

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction



Health Education Curriculum Content – Abstinence

As a result of HB 1229, introduced and passed during the 2011 North Dakota legislative session, every school district, both public and nonpublic, must expand health education to include abstinence education, if teaching sexuality education as part of the general health curriculum. This fact sheet provides guidance for districts in meeting this requirement.

15.1-21 Health Education curriculum – Content

Beginning July 1, 2012, each school district and nonpublic school shall ensure that the portion of its health curriculum which is related to sexual health includes instruction pertaining to the risks associated with adolescent sexual activity and the social, psychological, and physical health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity before and outside of marriage.

Adolescent sexual behavior is linked to a host of critical social and health repercussions to include unintended pregnancy, STDs and HIV. Secondary factors include risk behaviors of alcohol, drug and tobacco use. Addressing adolescent sexuality should be viewed in greater context than reproduction and nothing less than comprehensive social and personal decision-making. Evaluations of sexuality health education programs show a delay in the onset of sexual activity, a reduction in the frequency of sexual activity, a reduction in the number of sexual partners and an increase in safe sexual practices (*American Medical Association, Advocates for Youth*).

Parents, schools and the community must work together to provide consistent messages regarding healthy and responsible behavior. Parents and families are the first and most influential sexuality educators of their children; education programs are more likely to be effective when they are consistent with parental support. Schools, in concert with families and health-care professionals, should implement effective sexuality education that is age appropriate and medically accurate. All young people should be prepared to become sexually healthy adults and be provided the knowledge and skills to avoid HIV, sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancy.

Abstinence means voluntarily refraining from any and all sexual activity. *Abstinence-only education* teaches abstinence as the only way to prevent pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases, including HIV and includes instruction on waiting to engage in sexual activity until marriage. *Abstinence-based education* also teaches abstinence as the only way to prevent pregnancy and sexually-transmitted diseases including HIV, but expands instruction into the areas of effective methods of birth control and protection against STDs and HIV, as well as effective decision making and communication.

For public and non-public districts that dedicate a portion of health education content/curriculum to sexual health, HB 1229 requires inclusion of instruction pertaining to the risks associated with adolescent sexual activity and the social, psychological and physical health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity before and outside of marriage.

Alignment of health curriculum with the 2008 Health Education standards will assure schools are in compliance with HB 1229. These standards establish benchmarks for health instruction at all grade levels; for example, in grade five, students are expected to be able to describe changes that occur during puberty. The standards provide a framework for the skills and knowledge K-12 students are expected to attain in health. The standards offer guidance while, at the same time, allow for and encourage an effective curriculum created at the local district level.

Suggested Curriculum Options

- ◆ **Reducing the Risk: Comprehensive Prevention Education for Youth (2010) ages 5-18**
www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/HIV/elementary.pdf
www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/HIV/middleHighSchool.pdf
www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/HIV/emergent.pdf
 To order or request this curriculum, contact North Dakota Department of Public Instructions's Coordinated School Health Program at 701.328.2753.
- ◆ **Making a Difference! An Abstinence Approach to HIV/STD and Teen Pregnancy Prevention (2003) ages 11-13**
www.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.ebpDetail&PageID=127
- ◆ **Making Proud Choices! A Safer Sex Approach to Prevention of STD's, HIV and Teen Pregnancy (2007) ages 11-13**
www.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.ebpDetail&PageID=128
- ◆ **Draw the Line/Respect the Line (2004) ages 11-14**
pub.etr.org/productdetails.aspx?id=10000&itemno=S028
- ◆ **Becoming a Responsible Teen (1995) ages 14-18**
www.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.ebpDetail&PageID=2
- ◆ **All4You! (2006) ages 15-18**
www.etr.org/tppi/products/all4You.html

Resources

- ◆ **Department of Public Instruction**
www.dpi.state.nd.us/health/HIV/index.shtm
- ◆ **North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Health Education Standards**
www.dpi.state.nd.us/standard/content/health/index.shtm
- ◆ **National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy**
www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/programs.aspx#search
- ◆ **U.S. Department of Health & Human Services**
www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/prevention/research/programs/index.html
- ◆ **Child Trends, Programs That Work**
www.childtrends.org/_catdisp_page.cfm?LID=CD56B3D7-2F05-4F8E-BCC99B05A4CAEA04



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