

What if someone told that girl to protect herself, and how? What if someone told that boy that there are right ways to have sex? What if they had been told the effects? The consequences? The preventive methods? The contraceptives? The diseases? What if they had the knowledge? Would they be where they are today? Should we not emphasize teaching this generation the importance of doing things the right way? What if you were in this situation? A survey conducted of 50 Southwest CTA high school students concluded that 47.9% were familiar with sexual topics before the end of their elementary school year, an alarming number considering extensive education is not provided until their eighth grade year (Lopez & Torres, 2015). The same survey showed that 41.7% of those same students gained the majority of their knowledge from media sources, expressing the deficiency of parent and school sexual instruction. A 54.2% responded that their parents have never even approached the subject, validating the urgency of comprehensive school programs. Being denied important knowledge to look after yourself will not only make you vulnerable to the many outcomes, but future generations to come as well if action is not taken. Today we will address the importance of sexual education taught in school by focusing on the inefficiency of abstinence programs, the effectiveness of the programs that continuously teach all ages, the faultiness behind leaving parents to solely teach sexual education, and the invalidness in stating that sexual education will trigger sexual activity.

The alarming rates in the United States on sexual repercussions brings clear awareness to the unsuccessfulness of abstinence-only programs, and the desperate need for a change in sexual education in schools. A 2014 article by the Kaiser Family Foundation “Sexual Health of Adolescents and Young Adults in the United States” demonstrates the distressing numbers of sexually active teenagers, unplanned pregnancies, abortion rates, as well as sexually transmitted

diseases. Their report showed that sexual intercourse activity among high school students was at a disturbingly high 47 percent in 2013, despite abstinence programs being taught in schools. That number is followed by an 82 percent of unplanned teen pregnancies. Although there is an enforced concept of teaching refrainment from any sexual activity, teenagers are still engaging in sexual relationships. 25 percent of the sexually active population consists of teenagers yet they almost make up half of the sexually transmitted infection cases recorded. These rates in the United States continue to be some of the highest worldwide, proving the inefficiency of abstinence programs.

Comprehensive sexual programs implemented in other countries have shown greater outcomes and allow a better understanding on sexual topics. This year, author Saskia De Melker wrote for PBS on the Netherland's distinctive approach to implement required comprehensive sexual education classes beginning at a young age. Their ongoing program dedicates a "Spring Fever" week to prepare children of all ages on the importance of self-image, gender stereotype, sexual orientation, contraceptives options, among many other topics. Four year old children begin to dwell on simplistic yet "core principles" that helps them identify their feelings, body awareness, healthy relationships, and learn the importance of saying no when found in harmful situations. Children have the opportunity to delve into attitudes and values that will encourage better communication and decisions about their sexual lives. Schools prepare parents on how to properly approach their children by holding parent nights that give them the necessary tools to answer any questions on sexual topics. By involving both parents and children in school education programs, the Netherlands shows significantly low percentages compared to that of the United States; pregnancy rates alone are five times higher than the Netherland's (Melker). The

2011 National Curriculum Science Order in England required to teach anatomy, fertility, puberty, sexually transmitted diseases, and sexual reproduction for all primary and secondary students ("Sex and Relationships"). These programs highly benefit students of all ages to be prepared when unanticipated situations approach.

Despite our viewpoint to promote the institution of sexual education programs in schools, those against this argue that parents should be left the right to teach sex topics to their children and that expanded knowledge is triggering an increased teenage initiation to partake in sexual activities. While it is true parents have the responsibility and authority to teach their children on such sensitive topics, not all parents are necessarily qualified to do so. They have the absolute ability to teach their kids their moral standards and their beliefs, but they are not always equipped with the correct information to inform on the scientific aspect of sexual education. Although parents also believe that teaching their children about sex subjects in a school environment will make them more curious and encourage them to act upon their knowledge, a correctly taught curriculum will simply prepare students with the essential knowledge needed to make healthy decisions. We are not promoting children to go out and have sex, we are not teaching them that in order for them to understand they must experience, we are not providing them with information for them to become sexually active. Through proper material and tools, children are purely taught the science of sex. The issues that arise with the engagement of unsafe sexual activities are a serious matter, and although this topic is often overlooked and joked about, it can be someone you know trying to survive through the outcomes. Addressing the ignorance on this topic is crucial to avoid any more cases of high school girls dropping out of school because they have the newly added responsibility of taking care of a baby not much

younger than them, of teenage boys having to sustain themselves on their own now that they have a family to provide for and have lost their parents' support, of emotional consequences that come with disappointing their families, this can all be prevented with the right knowledge. Providing this essential information in schools can help impede adolescents from having to face obstacles that they will be forced to confront on their own; their consequences now will affect their future forever.

Teaching children with an ongoing program can be one of the best decisions considered by the government and school districts. It will help children physically, mentally, and emotionally throughout school. Abstinence programs have not proven to be effective, comprehensive programs that teach all ages have shown greater results, parents do not possess the right information to give their children on sexual education, and sexual education has no intent on promoting sexual activity, confirming the urgency for schools to provide the necessary instruction. Just imagine it was your children, sibling, cousin, or anyone important to you that never learned. He/she never had that knowledge, all they knew came from an unreliable source? Imagine how easy their life/ challenges could have been if they had been taught in school.

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