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 Engaging in sexual activity brings in consequences. In the U.S. today, teenage pregnancies occur in nearly 1 in 4 girls, while young people below 25 acquire nearly half of the total reported sexually transmitted infections (STI). Moreover, with nearly half of high school students have engaged in sexual activity before graduating, there have been a range of sex-education programs across the nation trying to address these issues (NCSL, 2019). Current sex-education programs range from abstinence only programs to medically accurate and age appropriate sexuality education that lasts until 12th grade. Many of these programs are tailored according to state regulations or what local districts or individual teacher deem appropriate for their students (NPR, 2011). Sex-education finds overwhelming support (90%) from parents when it comes to addressing birth control, HIV issues, and abstinence in high school, yet when it comes to middle school, the support falls to 75%, yet only 36% Americans support abstinence only programs (Planned Parenthood, 2012).

Human sexuality is a sensitive issue with complex emotions relating to sexual behavior and relationships associated with it. Therefore sex-education programs have to integrate issues such as positive body image, healthy relationships, technology and media literacy, and emerging issues like sexting into the curriculum rather than solely health outcomes such as STD/HIV prevention or abstinence. Moreover, psychosocial risks and protective factors associated with sexual activity and sexual behavior also have to be incorporated to inculcate healthy and accurate knowledge, attitudes, values, and norms (Planned Parenthood, 2012). Furthermore, parents should be allowed to opt their children out of topics that may conflict their religious or moral values. Additionally abstinence programs, despite not proven to delay sexual activity or prevent associated risks, should still be taught to them in a manner that encourages them to gain self-discipline and feel empowered to self-regulate their sexual activities.

# References

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