

Official statements of conferences, assemblies, conventions, and other leadership bodies of various faith groups*

Central Conference of American Rabbis

The Central Conference of American Rabbis resolves to support federal, state, provincial, and local legislation to provide for the inclusion of comprehensive and age-appropriate sexuality education in the public schools on all levels (from grade school through high school), while opposing federal, state, provincial, and local funding exclusively for abstinence-only programs.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

We encourage all manifestations of the church to participate in proactive prevention by engaging in age appropriate health and sexuality education paired with Christian spirituality for adults and youth.

Church of the Brethren

Education for family life is appropriate within the public school. It is needed to supplement instruction in the home and church. Public school instruction should include information about the body, sex organs, and the reproductive system, but the emphasis should be on values and relationships. Teachers who are responsible for this task should be well trained and themselves be worthy models of mature and responsible sexuality. The church supports responsible family-life education in the public school as long as the religious commitment of all students and residents of the community is respected.

Episcopal Church

We strongly urge dioceses and congregations to provide a safe, hospitable environment for frank conversation with youth and young adults about human sexuality, to share and teach accurate information, and to promote dialogue. We encourage the members of this Church to give strong support to responsible local public and private school programs of education in human sexuality.

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

People of all ages need information and experience to understand and responsibly live out their sexual identity in the varied relationships of their lives — as child or parent, sister or brother, spouse, friend, co-worker, neighbor, or stranger. This church affirms the importance of ordering society and educating youth and adults so that all might live in these relationships with mutual respect and responsibility. Education about sexuality should emphasize monogamy, abstinence, and responsible sexual behavior, as well as practices intended to prevent the transmission of disease during sexual intercourse.

Islam

From the Muslim Women's League:

Explaining anatomy and the changes one's body experiences during puberty are essential for enabling young people to grow up with a healthy self-image. Also, in an age where sexual activity in many countries begins at an early age, Muslim adolescents must be informed to better enable them to deal with peer pressure. Sex education can be taught in a way that informs young people about sexuality in scientific and moral terms. Regardless of the challenges of each society, young people must be adequately informed. Also, in some Muslim communities, individuals are encouraged to marry at young ages. They need to be educated regarding sexuality prior to the marriage such that they know what to expect and can consider their options for birth control prior to consummating the marriage.

Jewish Council for Public Affairs

The JCPA believes that public schools have an obligation to provide young people with accurate and effective sexuality education and, therefore, that current, ineffective abstinence-only-until marriage sexuality programs in public schools should be replaced by comprehensive, medically accurate, age-appropriate sexuality education that does not promote any particular religious viewpoint on sexuality.

Mennonite Church USA

We call on pastors and congregational leaders to address issues of sexuality and appropriate sexual expression in sermons, in Sunday school classes, and in premarital counseling. We commit ourselves to provide Christian education about human sexuality for both young and old and to foster understanding of various means by which pregnancy can be prevented when it is not desired.

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

We support the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Surgeon General in planning and implementing comprehensive school health education that includes age and developmentally appropriate sexuality education in all grades as a part of human growth and development curriculum for youth. We call upon state legislatures to require that all schools provide comprehensive kindergarten through twelfth grade human growth and development education that is complete, factual, accurate, free of bias, and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability.

The United Methodist Church

We recognize the continuing need for full, positive, age-appropriate and factual sex education opportunities for children, young people, and adults. The Church offers a unique opportunity to give quality guidance and education in this area. Children, youth, and adults need opportunities to discuss sexuality and learn from quality sex education materials in families, churches and schools.

Faith statements continued on other side...

* For citations to the sources of these statements, contact IRCRC at info@ircrc.org or 877-441-5797.

Unitarian Universalist Association

We urge member congregations to advocate the availability of comprehensive, objective, unbiased, up-to-date, age-appropriate, sexuality education curricula in public schools, including information about:

- The reproductive system and its functions;
- The proper use of all forms of contraception, including the option of abstinence;
- Sexually transmitted diseases, their prevention and treatments;
- Sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual harassment, rape (including date rape), and incest, as well as their prevention and treatment through counseling, information, and resources;
- Pregnancy counseling and options including information about organizations such as Planned Parenthood and Birthright.

United Church of Christ

Sex education beginning early in elementary school, as called for by the Surgeon General, is a major component of the effort to contain the AIDS pandemic. Curricula need to address the physical, social and ethical nature of human sexuality and teach skills for responsible personal decision-making. Government funding of research, service, education, treatment and prevention must become a global priority.

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

We...

- encourage parents to talk to their children about sexuality and sexual health in a Conservative Jewish context;
- call upon the U.S. Congress to cease funding of abstinence only education;
- oppose funding of abstinence only education on federal, state, provincial and local levels;
- encourage the support of the inclusion of components of age appropriate comprehensive sex education in public schools.

How You Can Help

IN INDIANA—*Prevention First*

Learn about **Prevention First** legislation which calls for medically accurate information in sex education and informing parents about what is *not* being taught in abstinence-only classes. Sign the **Prevention First** petition and urge your Indiana legislators to support this common-sense approach. Go to:

www.ircrc.org/preventionfirst.html

IN THE NATION—*People for REAL*

Join the **People of Faith for REAL** campaign! Encourage our nation's leaders to support programs that provide honest, medically accurate, complete, age-appropriate sex education. As people of faith, we believe it is a moral imperative to provide children and teens with all the information they need to make responsible and informed decisions about their health. Learn more and sign the **People of Faith for Real** petition at:

www.ircrc.org/real.html

The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice is a national organization of 40 religious groups and faith traditions committed to preserving reproductive choice as an integral part of religious freedom. Perspectives in this document come from both RCRC member and non-member faith organizations. For more information contact the Indiana affiliate:



Indiana Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (IRCRC)
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Religious Communities and Sexuality Education

► **In the home** ► **In congregations** ► **In schools**

Major faith traditions representing millions of Americans support comprehensive sexuality education.

Many faith groups view sexuality as a natural and positive part of God's creation. They want to help young people learn how to make informed, responsible decisions and develop into sexually healthy adults. Concerned about high rates of teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, and date rape, many faith groups are encouraging congregations to develop comprehensive sexuality education programs. Also, many are advocating for better sexuality education in public schools.

Also, in keeping with our nation's constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion, many faith groups oppose civil laws that would impose specific religious views about sex education on all Americans.

Read
official
statements
of various
faith
groups