

Comprehensive Sex Education 2015 Fact Sheet

[HB 670 Rep. Smith](#), St. Louis (D-85) | [SB 418 Sen. Chappelle-Nadal](#), St. Louis (D-14)

Comprehensive sex education legislation would once again allow trained sex education professionals to be invited into public schools and would require voluntary sex education courses to include information on both abstinence and the benefits of contraception. Improving access to preventive health care and supporting healthy families should be a shared goal in Missouri. If we are committed to reducing the number of unintended pregnancies and abortions in Missouri, we must get to the root of the problem through common sense prevention programs. One such program is ensuring comprehensive sexuality and reproductive health education in schools and communities.

We aren't getting rid of abstinence education- we're improving it. Allowing trained sex education professionals to be invited into public schools doesn't mean abstinence behavior will stop being encouraged. Comprehensive sex education legislation would require voluntary sex education courses to include medically accurate information on **both** abstinence and the benefits of contraception and sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention. It also addresses issues of internet predators, as well as the unforeseen consequences of "sexting."

We know comprehensive programs work. Medically accurate, age-appropriate education that includes information about both abstinence and contraception has been found to be effective in delaying the onset of sexual intercourse, reducing the number of sexual partners, and increasing contraception and condom use among teens (SEICUS). Teens who receive sex education that includes abstinence and contraception are more likely than those who receive abstinence-only-until-marriage messages to delay sexual activity and use contraception when they do become sexually active (SEICUS).

Missourians want comprehensive sexuality education. 86% of Missourians support teaching comprehensive sex education in schools, according to a Missouri poll conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates. Leading public health and medical professional organizations all stress the need for sexuality education that includes messages about abstinence and provides young people with information about contraception for the prevention of teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other STIs. Some of these supporters include: American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychological Association, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, The Institute of Medicine Society of Adolescent Medicine, American Nurses Association, and American Public Health Association.

Investing in Sex Education prevents unintended pregnancy AND makes good fiscal sense. If we want our country to be fiscally responsible, we must invest in sex education and family planning services, as unintended pregnancies cost U.S. families \$11 billion a year (Guttmacher). According to a report from the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, if those giving birth during their teen years instead had their children during adulthood, U.S. taxpayers would save about \$1,600 per person annually. For every dollar invested in family planning programs, the government saves approximately \$7 (Guttmacher).