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Is Sex Education Essential? Positive Outcomes; Different Cultures

Children should learn about sex education because as they reach their adolescent years they will engage in sexual activities. In different cultures sex education is taught in different styles, giving young people a different perspective on how things should be done. Sex education is essential to everyone and should be taught in schools. It has enhanced many students in so many ways.

Sex education consists of two main types; Abstinence Only until Marriage Education (AOUME), and Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE). Both styles of sex education aim “[t]o provide children and teenagers with factual information on the health and social risks of sexual practices resulting in teenage pregnancy, abortion, and STIs” (Liew, 706). AOUME teaches students primarily about safe sex, but it’s mostly geared towards young people not having sex until marriage. Many believe that it’s best for students to learn about abstinence only because that’s what will keep them safe. Although this may be a good approach for some, most students prefer taking comprehensive sex education, and some studies have proved how teaching about abstinence only is not effective. “[R]esearchers have found that abstinence-only programs place youth at risk for pregnancy and other STDs” (Stantelli et al., qtd in Freedman-Doan, 247). CSE gives students more knowledge behind sexual activities, different styles of contraceptives, and background information about the different kinds of sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). CSE is effective in preventing pregnancy and lowering STI rates (Lamb, 315). There have been many debates about what kind of sex education should be taught in schools, and most argue for some form of comprehensive sex education.

To add to that, it’s important for all young people to learn about sex education. No matter the age, gender, or ethnic background, it’s important for everyone to learn about this topic. Sex education is

important to all young people because they may engage in sexual activity someday. No matter what age it begins, is important that they have some kind of knowledge about what's going on, and most importantly so they could prepare for it. It's always best to be safe than sorry. Learning about sex education will not only prepare young people for what comes with having sex, but since teens are on the high stream of statistics, this will help lower the pregnancy and STI rates. Teens can help lower STI rate by learning how to reduce their risk of catching anything. This can be done by teens taking a sex education course. For example, in India, researchers been coming up with ideas on different kinds of education to help their country. They've been doing this because they are the second largest country of HIV/AIDS (Tripathi, 3). They explain how teens in their country need to have more knowledge about sex and family planning to help lower these rates. Researchers have done a few studies and they prove how teens who already have knowledge about sex and family planning are prepared for what will happen if they were to conceive, and those who have little knowledge know nothing or aren't prepared for what comes along with this. Also, when teens begin learning about sex, they should be taught to have a choice. Many don't consider the fact that people should have a choice about abstaining from sexual activity.

Now the question is who should teach young people about sex education. It's important the sex education begins at home with parents. Learning about this topic should first come from parents with the birds and the bees talk. Parents can also help by breaking down the basics so they could have a general idea of what sex is. This is so once their child starts going to school, they will have some idea of what's being taught to them. Parents could break down the very general information about this topic, while sex educators dig deeper and go into details about what it is. Sex education should be taught in places such as community centers, schools, churches and at home. Young people should be able to get access to information about sex everywhere in their community. When it comes to the idea of sex being taught in church, many question why and think that's not reasonable. They believe that if sex should be

saved until marriage and if they're taught anything about sex education, it should be to stay abstinent. But what they don't know is that "[A]bstinence-only programs prolongs age of first intercourse, but increases risk of pregnancy and STDs (Bruckner and Bearman 2005)" (Freeman-Doan, 248). Abstinence only programs aren't benefiting teens at all. Learning about sex education in church will help them with the will power to engage in sexual activity safely. "The religious communities can exert a level of social control on individual members' behaviors" (Freeman-Doan, 248).

When it comes to sex education in different cultures, young people are learning and getting a different perspective on what this is. For example, in the American culture adolescents are taught about sex once they reach middle school. As they are learning about this, they may come home with questions for parents, but they may be limited to what they will ask. In the Dutch culture, young people are very open with their parents about this subject. They have open relationships discussing sex, who their boyfriend or girlfriend is, and their parents even approve of their partner spending the night at their homes. Most families in the Netherlands believe that it is best for them to have this open relationship with their child because they will already know what's going on and they would rather their child be safe than out sneaking around. Dutch parents feel as if their teen's sexuality goes through a process, and only they will know when they are ready to engage in any sexual activity. "[T]hey believe young people can self-regulate, provided that they have been encouraged to pace themselves and prepare adequately by using the available means of contraception" (Schalet, 17). I agree with the Dutch culture and how they choose to educate their children about sex. Americans should consider doing things such as the Dutch because this could enhance their child being more open with them. They won't have to worry about their teens hiding anything from them.

Moreover, in the Hispanic culture, sex education is taught in a different way. Most young people don't really learn about sex education until they are already pregnant, and by that time it's too late. "[T]he teenage birth rate among Latinas is the highest of any race or ethnicity and nearly double the

national average (Ryan, Franzetta, and Manlove 2005), and they also have high infection rates for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (Bourdeau, Thomas, and Long 2008)” (Villar and Concha 545). Their culture believe that they shouldn’t learn about sex education because they should be saving themselves until marriage. In the Latino community, learning about sex education is for the parent of the child’s gender. “[Y]oung Latinas described their experience with middle school sex education with frustration; when they tried to ask questions and gain information, they were likely to be cut-off or chastised” (Villar and Concha, 547). This goes to show how sex education is viewed differently in the Latino culture. In America and a few other places around the world, sex education is taught before a teen is pregnant. Although most teens are taught about abstinence only, they still have an idea of what’s going on and methods of birth control.

Sex educators question around what age should children start learning about sex education. Sex education should be taught at as young as 5 years old. It’s important for children to begin learning about sex education at this age so they could know the dos and don’ts. Around this age is when children start going to daycare, and they will realize at potty time that they have different parts. Some children even pull their clothes down and show themselves off, or they play with their different body parts. It’s important that before children even start daycare, they learn about their different body parts from their parents. This will also help the child know if someone touches them the wrong way, they can report back to their parents so the parents could address the issue. As children grow up and move on in school, of course they will learn about the different topics that comes along with sex. Beginning to learn about sex education at a young age is really beneficial to students. Its best they learn young because as they get in school, they will start talking to their friends, and if any of their friends are already having sexual activity, they will ask their friends and may receive the wrong information. It’s best that they begin young at home, and as they’re in school, learn more about the subject so they could receive accurate information. There have been surveys and many studies conducted that asked parents how do they feel

about their child learning about sex education. In one study, 87% of parents agreed that their child should be taught about sex education in school (McKay, 159).

Many argue against schools teaching about sex education because they believe that this will only influence the child to engage in sexually related activities. Some argue that sex education is only harming our society today promoting children to have sex. They say how schools are teaching students to practice safe sex. They believe that this is influencing young people to have sex because they feel as long as they're safe, it's okay. Those arguing for sex education explain how essential it is in a young person's life to learn about sex education to prepare them for the real world. They also explain how children learning about this topic has lowered the pregnancy, abortion, and STI rates. One student says "I honestly think we NEED Sex Education in schools, and maybe girls wouldn't be so quick to get pregnant if they knew the reality of it" (Should Sex Education be taught in schools). Teaching sex education helps prepare adolescents for reality. For a student to say this for themselves goes to show how essential this subject is.

All in all, sex education is essential for everyone to learn. It's a part of our everyday lives, and it's everywhere around us. After doing this research, I learned more reasons for why sex education should be taught and how other cultures using different styles of sex education is enhancing children today. Other cultures should consider adopting these different styles because it could help lower pregnancy and STI rates around the world. It's best that sex education is being taught in schools because it benefits students in many ways. Learning about this subject prepares students for the real world. Many who've already learned about sex education argue that it's important that this subject is a required course because it has enhanced them in various ways. Students deal with peer pressure of friends who are already engaging in sex and may soon begin to engage in the activity themselves. With many young people already having sex, especially in today's society, it's very important that this subject should be taught to all young people.

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