

The Family Life & Human Sexuality—High School

Families and Teachers—Partners in Education

All students in high school participate in comprehensive Health Education A and B as part of a graduation requirement. The 5–6-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 believe 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.

Health Education A

- Compare and contrast characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Summarize the importance of talking with parents and other trusted adults about issues related to relationships, growth and development, sexual decision-making, and sexual health.
- Justify the benefits of respecting individual differences in aspects of sexuality, growth and development, and physical appearance.
- Differentiate between sex assigned at birth, gender identity, and gender expression.
- Define sexual identity and explain a range of identities related to sexual orientation.
- Identify how school and community programs and policies can promote dignity and respect for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.
- Summarize human reproductive systems including medically accurate names for internal and external genitalia and their functions.
- Summarize the relationship between the menstrual cycle and conception.
- Identify sexual behaviors, including solo, vaginal, oral, and anal sex, that impact the risk of unintended pregnancy and potential transmission of STIs, including HIV.
- Identify how systemic oppression and intersectionality impacts the sexual health of communities of color and other marginalized groups.
- Summarize community services and resources related to sexual and reproductive health.
- Explain the steps to using barrier methods correctly (e.g., external, and internal condoms and dental dams).
- Compare and contrast types of contraceptive and disease-prevention methods.
- Evaluate community services and resources related to sexual and reproductive health.
- Identify the laws related to reproductive and sexual health care services (e.g., contraception, pregnancy options, safe surrender policies, prenatal care).

Health Education B

- Identify the influence of power and cultural differences on interpersonal relationships.
- Analyze ways systemic oppression and intersectionality impact the sexual agency of communities of color and other marginalized groups.
- Summarize common symptoms, or lack thereof, and treatments for STIs, including HIV.
- Demonstrate the steps to using barrier methods correctly (e.g., external, and internal condoms and dental dams).
- Summarize community services and resources related to sexual and reproductive health.
- Evaluate the impact sexually explicit media can have on one's perceptions of, and expectations for, a healthy relationship.
- Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.
- Work cooperatively as an advocate for improving personal, family, and community health.
- Evaluate the effect of media on personal and family health.
- Analyze how the perceptions of norms influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors.
- Demonstrate how to influence and support others to make positive health choices.
- Work cooperatively as an advocate for improving personal, family, and community health.

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.

