



The Truth about Abstinence-Only Education

In recent years, federal funding for abstinence-only education programs has increased to more than \$170 million annually. Are your tax dollars being used to teach teens what they need to know about sex? You be the judge.

Characteristics of Abstinence-Only Curricula

- ☑ Rely fear and shame and portray premarital sexual activity as inevitably harmful.
- ☑ Present condoms and contraception only in terms of failure rates, and exaggerate failure rates.
- ☑ Include biased and inaccurate information about HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.
- ☑ Idealize one family structure that consists of a married couple raising children.
- ☑ Foster myths and stereotypes about gender differences.
- ☑ Racist and classist comments exist within the text, and stereotypes about various communities are underscored; people with disabilities are entirely omitted or are depicted as non-sexual.
- ☑ Omit discussion of sexual orientation; refer to homosexuality as “unnatural.”
- ☑ Present biased information about pregnancy options; portray abortion as dangerous and immoral.
- ☑ Religious bias influences the curricula and only one viewpoint on sexual behavior is discussed.

“AIDS can be transmitted by skin-to-skin contact.”

*--Reasonable Reasons to Wait
(Teacher’s Guide, Unit 5, p.19)*

“Women gauge their happiness and judge their success by their relationships. Men’s happiness and success hinge on their accomplishments.” *--Why kNOw, p. 122*

What the Research Says about Abstinence-Only Education

- ☑ Research indicates that abstinence-only-until-marriage programs do not delay the onset of sexual activity among teens, and that these programs may actually deter teens from using condoms when they become sexually active.
- ☑ There is no conclusive evidence that abstinence-only-until-marriage programs reduce the rate of unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases.
- ☑ A recent Congressional report found that some widely used, federally-funded abstinence-only curricula distort information, misrepresent the facts, and promote gender stereotypes. More than 80% of the curricula reviewed contained false, misleading, or distorted information about reproductive and sexual health.