

# Parents' Checklist to Support their Children's Sex Education



## What you can do at HOME

**Talk with your children and teens regularly throughout their lives about a broad set of topics related to sex and sexuality such as:**

- Healthy friendships and relationships
- Personal safety, bullying, boundaries and consent. Remember to talk about both in person and online interactions.
- Sexual health, including, for adolescents, preventing STIs including HIV, birth control, and how to talk with healthcare providers
- Positive body image and identity, including gender stereotypes, gender identity, and sexual orientation
- Making healthy decisions, including skills to deal with peer pressure, how to say no to sex until they're ready, and how to be prepared for whenever they are ready to have sex
- Where to find reliable sexual health information in books or online

Learn more about how to talk with children of all ages about these topics and more at [plannedparenthood.org/parents](https://plannedparenthood.org/parents).



## What you can do to find out and help improve what is happening in your LOCAL SCHOOLS:

**Ask your children what, if anything, they've learned about these topics in school.**

Find out if they're happy with this, feel included in it, and what they wish school would teach that they're currently not.

**Find out who is providing health and sex education at your local school.**

When you call or email the school, ask to speak with whoever oversees health and sex education programs.

There may be a program coordinator who oversees health and sex education classes, or who coordinates the external organizations that come into the school to provide programming, which can include health and sex education. There could also be an individual teacher who is responsible for providing health and sex education.

**Find out how often and when sex education is happening.**

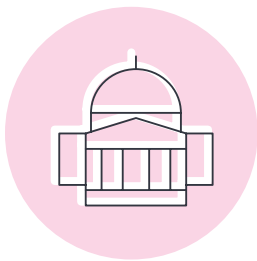
When you speak with the person responsible for health and sex education programs, the first question you can ask is how often and when health and sex education occurs. Ideally, health and sex education occur each year of school, in the same way that math and science do. Unfortunately, this rarely happens, and health and sex education usually occur only at certain grade levels. *continued...*

### **Find out what topics are being covered in sex education.**

Once you have an idea of when and how often sex education takes place, ask what topics are covered each time sex education occurs.

At minimum, information on the following topics should be covered: anatomy and physiology, puberty and adolescent development, pregnancy and reproduction, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV, healthy relationships, personal safety.

For more information on this, check out the Future of Sex Education's [National Standards for Sexuality Education](#).



### **What you can do at the STATE AND FEDERAL LEVELS:**

#### **Learn about the sex education requirements in your state.**

You can find them at the [Guttmacher Institute's website](#).

#### **Contact your members of congress (senators and representatives) and tell them you want them to:**

- Support the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPPP) and the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP), as these programs fund evidence-based approaches.
- Oppose increased funding for the Sexual Risk Avoidance Program, which funds Abstinence-Only Until Marriage approaches.
- Support the Real Education for Healthy Youth Act, which calls for an end to Abstinence-Only Until Marriage funding and supports states in funding better sex education programs.