

# APPROACHES TO SEX EDUCATION

Comprehensive Sex Education Sexual Risk Reduction		Sexual Risk Avoidance Education Optimal Sexual Health Education	
Abstinence-Plus		Abstinence-Based	Abstinence-Centered Abstinence-Focused (Abstinence-Only)
Focuses on reducing risks, “safer” sex		Focuses on avoiding risks, keeping students safe	
Dual message- Guides students to choose abstinence (“which can mean different things to different people”) or consensual sexual activity using contraception		Directive message- Guides students to choose abstinence (delaying all sexual activity until “long-term, mutually monogamous relationship” (CDC), ideally marriage)	
Rights-based, pleasure-based (sexual response system)		Science-based, health-based (reproductive system)	
Advocates for contraception- emphasizing effectiveness and minimizing ineffectiveness		Educates about contraception- both effectiveness and ineffectiveness or risks (human use reality rates) and side effects	
Teaches consent and negotiation skills for sexual activity		Teaches refusal and resistance skills for sexual avoidance	
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) are “normal and common”		STIs or Sexually Transmitted Diseases can cause serious health concerns and can/should be avoided	
Instruction segmented for students of different sexual orientation and gender identity, “LGBTQ-focused” lessons		Information provided and risk avoidance promoted for all students, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity	
Abortion presented as a “safe, reproductive health care choice” and “right”		Abortion, if discussed, presented with state laws, physical and emotional risks (emphasizing parenting and adoption)	
Parent relationship, knowledge and relevancy undermined; Students encouraged to seek other help		Parent involvement, communication and authority upheld; Family values supported	
<b>Both approaches seek to provide students:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Medically-accurate, age-appropriate, culturally-sensitive, and trauma- informed instruction</li><li>• Evidence-based or evidence-informed content and classroom methodology</li><li>• Healthy, supportive relationships, including communication skills</li><li>• Positive futures, including goal-setting and decision-making skills</li><li>• Sexual abuse, harassment and dating violence prevention</li><li>• Compassionate support for those who have been harmed in the past</li></ul>			