

# IN GOOD COMPANY: SUPPORT FOR COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

If you support comprehensive sexuality education—medically accurate and complete, age appropriate as well as developmentally appropriate, and sequential education that includes information about abstinence and contraception, human development, disease and pregnancy prevention, in addition to skill development related to healthy relationships, decision making, and communication—then you are in good company.

## MEDICAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

The American  
Academy of Pediatrics  
(AAP)

recommends that pediatricians “encourage adolescents to postpone early sexual activity[.]...[h]elp ensure that all adolescents have knowledge of and access to contraception including barrier methods and emergency contraception supplies...[and]...advocate for implementation and investments in evidence-based programs that provide comprehensive information and services to youth.”<sup>1</sup>

The American  
Foundation for AIDS  
Research (amfAR)

believes that “young people need accurate, age-appropriate information about sexual behavior and HIV/AIDS. Comprehensive, evidence-based sex education is an important component of HIV prevention efforts.”<sup>2</sup>

The American Medical  
Association (AMA)

“urges schools to implement comprehensive, developmentally appropriate sexuality education programs” and “supports federal funding of comprehensive sex education programs.”<sup>3</sup>

The American Psychological  
Association (APA)

recommends that “comprehensive and empirically supported sex education and HIV-prevention programs become widely available to teach youth how to abstain from risky sexual behaviors and learn how they can protect themselves against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.”<sup>4</sup>

The American Public  
Health Association  
(APHA)

urges that abstinence be “provided within public health programs that provide adolescents with complete and accurate information about sexual health. Such programs should be medically accurate and developmentally appropriate...[ and] based on theories and strategies with demonstrated evidence of effectiveness. Current federal funding for abstinence-only programs... should be repealed and replaced with funding for a new federal program to promote comprehensive sexuality education.”<sup>5</sup>

**The American Sexual Health Association (ASHA)**

ASHA supports “comprehensive health and sexuality education programs,” the content of which “should include medically accurate and developmentally appropriate discussions of sexuality, reproduction, fertility, methods of contraception, decision-making, delaying first intercourse, abstinence, risk assessment and risk reduction, and sexually transmitted disease prevention, with special emphasis placed on the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).”<sup>6</sup>

**The Institute of Medicine (IOM)**

recommends that “Congress, as well as other federal, state, and local policymakers, eliminate the requirements that public funds be used for abstinence-only education, and that states and local school districts implement and continue to support age-appropriate comprehensive sex education and condom availability.”<sup>7</sup>

**The Society for Adolescent Health & Medicine (SAHM)**

finds that “adolescents should have universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services that are evidence based, confidential, developmentally appropriate, and culturally sensitive.”<sup>8</sup>

**The Community Preventive Services Task Force**

recommends “group-based comprehensive risk reduction (CRR) interventions delivered to adolescents to promote behaviors that prevent or reduce the risk of pregnancy, HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).”<sup>9</sup>

**EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

recommends SIECUS’ *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education: K-12* as a resource in developing appropriate school-based curricula.<sup>1</sup> The NEA supports programs that include information on “sexual abstinence, birth control, family planning [...]; diversity of culture and diversity of sexual orientation and gender identification; and sexually transmitted diseases, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and homophobia.”<sup>11</sup>

**The National Education Association (NEA)**

calls for “medically accurate sex education programs in public schools that include abstinence education and information on birth control.”<sup>12</sup>

**The American Federation of Teachers (AFT)**

## Vast Parent and Public Support

More than 90% of parents of junior high (93%) and high school (91%) students believe it is *very* or *somewhat important* to have sexuality education as part of the school curriculum.<sup>14</sup>

A third of parents of high school students (65%) and nearly three-quarters (72%) of parents of junior high school students stated that federal government funding “should be used to fund more comprehensive sex education programs that include information on how to obtain and use condoms and other contraceptives” instead of funding sex education programs that have “abstaining from sexual activity” as their only purpose.<sup>15</sup>

A clear majority of adults in the U.S., of multiple demographics, believe teens should be given more information about both abstinence and contraception: 69% of adults 18 and older; 82% of both Black and Hispanic adults; and 64%–75% of adults across geographic regions are among those that agree with this ideology.<sup>16</sup>

## RELIGIOUS GROUPS SUPPORT COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION

have policies **supporting sexuality education** in schools: American Baptist Church (USA), Church of the Brethren, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, Metropolitan Community Churches, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, Union for Reform Judaism, Unitarian Universalist Association, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.<sup>13</sup>

## Fourteen Religious Denominations

## REFERENCES

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- <sup>12</sup> American Federation of Teachers, “AFT Resolutions: Support for Reproductive Rights,” 2006, accessed May 20, 2014, [http://www.aft.org/about/resolution\\_detail.cfm?articleid=1429](http://www.aft.org/about/resolution_detail.cfm?articleid=1429).
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