



New Jersey

New Jersey received at least \$2,709,783* in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2003.¹

New Jersey Sexuality Education Law

New Jersey law does not mandate sexuality education but does mandate at least 150 minutes of health education during each school week in grades one through twelve. In addition, high school students must acquire 3 ¾ credits of health education each year of high school. School districts must align their health education curricula with the New Jersey Department of Education's *Core Curriculum Content Standards*.

One of the four required health education standards, *Standard 2.4: Human Relationships and Sexuality*, addresses three subject areas: relationships, sexuality, and pregnancy and parenting. Learning expectations within Standard 2.4 focus on abstinence and help students to identify and address internal and external pressures to become sexually active. Standard 2.4 also mandates that instruction in middle and high school classes address the use of contraceptive methods and risk reduction strategies as well as the implications of their use.

In addition, Standard 2.1 includes sexually transmitted disease (STD) and HIV/AIDS prevention education, and Standard 2.3 addresses the impact of alcohol and drug use on the incidence of sexual assault, STDs, and unintended pregnancy.

New Jersey law requires that all sexuality education, HIV/AIDS, and sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention education “stress that abstinence from sexual activity is the only completely reliable means of eliminating the sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and of avoiding pregnancy.”

The law also requires that, “Any instruction concerning the use of contraceptives or prophylactics such as condoms shall also include information on their failure rates for preventing pregnancy, HIV, and other sexually transmitted diseases in actual use among adolescent populations and shall clearly explain the difference between risk reduction through the use of such devices and risk elimination through abstinence.”

New Jersey allows parents or guardians to remove their children from any or all parts of sexuality, STD prevention, and HIV/AIDS prevention education. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See New Jersey Statutes Amended 18A:35-4.7, 18A:35-4.20, and 18A:35-4.21, and New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:8-3.1.

* Exact funding information for one SPRANS–CBAE grantee in New Jersey was not available to SIECUS.

¹ This refers to the fiscal year for the Federal Government which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, fiscal year 2003 begins on October 1, 2002 and ends on September 30, 2003.

See also *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education*² and *New Jersey Comprehensive Health Education and Physical Education Curriculum Framework*.³

Recent Legislation

The New Jersey legislature carries bills over from even to odd years (2002 to 2003 and 2004 to 2005). All related bills since 2002 are listed. New Jersey's legislature meets throughout the year.

Comprehensive Family Life Education Bill, 2002 and 2004 Sessions

On May 9, 2002, a bill was introduced in the New Jersey legislature that would require each board of education in the state to offer comprehensive family life education. House Bill 2272 defines family life education as “education regarding human development and sexuality, including education on family planning and sexually transmitted diseases, that is medically accurate and age-appropriate; respects community values and encourages parental communication; promotes responsible sexual behavior and addresses both abstinence and the use of contraception; promotes individual responsibility and involvement regarding sexuality; and teaches skills for responsible decision-making regarding sexuality.”

The bill died at the end of the legislative session in December 2003.

The same bill was again introduced in the current session. House Bill 787, introduced in January 2004, would make the same requirements for family life education and also repeal the New Jersey law requiring that all such courses stress that abstinence is the only completely reliable means for eliminating STDs and avoiding pregnancy.

At press time, no action had been taken on the bill.

Bill to Exempt Students from Family Life Education Requirements in Public Institutions of Higher Education, 2003 and 2004 Sessions

House Bill 3806, introduced on June 16, 2003, would excuse any student with “conflicts of conscience” from certain class requirements in public institutions of higher education. The enumerated classes are “health, family life education, or sexual education.” Such a law already exists for students in public elementary or secondary schools.

House Bill 308, introduced in January 2004, and Senate Bill 1244, introduced in February 2004, contain the same provisions.

At press time, no action had been taken on any of the bills.

Parenting Education Part of Family Life Education, 2004 Session

Introduced in January 2004, House Bill 1525 would require that instruction on parenting, including responsibilities and obligations, be included in any family life education course.

At press time, no action had been taken on the bill.

² *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education*, (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Department of Education). Available online at http://www.state.nj.us/njded/cccs/s2_chpe.pdf.

³ *New Jersey Comprehensive Health Education and Physical Education Curriculum Framework*, (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Department of Education). Available online at <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/frameworks/chpe/index.html>.

Events of Note

New Jersey Education Association Cancels Abstinence-Only Speakers October 2002; Trenton, NJ

In October 2002, the New Jersey Education Association (NJ-NEA) canceled three sexuality education speakers after discovering they had an abstinence-only-until-marriage focus. The three speakers were scheduled to make presentations at the organization's annual conference. The NJ-NEA replaced the scheduled workshops with alternate presentations by staff members from the Network for Family Life Education at Rutgers University, a comprehensive sexuality education group that trains teachers. The former speakers and other conservative leaders criticized this decision.

Newark, New Jersey Implements Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Curriculum October 2003: Newark, NJ

Public high schools in Newark, New Jersey are scheduled to begin teaching an abstinence-only-until-marriage program called *The Choice Game*, created by the Several Sources Foundation, a faith-based organization that opposes abortion rights.

The creation of *The Choice Game*, as well as its implementation into Newark public schools, was funded by a Special Projects of Regional and National Significance–Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS–CBAE) grant from the federal government. The grant provides \$775,951 per year from 2002 through 2005.

The program, which is currently being used in Catholic schools throughout New Jersey, will reach approximately 8,000 students—all of the ninth grade students in Newark's public school system.

Classes are 90 minutes long and are held once a week for nine weeks. The program includes six CD-ROMS with interactive “soap operas.” Students direct the players in the soap operas in order to see the consequences of their decisions. At the end of the nine week program, participants are asked to sign a pledge promising to remain abstinent until they marry. If they sign this pledge, they receive a sterling silver ring to wear on their wedding finger.

The classes in Newark's public schools will not mention contraception or condoms, although condom usage is discussed briefly in another class taught by a different teacher. The founder of Several Sources Foundation has said that she does not want students to be taught about condoms at all, “Even if condoms were 100 percent effective at preventing pregnancy or disease—and they're not—you can't put a condom on a broken heart. We'd be a lot better off if we taught young people the value of waiting, instead of thinking they need immediate gratification.”

The Choice Game was pilot tested with Newark youth in a summer program. One student who participated in the program said, “The game was great—it taught me a lot of things, like how you can catch STDs from oral sex. Some kids will heed the abstinence message, some won't. Some kids will say, ‘I don't need no game to run my life; I run my own life.’ I like the game's message, but I think kids need to learn more about condoms, too.” Newark has one of the highest rates for teen births and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in New Jersey.

The Choice Game is slated to be used in school districts in Chicago and Ohio in the future.

New Jersey's Youth: Statistical Information of Note⁴

- In 2001, 42% of female high school students and 53% of male high school students in New Jersey reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 43% of female high school students and 49% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2001, 3% of female high school students and 12% of male high school students in New Jersey reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2001, 11% of female high school students and 23% of male high school students in New Jersey reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 11% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2001, 34% of female high school students and 38% of male high school students in New Jersey reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 33% of females and 33% of males nationwide.
- In 2001, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 16% of females and 37% of males in New Jersey reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 31% of males nationwide.
- In 2001, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 57% of females and 70% of males in New Jersey reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 51% of females and 65% of males nationwide.
- In 2001, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 16% of females and 9% of males in New Jersey reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.
- In 2001, 6% of female high school students and 7% of male high school students in New Jersey reported ever having been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant compared to 5% of female high school students and 4% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2001, 91% of high school students in New Jersey reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 89% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, New Jersey's abortion rate was 47 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁵

⁴ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: J. Grunbaum, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States, 2001," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 51, no.SS-4, June 28, 2002, pp. 1-64. Available online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>. New Jersey did not participate in the 2003 YRBS.

- In 2001, New Jersey's birth rate was 29 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 45 per 1,000 nationwide.⁶

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

New Jersey received \$843,071 in Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Fiscal Year 2003. The Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage grant requires states to provide three state-raised dollars or the equivalent in services for every four federal dollars received. The state match can be provided in part or in full by local groups. New Jersey contributes \$103,012 towards the matching funds. The rest of the money is matched by contracted groups. The majority of the federal and state money is contracted out to sub-grantees.

One sub-grantee, the Heureka Center, focuses on "disease prevention and health promotion," including the promotion of "trust in God – the center of life, physical, mental, and spiritual." Its abstinence program consist of sessions for parents of preteen and young teens, preteen sessions (ages 10-12), young teen sessions (ages 13-14), and teen leadership training sessions. The Heureka Center states that the skills learned in the abstinence programs will help "equip youth to say no to other harmful behaviors such as smoking, taking drugs, alcohol, and violence."

Special Projects of Regional and National Significance–Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS–CBAE) and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are five SPRANS–CBAE grantees in New Jersey: the Freedom Foundation of New Jersey, Free Teens USA, Several Sources Foundation, New Jersey Family Policy Council, and Trinity Community Development Council. There are no AFLA grantees in New Jersey.

The headquarters of Free Teens USA is located in Westwood, NJ. According to their website, this organization designs an abstinence-only-until-marriage curriculum that is used in 38 states and more than 70 countries. The organization works with other abstinence-only-until-marriage groups, including the Institute for American Values, the National Fatherhood Initiative, and the Abstinence Clearinghouse. Free Teens' website has sections for parents, teachers, and students and includes information and advice on abstinence. For example, the website points to Magic Johnson as a reason to abstain from sex with multiple partners.

Several Sources Foundation runs a number of different organizations. All have websites that link to Life Call, "a prolife website dedicated to educating teens on abortion and prolife issues, helping pregnant women, and saving as many babies from abortion as we possibly can." Several Sources Foundation also runs a website called Silent Scream which includes a video claiming to be footage of an abortion of an 11-week-old fetus.

Their abstinence websites are www.chastitycall.org and www.thechoicegame.com. *The Choice Game* is supported by their SPRANS–CBAE grant. *For more information, please see "Events of Note."*

⁵ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information*, (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004). Available online at www.guttmacher.org.

⁶ A. Papillo, et.al., *Facts at a Glance*, (Washington, DC: Child Trends, February, 2004).

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2003⁷

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS–CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services www.state.nj.us/health	\$843,071 federal/ \$103,012 state	Title V
Camden County Chapter, American Red Cross		Title V sub-grantee
Catholic Community Services		Title V sub-grantee
Community Health Care		Title V sub-grantee
Freedom Foundation of NJ DUAL GRANTEE 2001-2004	\$515,481	Title V sub-grantee SPRANS–CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Free Teens USA, Inc DUAL GRANTEE 2002-2005 www.freeteensusa.org	\$475,280	Title V sub-grantee SPRANS–CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Heureka Center for Disease Prevention & Health Promotion (A Better Choice) www.heurekacenter.org		Title V sub-grantee
Montclair State University, Project HOPE		Title V sub-grantee
Peer Challenge		Title V sub-grantee

⁷ SIECUS was not able to obtain exact funding information for all grantees.

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
St. Peter's University Hospital		Title V sub-grantee
Several Sources Foundation 2002-2005 www.severalsourcesfd.org	\$775,951	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
New Jersey Family Policy Council		SPRANS-CBAE
Trinity Community Development Council 2002-2003	\$100,000	SPRANS-CBAE (Planning Grant)

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

Alice Burns
New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
Community Health Services
PO Box 364
Trenton, NJ 08625
Phone: (609) 984-1384

New Jersey Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Family Planning Association
of New Jersey
210 West State St.
Trenton, NJ 086608
Phone: (609) 393-2506

Hyacinth AIDS Foundation
317 George St., Suite 203
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Phone: (732) 246-0204
www.hyacinth.org

Network for Family Life Education
Rutgers University
100 Joyce Kilmer Ave.
New Brunswick, NJ 08854
Phone: (732) 445-7929

New Jersey Lesbian and Gay Coalition
P.O. Box 11335
New Brunswick, NJ 08906
Phone: (732) 828-1266
www.njlgc.com

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New Jersey NOW
110 W. State St.
Trenton, NJ 08608
Phone: (609) 393-0156
www.nownj.org

New Jersey Religious Coalition for
Reproductive Choice
P.O. Box 13
Mt. Freedom, NJ 07970
Phone: (908) 508-0351
www.njrcrc.org

New Jersey Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

New Jersey Christian Coalition
560 Hoover Ave.
Washington Township, NJ 07676
www.njchristiancoalition.org

New Jersey Committee for Life
490 Somerset St.
North Plainfield, NJ 07060
Phone: (908) 753-5311
www.njcfl.org

New Jersey Family Policy Council
P.O. Box 6011
Parsippany, NJ 07054
Phone: (800) 653-7204
www.njfpc.org

New Jersey Right to Life
113 North Ave. West
Cranford, NJ 07016
Phone: (908) 276-6620
www.njrto.org

Newspapers in New Jersey

The Star-Ledger
Peggy O’Crowley
Family/Parenting Writer
1 Star Ledger Plz.
Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: (973) 392-5810

The Star-Ledger
Rosemary Parrillo
Medical/Health Editor
1 Star Ledger Plz.
Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: (973) 392-1540