

The Family Life & Human Sexuality—Middle School

Families and Teachers—Partners in Education

All students in grades six, seven, and eight participate in comprehensive health education instruction for one quarter of the year. The 3–5-day *Family Life and Human Sexuality Unit* is one of several units taught during health education. This unit is based on Maryland State Health Education standards and is required by Maryland State regulations.

What are the goals of these lessons?

AACPS believes that families should take the lead in all learning relating to family life and human sexuality. This partnership between the school and the family ensures your student is provided with the most respectful and appropriate information so that they understand and appreciate what is happening during this very important time in their lives.

Our goals are to:

- support families as the primary sexual educators
- promote healthy attitudes on human sexuality
- encourage abstinence as the safest, healthiest choice for adolescents
- counteract negative messages about sexuality portrayed in the media
- help students navigate through early adolescence—a time of significant change in growth and development

Are students taught separately?

No. Each grade level is taught in an educational setting with all students learning the material simultaneously.

Are you showing pictures?

Yes. We use a variety of appropriate visuals to enhance the lessons. All materials have been approved through the AACPS Materials of Instruction review process and include:

- simplified illustrations/animations showing the changes to the human body that occur during puberty, including the menstrual cycle
- detailed illustrations and cross sections of the human anatomy and reproductive system, labeled with appropriate terminology illustrations of the reproductive process, including fetal development and childbirth.

Can I review the curriculum?

Yes. Families are invited to attend the Family Life and Human Sexuality Preview Night at school to review the information and materials used in these units. If you cannot attend the school meeting, you may schedule a time to meet with the Office of Health, Physical Education, and Dance.

What if I don't want my child to participate in these lessons?

If you are not comfortable with the unit curriculum or the materials, return the opt out letter to your school. Your student will receive appropriate alternative instruction in a different setting.

Tips for talking to your student about sexuality

- Let your child know that you are open to talking.
- Listen. Sometimes, the less you say, the more a child will talk.
- Talk about your values regarding sexual behavior.
- Teach your child ways to make good decisions about sex.
- Coach your child on what to say and do to get out of risky situations.
- Start talking early. It will keep lines of communication open throughout your lives together.
- Give correct sexuality information. Children want to get the facts from **you**.
- Take advantage of “teachable moments” to discuss and share your views about human sexuality topics that are part of music, TV, movies, news, or other moments where issues arise.

What do students learn?

Specific outcomes and activities are aligned with the Maryland Health Education Framework at each grade level.

Grade 6

- Describe the physical, social, and emotional changes that occur during puberty.
- Summarize that the onset and progression of puberty varies considerably.
- Describe how puberty prepares human bodies for the potential to reproduce.
- Define sex assigned at birth, gender identity and gender expression.
- Describe ways to show courtesy and respect for others when aspects of their sexuality (such as sexual activity, sexual abstinence, sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity) are different from one's own.
- Identify human reproductive systems including medically accurate names for internal and external genitalia and their functions.
- Describe conception and its relationship to the menstrual cycle and vaginal sex.
- Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.

Grade 7

- Define sexual identity and explain a range of identities related to sexual orientation.
- Explain why it is wrong to tease or bully others based on aspects of their sexuality.
- Identify strategies for respecting individual differences in sexual growth and development, or physical appearance.
- Describe human reproductive systems including medically accurate names for internal and external genitalia and their functions.
- Describe menstruation, fertilization and implantation.
- Identify ways to prevent pregnancy, including not having sex and effective use of contraceptives, including condoms.
- Describe how the effectiveness of condoms can reduce the risk of HIV, and other STIs.
- Apply effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to enhance health.

Grade 8

- Summarize human reproductive systems including medically accurate names for internal and external genitalia and the functions.
- Explain menstruation, fertilization, and implantation.
- Explain sex assigned at birth and gender identity and explain how they may or may not differ.
- Describe sexual identity and explain a range of identities related to sexual orientation.
- Describe how intolerance can affect others when aspects of their sexuality are different from one's own.
- Describe ways sexually active people can reduce the risk of pregnancy.
- Distinguish healthy relationships from unhealthy ones.
- Analyze how peers, family, media, society, culture, and a person's intersecting identities can influence attitudes, beliefs, and expectations about relationships.
- Describe strategies a student might use to end an unhealthy relationship, including involving a trusted adult who can help.

If you have questions or want more specific information,
talk to your child's Health Education teacher or contact the
Office of Health, Physical Education, and Dance at
www.aacps.org/healtheducation.



ANNE ARUNDEL
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DPS/CB 2693/66 (Rev. 3/25)