

# Sex Education:

## *The Parent's Perspective* FACT sheet

**What** Nearly 1,300 parents were interviewed in the first-ever poll of California parents regarding their attitudes about sex education for their children. Regardless of location, politics, religion or education level, California parents overwhelmingly support (89 percent) comprehensive sex education.

**Why** In the face of rising rates of sexually transmitted diseases, and the high costs of teen births, it's more important than ever that students receive age-appropriate, medically accurate, comprehensive information about how they can protect themselves. The findings from this survey should clear the way for wary educators to embrace those comprehensive sex education programs consistent with state law, safe in the knowledge that the vocal minority opposed to comprehensive sex education is indeed a very small minority.

- 80 percent increase in the California rate of chlamydia among young females since 1996<sup>1</sup>
- 65 percent increase in the California rate of gonorrhea among young males<sup>2</sup> and a 90 percent increase among young females<sup>3</sup> since 1996

**Who** The survey was conducted by the Public Health Institute's Center for Research on Adolescent Health and Development. It was funded by a grant from The California Wellness Foundation.

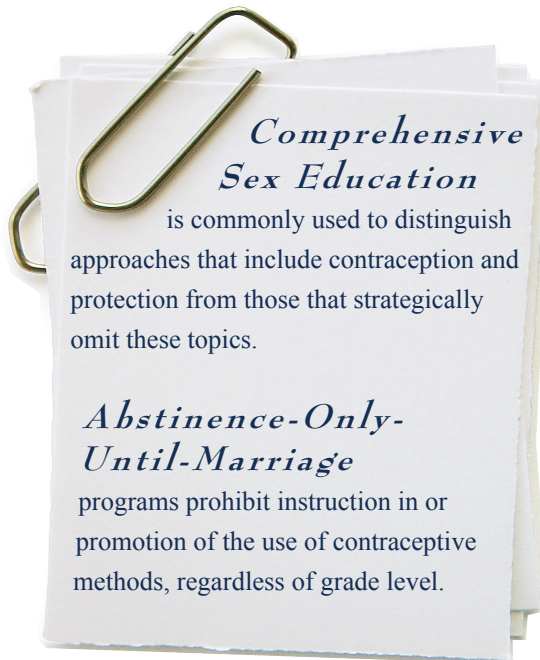
**When** The results are based on telephone interviews conducted by Quantum Market Research during the spring and summer of 2006.

**How** A total of 1,284 parents were surveyed across five socio-geographic regions – North/Mountains, Central Valley, San Francisco Bay Area/Central Coast, Los Angeles County and South.

**The Question** The primary survey question asked a respondent's preference for sex education policy options:

*What do you think teenagers should be taught in sex education classes?*

- ONLY about abstinence, that is, not having sex until marriage*
- ONLY about how to prevent pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted infections if they do decide to have sex*
- BOTH about abstinence AND about how to prevent pregnancies and the spread of sexually transmitted infections if they do decide to have sex*



### Key Findings

- 89 percent of California parents support comprehensive sex education in general
- 96 percent of California parents support comprehensive sex education for high school students
- Support for comprehensive sex education is consistently high regardless of parents' locale, religion, politics, race or education level
- 86 percent of the parents who identified as evangelical Christians support comprehensive sex education
- 71 percent of parents who identified as "very conservative" support comprehensive sex education

1. "Chlamydia, Rates for Females by Age Group, California, 1990-2005." Provisional Data – CA DHS STD Control Branch. July 2006.  
 2. "Gonorrhea, Rates for Males by Age Group, California, 1990-2005." Provisional Data – CA DHS STD Control Branch. July 2006.  
 3. "Gonorrhea, Rates for Females by Age Group, California, 1990-2005." Provisional Data – CA DHS STD Control Branch. July 2006.

# Sex Education:

## *The Parent's Perspective*

ISSUE *backgrounder*

### SB 71

California passed the California Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Act (SB 71) in 2003. This act mandates that if districts choose to provide sex education, it must commence by 7th grade and be age appropriate, factual, medically accurate, objective, and cover all contraception and STD prevention methods approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

### AB 629

The Sexual Health Education Accountability Act (AB 629) passed the Assembly Health Committee on March 27, 2007. Its next stop is the Assembly Appropriations Committee. AB 629 would extend the requirement of SB 71 to state-funded and administered teen pregnancy and STD prevention education programs provided in communities outside of school.

## Costs and Concerns

- In 2004, more than 50,000 teens – four percent of all female teens aged 15 to 19 – gave birth in California, and many more became pregnant.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2004, the average annual cost to taxpayers for each teen birth was \$2,336 to taxpayers, and \$5,211 to society. This yields a total annual cost of \$1.5 billion to taxpayers and a total annual cost of \$3.4 billion to society.<sup>1</sup>
- Chlamydia rates among young adult females (aged 20-24) have increased an alarming 80 percent since 1996.<sup>2</sup>
- Rates of gonorrhea among young adult males and females are also going up, after a decline in the early-1990s. Since 1996, there has been an increase of approximately 65 percent in rates among young adult males<sup>3</sup>, and of approximately 90 percent among young adult females<sup>4</sup>.

1. Constantine, Norman and Carmen Rita Nevarez. No Time for Complacency: Teen Births in California. Center for Research on Adolescent Health and Development. Spring 2006.

2. "Chlamydia, Rates for Females by Age Group, California, 1990-2005." Provisional Data – CA DHS STD Control Branch. July 2006.

3. "Gonorrhea, Rates for Males by Age Group, California, 1990-2005." Provisional Data – CA DHS STD Control Branch. July 2006.

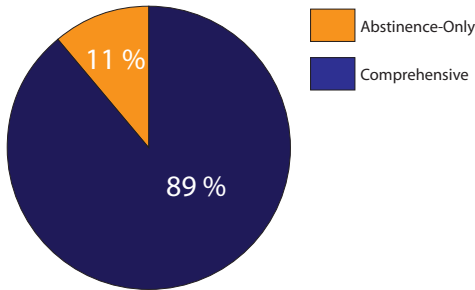
4. "Gonorrhea, Rates for Females by Age Group, California, 1990-2005." Provisional Data – CA DHS STD Control Branch. July 2006.

# Sex Education:

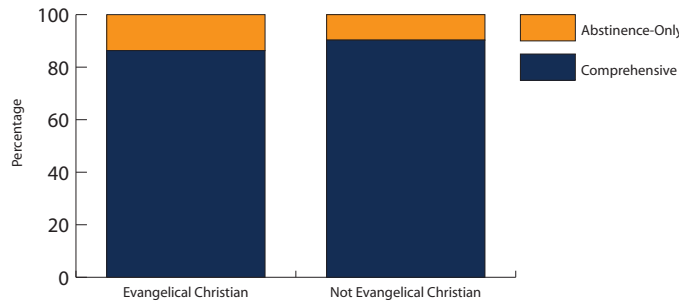
## *The Parent's Perspective*

**SURVEY** results

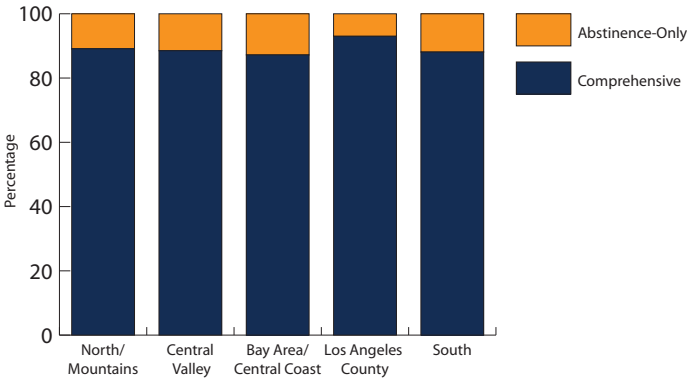
### Overall Support



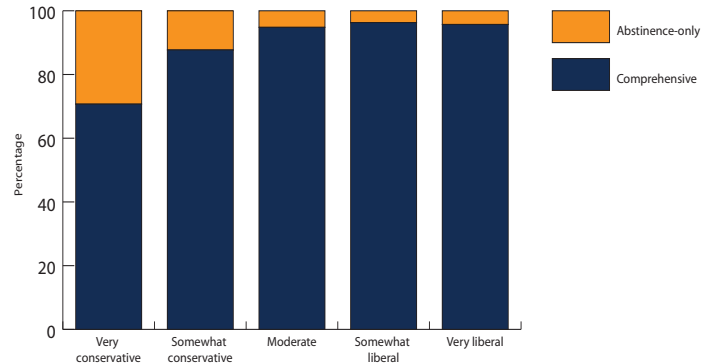
### By Religion



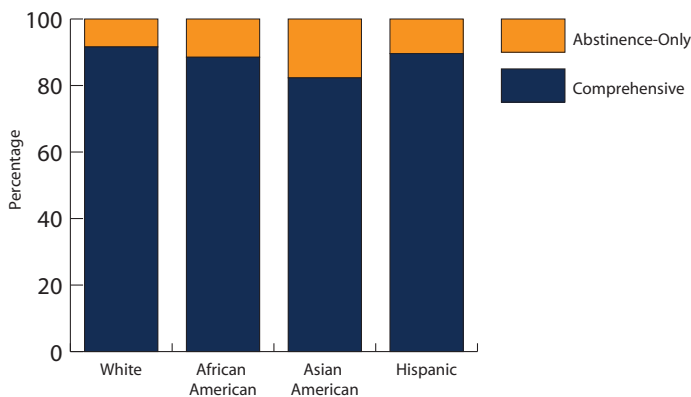
### By Region



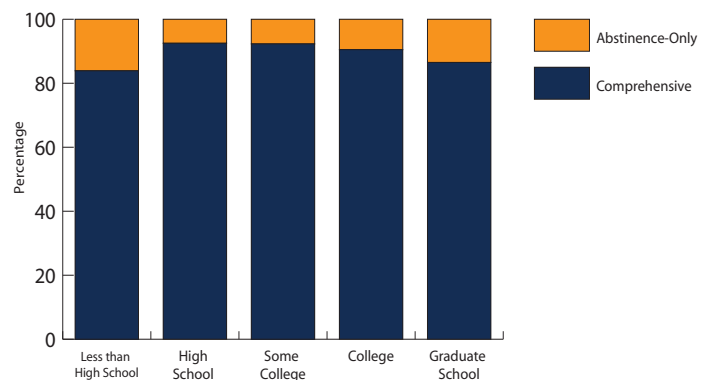
### By Political Ideology



### By Race and Ethnicity



### By Education Level





# Sex Education: *The Parent's Perspective*

## SPOKESPERSONS *list*

### Report Authors

#### **Norman A. Constantine, PhD**

Clinical Professor, School of Public Health  
University of California, Berkeley  
Senior Scientist and Director,  
Center for Research on Adolescent Health and  
Development  
Public Health Institute, Oakland, CA  
Phone: 925.284.8118  
[nconstantine@phi.org](mailto:nconstantine@phi.org)

#### **Petra Jerman, PhD, MPH**

Senior Research Associate  
Center for Research on Adolescent Health and  
Development  
Public Health Institute, Oakland, CA  
Phone: 510.352.2814  
[pjerman@phi.org](mailto:pjerman@phi.org)

### Regional Spokespersons

#### **BAY AREA**

Julie Garcia (East Bay)  
Senior Program Specialist  
Alameda County Public Health - San  
Leandro  
Phone: 510.618.2082  
[julie.garcia@acgov.org](mailto:julie.garcia@acgov.org)

Buu Thai (San Jose)  
Director of Public Affairs - Santa  
Clara & San Benito Counties  
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte  
Phone: 408.297.9255 ext. 217  
Cell: (408) 772-2825  
[buu\\_thai@ppmarmonte.org](mailto:buu_thai@ppmarmonte.org)

Kris Popplewell Ahmed, MPH (San  
Mateo)  
Associate Director  
Teen Pregnancy Coalition of San  
Mateo County  
Phone: 650.367.1937  
Cell: 510.290.5075  
[kris@teenpregnancycoalition.org](mailto:kris@teenpregnancycoalition.org)

#### **CENTRAL COAST**

Sally Rogow (San Luis Obispo)  
Planning and Development Specialist  
TPP Project Director  
Economic Opportunity Commission of  
San Luis Obispo County  
Phone: 805.547.9465  
[srogow@eocslo.org](mailto:srogow@eocslo.org)

#### **CENTRAL VALLEY**

Patsy Montgomery (Fresno)  
Central Valley Director of Public Affairs  
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte  
Phone: 559.488.4908 ext. 301  
Cell: 559.360.4309  
[patsy\\_montgomery@ppmarmonte.org](mailto:patsy_montgomery@ppmarmonte.org)

Pedro Elias (**Spanish-speaking**)  
Central Valley Male Involvement  
Program Coordinator  
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte  
Phone: 559.488-4908 ext. 322  
[Pedro\\_Elias@ppmarmonte.org](mailto:Pedro_Elias@ppmarmonte.org)

#### **LOS ANGELES**

Helen Torres (Los Angeles)  
HOPE Executive Director  
Hispanas Organized for Political  
Equality (HOPE)  
Phone: 213.622.0606 ext. 1  
[htorres@latinas.org](mailto:htorres@latinas.org)

#### **NORTH COAST**

Beth Chaton (Eureka)  
TAPESTRY Program Coordinator  
Humboldt County Office of Education  
Cell: 707.845.2428  
[bchaton@humboldt.k12.ca.us](mailto:bchaton@humboldt.k12.ca.us)

#### **SAN DIEGO & RIVERSIDE COUNTIES**

Alisha Wilkins (Riverside)  
Public Affairs Manager  
Planned Parenthood of San Diego &  
Riverside Counties  
Phone: 951.222.3115  
[awilkins@planned.org](mailto:awilkins@planned.org)

#### **SACRAMENTO & STATEWIDE**

Ana Sandoval (Sacramento)  
Communications Director  
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of  
California  
Phone: 916.446.5247  
Cell: 916.712.6239  
[ana.sandoval@ppacca.org](mailto:ana.sandoval@ppacca.org)

Valerie Small Navarro  
(Sacramento)  
American Civil Liberties Union,  
California Legislative Office  
Phone: 916.442.1036 ext 2  
[vsmallnavarro@acluleg-ca.org](mailto:vsmallnavarro@acluleg-ca.org)

#### **SAN BERNARDINO & ORANGE COUNTIES**

Stephanie Kight (Santa Ana)  
Senior Vice President for Community  
Affairs  
Planned Parenthood, San Bernardino/  
Orange County Affiliate  
Phone: 714.633.6373 ext. 110  
[skight@pposbc.org](mailto:skight@pposbc.org)

# Sex Education:

## *The Parent's Perspective*

### ORGANIZATION *backgrounder*



The Public Health Institute (PHI) is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting health, well-being and quality of life for people throughout California, across the nation and around the world. As one of the largest and most comprehensive public health organizations in the nation, PHI is at the forefront of research and innovations to improve the efficacy of public health statewide, nationally and internationally. One of the programs under the PHI umbrella is the Center for Research on Adolescent Health and Development, which conducts research, evaluation and policy studies on adolescent health and youth development.



Quantum Market Research is an experienced market research firm headquartered in downtown Oakland. Veronica Raymonda, QMR's founding Director, has over 15 years of experience providing market research and consulting services to a broad range of organizations including research organizations such as UCSF, UCB, Kaiser Permanente, The Kaiser Foundation, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, transportation agencies such as BART and AC Transit, newspapers such as The Chronicle and the Novato Advance, and energy companies including PG&E, Southern California Edison, and Florida Power and Light, among others. Throughout the years, QMR's staff has developed proven and effective techniques to successfully interview hard-to-reach communities. Furthermore, QMR's staff has been providing one of the best bilingual research services available in the industry since 1991.