

Good example of
should teenagers be
allowed to have legal
sexual intercourse
argu...

[Health & Medicine](#), [Pregnancy](#)



Pre-marital sex, losing virginity at a very early age, having multiple dating partners and viewing sexual intercourse as means of pleasure, are some of the underlying truths of the society today. While some cultures might even refrain from acquainting their children with this concept, parents often let their children have sex at their own homes. This mixed reality often makes one wonder about which practice is actually correct? What is the right thing to do when it comes to sexual intercourse? On the basis of these questions which usually govern human beings, this paper would specifically highlight sexual intercourse with respect to the teenage activity by emphasizing on the idea that whether they should be allowed to have legal sexual intercourse or not.

Sex being a universal experience comes with a set of complicated and highly essential issues which are continuing from a very long time. Today, it is the influence of media and technology that the whole idea is seen from a different perspective. While sex maybe sacred for some, it is just a means of pleasure for many. Sexual intercourse is another name of physical attachment where a male and female mates to produce offspring. As a matter of fact, sex is a lot more than physical attraction and pleasure. It is a concept revolving around the meaning of love, intimacy, commitment and stability in relationships. This idea is blurred by the way sex is perceived by different people which is often influenced on the basis of age, gender, social pressure, media and technology. When cultures consider it a taboo, generations jump into unsafe sexual activities due to their curiosity about the whole matter. Moreover, it is often the surrounding and the people with whom individuals hang that make sex a trend and a fashion for popularity

and fun. Perceiving sex in this light, results in adverse consequences such as sexually transmitted diseases, AIDs & HIV, unwanted pregnancy, and rape. While analyzing the first time sex experience of individuals, research reveals that as compared to Asia and Latin America, countries such as Africa, Europe and North America is seen to have individuals who indulge in earlier sex. However, USA has experienced a decline in sexual activity amongst teenagers which was at rise during the 1970s after which it eventually reduced by the time of 1990s. This was the period where contraceptives and lesser cases of teen pregnancy were recorded. In contrast, while UK accounted for only 1 percent of males and females to become sexually active before 16 years of age by 1957, the percentage of these teenagers substantially grew to 20-25% (Mackay, 2001). In addition, studies also found that almost one in every 100 girls got pregnant between the ages of 13 and 15. Currently, studies analyzing the trend of sexual behavior between 2006 and 2010 show that about 42% unmarried female teenagers and 43% unmarried male teenagers have had sex at least once in their life. This trend is seen to be stagnant since the year 2002. On the other hand, the use of contraceptives has also increased where about 80 percent of individuals during 2006-2010 were seen to use contraceptives during their first sexual intercourse. Furthermore, many girls also report that they involuntarily and forcefully had their first time sex where several were also willing to go for it (Martinez, 2011). These alarming figures often make one wonder if these teenagers are on the correct path or not. Sexual intercourse with respect to teenagers has become an important issue of concern not only because of the way sex is being perceived but also because it is essential to monitor the

health, safe sex practices and STDs amongst teenagers.

Statistics show that 39.1 births per 1000 females between 15 and 19 years are evident in USA. This rate is quite high as compared to the one recorded in other developed countries such as 14 births in Canada, 10 in Germany and 7 in Italy. However, the teen birth rate which was at its peak in 1991 greatly declined by 2009 by 37%. This decline continued till 2005 where slight increase was then noticed till the year 2007. This became an issue of concern which eventually subsided when the birth rate began to decline again (Martinez, 2011). These figures show the success of contraceptives and its use amongst individuals especially teenagers. However, it is also conspicuous to be concerned about these birth rates as teenage pregnancies often contribute to miscarriage, still births, induced abortions and are therefore very harmful to human health. In addition, research also shows that teen pregnancy differs according to age, race and origin. This is evident from the fact that while non-Hispanics (white teenagers) reported about 44 pregnancies, the black non-Hispanics reported 124 pregnancies as compared to the 129 incidents in the case of Hispanic teenagers. Regardless of the difference in teen pregnancy on the basis of age, origin, society and race, it is a serious matter of concern which needs to be carefully addressed (Martinez, 2011).

In this regard, it is important to find a solution for allowing legal sexual intercourse for teenagers. Making this practice legal for teenagers would certainly mean that they are being given the freedom to have sex with whoever they want without any restrictions. Legalizing sex also means that teenagers would be given an opportunity to mature earlier than their age

and therefore regard sexual intercourse with value and purpose instead of a play of pleasure. In contrast, allowing them to have sexual intercourse is like giving them the permission to risk their life and be open to a number of diseases and attach no significance to the concept of virginity or monogamous relationships.

Majority of U. S. States have incorporated the age of 16 to be the age of consent. This means that both the partners must be at least 16 years old. However, if one of them is below 16 and the other is older, he will be charged according to the law of the state. For instance, in Georgia, sending explicit emails and text messages to people below 18 is a crime that would result in the prosecution of the individual. Moreover, any sexual act with a child below 16 years would be charged according to the case of aggravated child molestation where such activities with children below 13 would be severely persecuted in the name of sodomy. Charges may be up to 20 years of imprisonment (Teens, sex and the law, n. d.). Despite these strict laws, the previously mentioned rate of teenage sexual practices is quite high. The question here arises that if it is illegal to have sex before the age of 16, how are these teenagers involved in this practice? Also, why are these teenagers not being charged accordingly? This shows that despite the state laws, sexual activities continue to exist from a very long time pointing out to the different forms and options people have with the growing number of years. While some may find school as an option to carry out sexual practices, other individuals might have liberal parents who would let them do whatever they want. This points out to the fact that even if the age limit of legal sexual intercourse is lifted, sexual behavior amongst teenagers will continue.

For this reason, it is not really important to debate on the issue that whether teenagers should be allowed to have legal sexual intercourse or not because even if it is legalized at a very young age, teenagers will continue to adopt this behavior. This might be because of the glamour and curiosity attached to sex which might never really end because it is this time (the onset of puberty) where teenagers are not only curious but are undergoing a physical change. This is a very vulnerable age where an idea such as sex may appear to be highly appealing and exciting. Therefore, the debate should rather be re-framed in a way that what strategy should be adopted by the parents, the society and the teachers to educate teenagers on the matter of sex so that they undertake a responsible and a fully aware approach.

Therefore, to address this issue, sex education should be incorporated in the curriculum of every school so that the concept of sex and human sexuality is imparted to the youth in an appropriate manner which is usually misrepresented by the media and the internet. While the internet may have pornography as the source of attracting young minds to an exciting adventure, the trained person would handle this sensitive issue in a manner which would be absorbed by adolescents. Sex education therefore deals with the areas of safer sex practices, abstinence, ways to resist pressure and force to submit for sex, hazards of early sexual intercourse, and the use of contraceptives and pregnancies. Educating adolescents and teenagers on these realms would help them responsibly view relationships and the attached sexual behavior. While sex educators might take either an abstinence based approach or a comprehensive sex strategy, the information which is delivered must be handled carefully. On the contrary,

educators stressing upon the negatives of sex might place great emphasis on STDs and HIV that would eventually embarrass individuals to participate in HIV screening tests. Therefore, there should be a balance in what is being taught. The key here is to acquaint people with the reality of sex which requires the positive as well as the negative. While it is the duty of the educator to tell the individuals about the problems of early sex, it is also essential to inform that about the role of sex in maintaining healthy relationships. As one in every four high school children is diagnosed with STD, it is the responsibility of the educator to tell students about the use of contraceptives and safer sex practices (Thato, Jenkins, & Dusitsin, 2008). Although this does not mean that the educator pro early sex in the form of safer sex practices, it is actually a way to stop unsafe sexual activity and teen pregnancies along with its associated consequences. Studies investigating upon the duration of sex education reveal that a short program is not really enough to fulfill the actual purpose. Instead, sex education must be a long term program where other trainings could be held along in order to notice a substantial change in the sexual activities of adolescents and the teenagers. Studies have therefore found that a great majority initiate sexual practices during their early teenage years where they are usually unaware about contraceptives and their risky sexual behavior. For this purpose there is a dire need to educate them. This should start during their adolescence so that they do not come under the trick of social pressure, media or the technology. However, studies have also highlighted areas such as the Sub-Saharan Africa along with other developing and under developed societies where either education is minimal or where individuals do not attend schools

due to financial issues. For such people, there is a need to come up with different ways to educate them regarding the sex so that no sector of the society shall remain ignorant (Hedman, 2008).

Moreover, although the age of consent is 16, parents can play an essential role in extending this legal sex age. In other words, apart from the duty of the sex educator, it is also important for the families to educate their children on this matter. Although there are some societies who consider discussing it a taboo, sibling can also help their teenage brothers and sisters by briefing them about the real picture about sex. Parents should keep a check on their child's activities and the friends he has. Ironically, no matter how vigilant a parent is, a child will find ways to practice what they truly desire. For this reason, it is important for parents to talk and communicate with their child. In this way, apart from making their child understand that what is right and wrong, they can also familiarize him with what is accepted and practiced by his family. In this way, he will get a coherent picture of the way the society views sex and the way his family perceives it. As a result, he will responsibly handle the matter by fully understanding the pros and cons of sexual intercourse during teens (Singh & Woog, 2005).

Hence, while state might say one thing, the society and more importantly the family norms would greatly differentiate on the basis of what they believe and what they prefer. When it comes to sexual intercourse, several cultures refrain from even mentioning the word in front of their children. Many cultures experience it without even knowing it in the true sense. And some societies offer it for free. Sex being a universal experience that has now paved its way to homosexuality, changing sex, pornography and other

dwelling concepts, continues to be an intricate matter of concern. This is merely because of the fact that the sacred concept is now being replaced with its charm and pleasure which not only results in unstable relationships, but it also poses great risk of diseases and pregnancies. Studies have revealed alarming rates of sexual behavior amongst teenagers along with the diagnoses of STDs and HIV, as well as early teen pregnancies and the consequent abortions and miscarriages. For this reason, it is highly essential to educate the young minds and acquaint them with the truth about sex which is not limited to pleasure and satisfaction. While 16 might be the age of consent in many states, refraining teenagers to have legal sexual intercourse is not the actual solution. Although the state has set a standard legal sex age, individuals still continue to adhere to these practices quite early. Therefore, even if it becomes legalized, sexual practices won't stop. Similarly, if teenagers are disallowed to have legal sexual intercourse, they will still continue to practice it. Therefore, the best way is to educate them making them understand the value of sex when it comes to relationship and commitment along with highlighting its risks and consequences. When this is implemented by the sex educator along with parents and other mature members of the society, the associated harm with sex will certainly decline.

REFERENCES

Black, K. I., Gupta, S., Rassi, A. (2010). Why do women experience untimed pregnancies? A review of contraceptive failure rates. *Best Practice & Research Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 24: 443-455.

Hedman, A. (2008). Relationship between comprehensive sex education and teen pregnancy in MN. *American Journal of Health Studies*, 23(4): 185-194

<https://assignbuster.com/good-example-of-should-teenagers-be-allowed-to-have-legal-sexual-intercourse-argumentative-essay/>

Martinez, G., Copen, C. E., Abma, J. C. (2011). Teenagers in the United States: Sexual activity, contraceptive use, and childbearing, 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth. National Center for Health Statistics. *Vital Health Stat* 23(31): 1-34.

Mackay, J. (2001). Global sex: Sexuality and sexual practices around the world. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 16(1): 71-82

Teens, sex and the law [Brochure]. (n. d.) Atlanta: Governor's office for children and families.

Singh, S. & Woog, V. (2005). Evaluating the need for sex education in developing countries: sexual behavior, knowledge of preventing sexually transmitted infections/HIV and unplanned pregnancy. *Sex Education*, 5(4): 307-331.

Thato, R., Jenkins, R. A. & Dusitsin, N. (2008). Effects of the culturally sensitive comprehensive sex education program among Thai secondary school students. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 62(4), 457–469. doi: 10. 1111/j. 1365-2648. 2008. 04609. x