

What U.S. parents think about **SEX EDUCATION** in schools

Planned Parenthood conducted national research, including focus groups and a nationally representative survey, to better understand parents' views of school-based sex education in 2023. We learned that parents are largely **very supportive** of sex education that is rooted in facts, covers a wide variety of topics, and helps young people grow up to be safe, healthy, and confident.



FINDINGS FROM **NATIONAL FOCUS GROUPS**

Parents see **VALUE** in sex education to help:

- **prevent** unintended pregnancy and STIs/HIV
- young people grow up to be **respectful, kind, and confident adults**
- all young people feel **safe** at school and **proud** of who they are
- **protect** against mis/disinformation, both online and from peers

Parents want **REASSURANCE** that sex education is:

- **age-appropriate**
- **comprehensive** (covers a range of topics), including topics like self-esteem and body image, staying safe online, and consent and healthy relationships
- **fact-based** and free of bias

Parents want to **BE INVOLVED** in sex education with:

- **resources** from experts to help them have conversations at home
- the chance to **communicate** values around topics learned at school

17 SEX EDUCATION TOPICS

INCLUDED IN POLL OF PARENTS:

Abstinence

Anti-bullying

Birth control methods

Consent and setting boundaries

Gender identity and stereotypes

Healthy and unhealthy
peer relationships/peer pressure

Healthy and unhealthy romantic relationships

How to access health care

How to stay safe online

Media literacy skills

Pregnancy options, including abortion

Puberty

Reproduction

Self-esteem/body image

Sexual orientation

Sexually transmitted infections and safer sex

Understanding all kinds of families

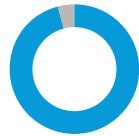


FINDINGS FROM THE NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SURVEY

Parents support sex education, **NOT** Sexual Risk Avoidance.

(AKA abstinence-only-until-marriage programs)

The vast majority of parents believe it's important to teach sex education in:



96%
high school

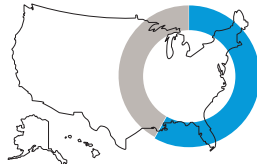


84%
middle school

TOP 3 qualities parents want in sex education:

- ✓ **age-appropriate**
- ✓ **comprehensive**
- ✓ **fact-based**

Parents want experts, like Planned Parenthood, to **TEACH** sex education in schools.



A strong majority of parents are **comfortable** with Planned Parenthood teaching sex education in their local school. This is true in all regions of the country.

64%

A significant majority of **Democrats (76%)** and **Independents (63%)** are comfortable with Planned Parenthood teaching sex education in their local school, and nearly half of **Republicans (49%)** are too.



Parents support a **WIDE RANGE** of sex education topics across elementary, middle, and high school.



67% or more agreed that all 17 topics should be taught in **high school**



More than **95%** of parents want topics like **STIs, consent, self-esteem**, and how to access health care to be taught in high school



57% or more agreed that all 17 topics should be taught in **middle school**



More than **85%** of parents want topics like **healthy relationships**, how to stay safe online, and anti-bullying to be taught in middle school



More than **60%** of parents want **sexual orientation and gender identity** taught in middle and high school



50% or more agreed that sex education topics like consent and boundaries, self-esteem, anti-bullying, healthy and unhealthy relationships, puberty, and how to stay safe online should be taught in **elementary school**