Sexuality Education for Students with Disabilities

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In the natural course of life, we humans can be expected to grow and change. We develop and mature over time—our brains, our bodies, the sense of who we are and who we want to be. Development is a beautiful thing, really, exciting and creative, and it makes parents, friends, and teachers look on in awe.

This resource page addresses one aspect of development that’s important not to ignore with children with or without disabilities—the development of sexuality. There’s so much to know and consider on this subject—what sexuality is, its meaning in adolescent and adult life, and the responsibilities that go along with exploring and experiencing one’s own sexuality.

The Basics of Human Sexuality

Human sexuality: What children need to know and when. Knowing what information is age-appropriate for children is important when you’re talking to them about sex. [http://www.plannedparenthood.org/parents/human-sexuality-what-children-need-know-when-they-need-know-it-4421.htm](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/parents/human-sexuality-what-children-need-know-when-they-need-know-it-4421.htm)

Sexuality and Disability

How does disability affect sexuality? The articles below highlight many key issues, including some that may not have crossed your mind. A great site is [www.parentcenterhub.org/sexed/](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/sexed/)

About sex and disability. [http://sexuality.about.com/od/sex_and_disability/Sex_and_Disability.htm](http://sexuality.about.com/od/sex_and_disability/Sex_and_Disability.htm)

Sexuality and young people with disabilities or chronic illness. [http://www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/disabsex.htm](http://www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/disabsex.htm)

Dating and disabilities. [https://www.liveabout.com/sexuality-4145431](https://www.liveabout.com/sexuality-4145431)
The Special Role of the Parent

Parents or guardians are the first and primary sexual health educators of children. What parents say and do can have a powerful influence on the development of healthy sexuality in children. Yet, how many of us squirm a bit, to take on talking about the birds and the bees with our kids? These materials might help us take on the task.

Why offer sex ed?
What parents need to know about sexuality and sexuality education, myths and facts, what does your family believe?
http://parents.teachingsexualhealth.ca/

How to talk with your children about sex.

There’s no place like home…for sex education.
Available in English and in Spanish, at the link below.
http://www.noplacelikehome.org/

The Content to Be Taught

A great deal has been invested in developing curricula and teaching tools that address the many facets of human relationships, from developing social skills and friendships to assuming responsibility for one’s own body, including sexuality. Here, we list resources that are indispensable to those providing sexuality education to young people.

Guidelines for comprehensive sexuality education: K-12.
The curriculum seeks to address both the functional knowledge related to sexuality and the specific skills necessary to adopt healthy behaviors. Rights, Respect, Responsibility reflects the tenets of social learning theory, social cognitive theory and the social ecological model of prevention.
https://3rs.org/3rs-curriculum

A finely tuned library of info, including lesson plans.
SexEdLibrary is also brought to you by SIECUS and connects educators, counselors, administrators, and health professionals with the latest in human sexuality research, lesson plans, and professional development opportunities. Hundreds of lesson plans were analyzed from multiple sources to offer easy access to the very best on such topics as sexual and reproductive health, puberty, abstinence, relationships, sexual orientation, body image, self-esteem, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, unintended pregnancy, and more.
http://www.sexedlibrary.com/

Teaching tools for the classroom.
Lots of great materials for teachers at the link below.
http://www.sexualityandu.ca/teachers

Materials on Specific Disabilities

Living with a disability, chronic illness, or chronic pain doesn’t make a person fundamentally sexually different from anyone. But it can mean that those with disabilities have less access to sex information in general or to
resources specific to their disability. Parents and teachers will find the materials below useful in understanding and addressing how a specific disability may affect sexuality and sexuality education.

Autism spectrum disorders.
http://www.autism.com/individuals/sexualityandautism.htm

Autism spectrum disorders.

Autism spectrum disorders.

Autism spectrum disorders.

Autism spectrum disorders.
https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/you-it/201603/sex-aspergers-autism

Cerebral palsy.
https://www.cerebralpalsy.org/inspiration/barriers/love-without-barriers

Deaf-Blindness.

Intellectual disabilities.
http://www.aamr.org/content_198.cfm

Intellectual disabilities.
http://www.sexualityandu.ca/teachers/teaching_sex_ed_for_youth_with_intellectual_disabilities

Intellectual disabilities.

Intellectual disabilities: Tips for parents.
http://tinyurl.com/yj62nce

Learning disabilities.
http://hpq.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/14/4/601

Learning disabilities.
Learning disabilities.  

Physical disabilities, emotional disabilities, and intellectual disabilities.  
http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=479&Itemid=177

Physical disabilities.  

Spina bifida.  
https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/spinabifida/adult.html#sexual-health

Spina bifida.  
https://www.spinabifidaassociation.org/resource/sexual-health/#18-years

Spinal cord injury.  
http://www.spinalcord.uab.edu/show.asp?durki=21720

Spinal cord injury.  
https://msktc.org/lib/docs/Factsheets/SCI_Sexuality.pdf

Traumatic brain injury.  

Governor’s Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizen’s (GACEC) Project