

CAPITOL FACTS & FIGURES

● ● ● HEALTH

Sex Education in Schools

High rates of sexually transmitted disease and teen pregnancy have led states to enact a wide range of sex education programs in schools.

- Twenty-one states and Washington, D.C. mandate sex education in public schools.
- Twenty-six states stress and 11 states cover abstinence in schools.
- Twelve states require medically accurate information be taught in schools.¹

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reviewed the curriculum of sex education in public schools in 2010 for 11 core topic areas for sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders and eight core topics for high school freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors.

- The percentage of students who were taught the 11 topics in sixth through eighth grades ranged from 12.6 percent in Arizona to 66.3 percent in Hawaii.
- The percentage of high school students who were taught the eight topics ranged from 45.3 percent in Alaska to 96.4 percent in New Jersey.
- Eleven states—Alabama, Arizona, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Washington—showed statistically significant lower rates of sex education from 2008 to 2010 for students in grades six through eight measured on the 11 topic areas. No state showed statistically significant higher rates from 2008 to 2010.
- One state, Alabama, showed statistically significant lower rates for high school students measured on eight topic areas from 2008 to 2010. Two states, Idaho and Nevada, showed statistically significantly higher rates of sex education.²

Decreasing HIV, STD and pregnancy rates suggest the important role sex education plays in promoting teen health.

- The current rate of teen pregnancy is historically low at 39.1 births per 1,000 females. The U.S. rate, however, is still more than three times higher than Canada, Germany and Italy.³
- Nearly half of the 19 million new STD infections reported in the U.S. are among 15- to 24-year-olds.⁴
- According to the CDC, an estimated 8,300 adolescents in the 40 states that provided data had HIV in 2009.⁵



Core Sex Education Topics ▶

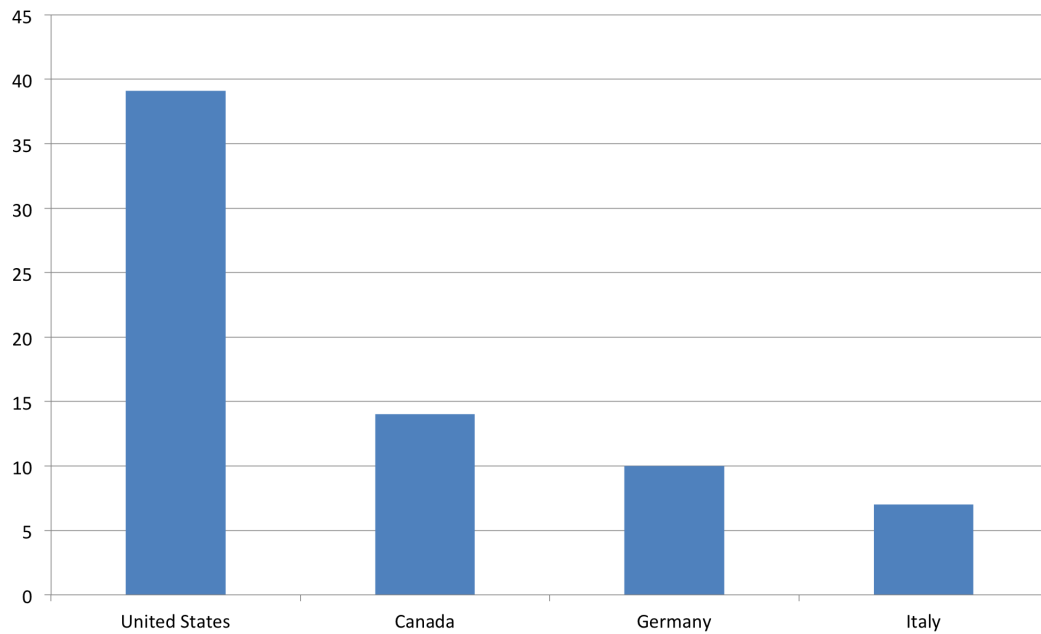
The 11 core topics areas for sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders are:

- Differences between HIV and AIDS
- How HIV and other STDs are transmitted
- How HIV and other STDs are diagnosed and treated
- Health consequences of HIV, other STDs and pregnancy
- Benefits of abstinence from sex
- How to prevent HIV, other STDs and pregnancy
- How to access valid and reliable health information, products and services
- Influences of media, family, and social and cultural norms on sexual behavior
- Communication and negotiation skills
- Goal-setting and decision-making skills
- Compassion for people living with HIV and AIDS

The eight core topic areas for high school students are:

- Relationship among HIV, other STDs and pregnancy
- Relationship between alcohol and other drug use and risk for HIV, other STDs and pregnancy
- Benefits of abstinence from sex
- How to prevent HIV, other STDs and pregnancy
- How to access valid and reliable health information, products and services
- Influences of media, family, and social and cultural norms on sexual behavior
- Communication and negotiation skills
- Goal-setting and decision-making skills

World Teen Pregnancy Rates per 1,000 females



Sondik, Edwards J., Jennifer H. Madans, and Charles J. Rothwell. "Teenagers in the United States: Sexual Activity, Contraceptive Use, and Childbearing, 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Oct. 2011. Web. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_031.pdf.

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¹Guttmacher Institute. "Sex and HIV Education." May 2012. http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_SE.pdf.

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "HIV, Other STD, and Pregnancy Prevention Education in Public Secondary Schools — 45 States, 2008–2010." April 6, 2012. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6113a2.htm>.

³Sondik, Edwards J., Jennifer H. Madans, and Charles J. Rothwell. "Teenagers in the United States: Sexual Activity, Contraceptive Use, and Childbearing, 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Oct. 2011. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_031.pdf.

⁴Center for Disease Control and Prevention. "Sexually transmitted disease surveillance 2009." Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2010. <http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats09/default.htm>.

⁵Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Sexual Risk Behavior: HIV, STD, & Teen Pregnancy Prevention." July 12, 2011. <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/sexualbehaviors>.



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Sex Education in Schools

State	Percentage of public secondary schools in which prevention topics were taught in a required course in grades 6,7,8, 2010 ¹	Percentage of public secondary schools in which prevention topics were taught in a required course in grades 9,10,11,12, 2010 ¹	Sex Education Mandated ²	Abstinence ²	Medically Accurate ²
Alabama	44.8	75.7		Stress	
Alaska	23.6	45.3			
Arizona	12.6	50.9		Stress	
Arkansas	59.7	84.9		Stress	
California	47.5	84.4		Cover	X
Colorado	NA	NA		Stress	X
Connecticut	39	80.2			
Delaware	45.2	93.3	X	Stress	
District of Columbia	NA	NA	X		
Florida	49	71.5		Stress	
Georgia	NA	NA	X	Stress	
Hawaii	66.3	81.7		Cover	X
Idaho	40.1	83.2			
Illinois	NA	NA		Stress	
Indiana	54.7	84.7		Stress	
Iowa	41.4	66.9	X		X
Kansas	39	71.2			
Kentucky	44.8	90.6	X	Cover	
Louisiana	NA	NA		Stress	
Maine	42.2	78.1	X	Stress	X
Maryland	57.7	92.1	X	Cover	
Massachusetts	40.8	72.2			
Michigan	39.5	76.3		Stress	X
Minnesota	36.3	73.5	X	Cover	
Mississippi	36.4	86.3		Stress	
Missouri	47.3	84.5		Stress	
Montana	41.6	67.9	X	Cover	
Nebraska	35.9	63.6			
Nevada	65.5	94.9	X		
New Hampshire	43.4	82.9			
New Jersey	64.3	96.4	X	Stress	X
New Mexico	NA	NA	X	Cover	
New York	66.3	92			
North Carolina	44.7	70.9	X	Stress	X
North Dakota	39.7	70.5	X	Cover	
Ohio	48.6	80.6	X	Stress	
Oklahoma	43.2	51.1		Stress	
Oregon	40.1	84.3	X	Stress	X
Pennsylvania	39.9	83.6			
Rhode Island	54.3	81.8	X	Stress	X
South Carolina	58.5	83.8	X	Stress	
South Dakota	27.6	48.1			
Tennessee	40.8	82.1	X	Stress	
Texas	49.1	73.5		Stress	
Utah	41.6	73.3	X	Stress	X
Vermont	39.4	80.3	X	Cover	
Virginia	53.5	78		Cover	
Washington	43.3	83.4		Stress	X
West Virginia	62.3	91.1	X	Cover	
Wisconsin	51.3	79.9		Stress	
Wyoming	37.8	65.1			
State Median	43.3	80.3			

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "HIV, Other STD, and Pregnancy Prevention Education in Public Secondary Schools — 45 States, 2008–2010." April 6, 2012. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6113a2.htm>.

²Guttman Institute. "Sex and HIV Education." May 2012. http://www.guttman.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_SE.pdf.