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Policy Statement on Sexuality Education

Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health finds that comprehensive sexuality education offers the most effective strategy for giving young people the knowledge and skills necessary to make responsible decisions about sexual behaviors and practices. School-based sexuality education plays an important role in helping teens acquire medically-accurate information and make informed decisions, supplementing the role of parents, physicians and other health care providers, religious institutions and other adults in the community. Whenever possible, open communication with a parent or guardian should be promoted.

Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health finds abstinence-only programs preclude information about the health benefits of contraception are insufficient methods of ensuring the sexual, mental and physical health of adolescents. Abstinence is one aspect of sexuality education but is not, in itself, an adequate means of appropriately educating youth. Without full disclosure of accurate information and skills, adolescents may endanger their health and the health of their partners. Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health finds that sexuality education should be taught in ways that are age—and experience—appropriate throughout a child's education. Comprehensive sexuality education should include factual information and skills-building related to reproductive biology, relationship-building, cultural awareness, sexual abstinence, sexual responsibility, contraceptives, alternatives in birth control, and other issues aimed at prevention of unwanted pregnancies and sexual transmission of infections. Comprehensive sexuality education should be taught by trained educators who are experienced with the use of the instructional methods of relevance to this subject area.