford explained that this foundation “collects the rent because it manages the building.”¹⁹

In addition, Ms. Crawford and her husband own a Christian employment agency, Go Ye, which supplies some of the staff for Tree of Life’s abstinence-only-until-marriage program. A 2005 audit shows that Tree of Life paid staff from Go Ye \$159,757 in that year alone.²⁰

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2006

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services www.healthyarkansas.com	\$587,519 federal	Title V
Abstinence By Choice, Inc.	\$124,882	Title V sub-grantee

ARKANSAS

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
CALEB Initiative/ Greater Fellowship Ministries	\$79,652	Title V sub-grantee
DUAL GRANTEE 2006–2011	\$350,000	CBAE
Earle School District – Abstinence Education Program	\$65,824.63	Title V sub-grantee
Excel Upward – Empowerment Through Abstinence	\$70,652.14	Title V sub-grantee
Fountain Lake High School – Teens at Risk	\$30,548.24	Title V sub-grantee
Healthy Kids, Inc.	\$101,499	Title V sub-grantee
Lee County Family Resource Center	\$33,750.80	Title V sub-grantee
Office of Human Concern	\$49,351.51	Title V sub-grantee
Prim N Proper, Inc. / Choosing to EXCEL	\$82,514.05	Title V sub-grantee
Reality Check, Inc.	\$90,415.22	Title V sub-grantee
Shining Light Foundation / FOCUS	\$47,543.20	Title V sub-grantee
St. Bernard’s Development Foundation	\$44,433.31	Title V sub-grantee
Stuttgart Public School	\$76,741.13	Title V sub-grantee
Tree of Life Prevention Health Maintenance	\$137,282	Title V sub-grantee
DUAL GRANTEE 2005–2008	\$726,164	CBAE

ARKANSAS

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Fayetteville Public Schools 2004–2007 www.fayar.net	\$447,099	CBAE

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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Arkansas Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Arkansas
 904 West 2nd St.
 Little Rock, AR 72201
 Phone: (501) 374-2660
www.acluarkansas.org

Arkansas Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Family Council of Arkansas
 414 South Pulaski St., Suite 2
 Little Rock, AR 72201
 Phone: (501) 375-7000
www.familycouncil.org

Newspapers in Arkansas

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
 Danny Shameer
 Health & Medicine Editor
 P.O. Box 2221
 Little Rock, AR 72203
 Phone: (501) 378-3568

Jonesboro Sun
 Kelli Cobb
 Medical/Health Editor
 518 Carson St.
 Jonesboro, AR 72401
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ARKANSAS

The Morning News
Laurinda Joenks
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The Sentinel-Record
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Times Record
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¹ This refers to the fiscal year for the Federal Government which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2006 begins on October 1, 2005 and ends on September 30, 2006.

² B. Bennett, "Committee: Book is Perfectly Normal," *Northwest Arkansas' News Source*, 10 March 2005, accessed 18 March 2005, <<http://www.nwanews.com/story.php?paper=nwat§ion=News&storyid=26042>>.

³ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Danice K. Eaton, et al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2005," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 55, no. SS-5 (9 June 2006): 1-108, accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>.

⁴ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: The Guttmacher Institute, February 2004), accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/2006/09/12/USTPstats.pdf>>.

⁵ *National Vital Statistics Reports 55.01* (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2006), 10, accessed 26 January 2006, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr55/nvsr55_01.pdf>.

⁶ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best LIFE* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best Inc., 2000). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *Choosing the Best LIFE* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

⁷ Bruce Cook, *Choosing the Best PATH* (Marietta, GA: Choosing the Best Inc., 2000). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *Choosing the Best PATH* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

⁸ Scott Phelps and Libby Gray, *A.C. Green's Game Plan* (Golf, IL: Project Reality, 2001). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *A.C. Green's Game Plan* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

⁹ Coleen Kelly Mast, *Sex Respect: The Option for True Sexual Freedom* (Bradley, IL: Sex Respect, 2001). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *Sex Respect* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

¹⁰ "Arkansas Communities," Tree of Life—Preventative Health Maintenance, Inc., accessed 11 January 2007, <<http://arkansascommunities.com/Fort%20Smith/treeoflife.htm>>.

¹¹ "Chlamydia," Tree of Life—Preventative Health Maintenance, Inc., accessed 11 January 2007 <<http://arkansascommunities.com/LittleRock/viewproduct.asp?item=b574c>>.

¹² "Arkansas Communities," Tree of Life—Preventative Health Maintenance, Inc., accessed 11 January 2007 <<http://www.arkansascommunities.com/LittleRock/viewproduct.asp?item=c600e>>.

¹³ "What About Safe Sex?," Tree of Life—Preventative Health Maintenance, Inc., accessed 10 February 2007, <<http://www.arkansascommunities.com/LittleRock/viewproduct.asp?item=h555o>>.

¹⁴ *Latex Condoms and Sexually Transmitted Diseases—Prevention Messages*, (Atlanta, GA: National Center for HIV, STD & TB Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, undated document.

¹⁵ Robert Hatcher, et al., *Contraceptive Technology*, 17th rev. ed. (New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1998): 328-329; "Condoms Get Better," *Consumer Reports*, June 1999, 46.

¹⁶ "Sex," Reality Check, Inc., (2005), accessed 3 April 2007, <<http://www.realitycheckinc.org/id23.html>>.

¹⁷ "Minutes: Board Meeting," Watson Chapel School District Board of Education (11 December 2006), accessed 30 January 2007, <<http://watson2.arsc.k12.ar.us/District%20website%20material/Board%20Minutes/Minutes%20December%202006.doc>>.

AR K A N S A S

¹⁸ Mark Minton, "Federal Funding Fuels Faith-Based Push for Chastity," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Inc.* (29 October 2006), accessed 3 April 2007, < <http://www.nwanews.com/adg/News/171060/>>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.