

# Abstinence only sex education assignment

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Abstinence-Only Programs Are Ineffective According to Debra W. Haffner, “ There are no published studies in the professional literature indicating that abstinence-only programs will result in young people delaying intercourse. “(...) In correlation with the growth of teen pregnancy, the desire to experiment with a partner, and the advancement of more effective contraceptives, abstinence-only sex education is not the proper teaching for teenage students. Critics of abstinence-only education propose that merely telling students not to have sex, and expecting them to take note, is unrealistic.

Sources, such as the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a sexual and reproductive health and research organization, show that nearly half of all adolescents will engage in some sort of sexual behavior before they leave high school. Therefore, it is vital to provide students with the proper knowledge they need to make responsible decisions. (...) Gloria Feldt, President of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, says, “ When teens have access to the full range of reproductive health care services, including medically accurate sexuality education, they are more likely to make responsible choices about sex and sexuality. (...) The increase of teenage pregnancy has placed a burden upon the argument for non-abstinent-only education. As indicated by the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, every year an estimated 850, 000 teenagers become pregnant. These statistics also conclude that more than one-third of girls will become pregnant before the age of twenty, and that 78 percent of these pregnancies are unintended.

Comprehensive sex education helps delay sexual intercourse between teens by offering them the tools they need to avoid unintended pregnancy. (Berne 91) “ Research done by Douglas Kirby for the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy shows that programs that provide teenagers with comprehensive sex education that includes a discussion of contraception in addition to abstinence can be effective in helping teens to delay sexual activity, to use contraceptives when they do become sexually active, and to have fewer partners.

In contrast, abstinence-only messages have been shown to reduce contraceptive use among sexually active teens, putting them at risk of pregnancy and STD's, including HIV. ” A recent regression of teen pregnancy is due to the higher use of contraception. A 2004 report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention accredits 53 percent of the decrease in teen pregnancy to increased abstinence and 47 percent to increased use of contraceptives. Berne 95) According to an analysis released by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy in May 2006: more than one in eight sexually experienced teen boys have caused a pregnancy, teen girls who first have sex before the age of fifteen are more likely to become pregnant rather than a girl having sex after fifteen, and teens who use a form of contraceptive the first time they experience intercourse are less likely to be involved in a pregnancy than those who do not. (Berne 112) To assume that a student is not going to experiment with his/her sexual behavior is to question human nature. Society should encourage adolescents to delay sexual behaviors until they are ready physically, cognitively, and emotionally for mature sexual relationships and

their consequences,” says the National Commission on Adolescent Sexual Health, a part of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States. “ Society must also recognize that a majority of adolescents will become involved in sexual relationships during their teenage years. “(...) Young people tend to explore their sexuality from a larger background that involve dating, relationships, and intimacy; not just sexual intercourse. Haffner 142) Because abstinence-only programs fail to provide teens with proper information needed to protect themselves, they are denying teens the full range of information on the subject of human sexuality. (...) Wall Street Journalist mocks the accusations of ‘ mixed messages’ against comprehensive sex education when she verbalizes, “[...] we constantly convey nuanced messages to our kids. We tell our teenagers not to drink and drive; but if they do drink, please call us to take them home. (...) There are also factors which lead to early decisions to engage into intercourse that sexual education programs cannot influence. Such factors include: early physical development, lower age of menarche, or a higher testosterone level, older siblings, single-parent household environments, or mothers with lower educational attainment. However, comprehensive programs can latently change a teen’s perception of their friend’ and siblings’ sexual behaviors. (Haffner 142) Over the years, new forms of contraceptives have been released to allow the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

From female hormone stimulants, to the male/female condom, to emergency contraceptive B, to abstinence, all are ways of protecting oneself from the possibilities of unplanned parenthood and infections. “ You can send a

message that abstinence is the best choice for a variety of reasons-it's the only 100 percent effective way to prevent pregnancy and disease," says Isabel Sawhill of the Brookings Institution. " But we also need to educate teens about birth control and should not be squeamish about the difference between education and promoting. (...) Detractors pass off the idea that teaching adolescents how to use condoms and other safe sex methods serves to encourage sexual activity. In 1997, a study by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS that examined 22-HIV prevention and comprehensive sex education programs found that due to the teachings of these programs, the number of sexual partners was reduced and the start of sexual activities was delayed. Each program was also effective at reducing the rising increase of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. (...)

In 1981, Congress approved Title XX, the Adolescent Family Life program. " Title XX provides grants to school-and community-based organizations that teach sexual abstinence. " People who support the abstinence-only sex education credit the programs with the decrease in teen pregnancies. (...) " According to Focus on the Family, only 14 percent of Americans say that it is acceptable for teenagers to have sex as long as they have access to birth control. The group decries programs that promote safe sex in schools or distribute contraceptives to teenagers. Without parental input, [...]officials hand out condoms and pills to kids who then assume they're expected to use them'. " However, in a poll taken in 1999 by Advocates for Youth and the Sexuality Information and Education council of the United States, 90 percent of those responded said information about contraceptives should be given to juniors and seniors in high school. Then, 95 percent also added that

abstinence should be discussed. (...) Supporters of comprehensive sex education say that teens have the right to access the accurate and reliable information needed to remain protected. (...)

With the rising of teen pregnancy, the desiring to experiment with one's partner, and the advancing of contraceptives, there is a need to stress comprehensive sex education. New programs including Teen Prevention Education Program is a group of juniors and seniors who are highly educated all year long in teenage sexuality and the problems teens face during adolescence. The program performs workshops to the freshman class in a safe, friendly, and confidential environment. According to an April 1998 Time/CNN survey, teenagers only 7 percent learn about sex education from their parents, while most teens learn about sex from their peers. ...) Because teens get most of their information from their peers, they need to be correctly educated in order not to make mistakes that they will eventually regret. By educating teens about the possible contraceptives they can use if they do decide to engage in sexual activities, they will be properly informed on the possible consequences and where to go if they need help. By blocking out these teachings and only supplying teens with information about abstinence, young people go into the world blind sighted; never knowing what could happen to them.