



The July, 2012, U.S. House of Representatives report *has confirmed abstinence, not comprehensive sex education, as the better approach.*

“Sexual Risk Avoidance (SRA), an abstinence-centered approach to sex education, is the best public health strategy to prevent unintended teen pregnancies and sexually-transmitted infections (STI’s).” (p.1)

“This report demonstrates that SRA is the better approach because it **comports with the latest research** on teenage behavior and fosters healthy development. CSE (Comprehensive Sex Education) **has failed to lower rates of teenage pregnancy** because it assumes that preteens and teens are fully capable of making decisions without adequate guidance.” (p.2)

“...a clear understanding of teenage behavior is why public health campaigns against teenage drinking, smoking and reckless driving have been relatively successful. They are not value neutral when it comes to teenage choices, especially those with public health ramifications.” (p.2)

“...proponents of CSE...believe that teens should not have sex, but cannot be discouraged from having it. Therefore, they simply need medically accurate information and access to contraception to protect them. Thus equipped, CSE proponents believe that teens will make sound choices about their sexual behavior. Yet, despite decades of research and a massive infusion of Federal funds into this strategy, there is little evidence to support that claim.” (p.5)

RECOMMENDATIONS OF REPORT (in part)

- “Adopt sexual risk avoidance (SRA / abstinence based) as a better approach to teenage pregnancy prevention. Sexual risk avoidance should be the primary Federal strategy in preventing teenage pregnancy and STIs.” (p.14)
- “Support parents or other guardians in their responsibility to be the primary sex educators of their children. Federal policy efforts should always support a positive relationship between parents and their children.” (p.14)
- “Develop a national strategic plan to incorporate the SRA approach into all programs designed to prevent and treat teenage pregnancy.” (p.14)

“CSE has done little in the last 20 years to impact rates of teenage pregnancy. An updated approach, SRA, is demonstrating effectiveness by emulating **theory-based and successful** public health campaigns helping teens set and keep **short-and long-term goals**, and involving parents. Critically important to effectiveness, SRA is also age appropriate.” (p.1&2)

Sexual Risk Avoidance (SRA / abstinence education)	Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE)
Emphasizes risk <i>avoidance</i> (p.1)	Emphasizes risk <i>reduction</i> (p.1)
<i>More grounded</i> on most current adolescent behavioral theory and research (p.11)	<i>Inconsistent</i> with behavioral and neuroscientific research* (p.7)
Sets <i>realistic and age-appropriate</i> expectations for teens and shows how to avoid risky behaviors (p.1)	Designed to teach all options related to sexual behavior. <i>Non-directive in helping teens</i> make healthy choice(s) (p.1)
Better reflects current research that shows teens are <i>helped by support of parents and other guardians</i> (p.1)	Assumes that preteens and teens are fully capable of making decisions <i>without adequate guidance</i> (p.2)
<i>Based on programs effective</i> in reducing teen car accidents, underage drinking, tobacco use (p.1)	<i>Value-neutral</i> approach is <i>ineffective</i> (p.1)
Sexual behavior is an <i>inherently moral activity</i> (p.3)	<i>Value-neutral</i> approach is <i>ineffective</i> (p.1)
Maintains teens can, do, and will <i>make choices</i> to avoid risky behaviors (p.2,8,11,14)	Maintains teen sexual behavior is <i>inevitable</i> (p.1)

* “Expecting preteens and teens to assess and reduce (sexual behavior) risks by drawing on the medical information learned in a few sessions of CSE is **inconsistent with both behavioral and neuroscientific research.**” (p.7)

CONCLUSION OF REPORT

“Research suggests that building the Federal effort to prevent teenage pregnancy on the SRA model would lead to a greater success than the CSE model has been able to achieve over the past two decades.” (p.2)

Full U.S. House of Representatives’ Report - *A Better Approach to Teenage Pregnancy Prevention: Sexual Risk Avoidance Prepared by Majority Staff, Committee on Energy and Commerce, July 2012*

http://gallery.mailchimp.com/e71e76ba0a0760415775e4352/files/A_better_approach.pdf

IFI’s summary of U.S. House of Representatives’ Report

http://gallery.mailchimp.com/e71e76ba0a0760415775e4352/files/A_better_approach.pdf

