

Formal sex education is one of the few sources of reliable information on sexuality and sexual health for youth. Hundreds of studies have shown that well-designed and well-implemented sex education can reduce risk behavior and support positive sexual health outcomes among teens, such as reducing unintended teen pregnancy and STI rates.

In order for LGBTQ youth to experience comparable health benefits to their non-LGBTQ peers, sex education programs must be LGBTQ-inclusive. Inclusive programs are those that help youth understand gender identity and sexual orientation with age appropriate and medically accurate information; incorporate positive examples of LGBTQ individuals, romantic relationships and families; emphasize the need for protection during sex for people of all identities; and dispel common myths and stereotypes about behavior and identity.

A new issue brief by Advocates for Youth, Answer, GLSEN, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA), and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) highlights the dearth of inclusive sex education programs and the missed opportunities to make a difference for LGBTQ youth.

A Call to Action: LGBTQ Youth Need Inclusive Sex Education urges educators, advocates, and policymakers to take immediate, concrete steps to provide LGBTQ-inclusive sex education for all youth, by:

1. Becoming advocates for LGBTQ-inclusive sex education
2. Ensuring that school is a safe and accepting space for LGBTQ students
3. Implementing LGBTQ-inclusive sex education in schools, community settings and online
4. Talking to their own children and teens about sex and sexuality
5. Working to remove state-level legal and policy barriers to LGBTQ-inclusive sex education in schools and require inclusive programs

This call to action for inclusive sex education comes at a critical time, when different groups within the LGBTQ youth community experience a number of health disparities, including higher rates of HIV, other STIs and unintended teen pregnancy. Many LGBTQ youth also experience stigma, rejection, or even violence in their schools and communities that negatively impacts their health. Research has shown that inclusive sex education can be a powerful tool that helps reduce the stigma and health disparities LGBTQ youth face and create safe, supportive schools.

In acknowledgement of the needs of LGBTQ youth, we, the undersigned organizations, support the Call to Action and ask educators, advocates, and policymakers to make LGBTQ-inclusive sex education the standard for all youth.

1. AIDS Action Baltimore
2. AIDS Alabama
3. AIDS Alabama South
4. AIDS Foundation of Chicago
5. AIDS Project Los Angeles
6. AIDS United
7. American Psychological Association
8. American School Health Association
9. American Sexual Health Association
10. APLA Health & Wellness
11. Asian & Pacific Islander Wellness Center
12. Asian Pride Project
13. Association of Nurses in AIDS Care
14. Campus Pride
15. Cascade AIDS Project
16. Center for Culture, Sexuality and Spirituality
17. CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
18. Family Equality Council
19. FORGE, Inc.
20. Forward Together
21. Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD)
22. Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC)
23. GLAAD
24. Global Justice Institute
25. GSA Network
26. Harlem United
27. Healthy Teen Network
28. HIV Prevention Justice Alliance
29. Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health
30. Lambda Legal
31. Latino Commission on AIDS
32. Legacy Community Health
33. Marriage Equality USA
34. Mazoni Center
35. National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors
36. National Black Justice Coalition
37. National Center for Lesbian Rights
38. National Center for Transgender Equality
39. National Coalition for LGBT Health
40. National Coalition of STD Directors
41. National Council of Jewish Women

42. National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
43. National Network for Youth
44. National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable
45. NMAC
46. PFLAG, Inc.
47. Physicians for Reproductive Health
48. Population Institute
49. Pride Action Tank
50. School-Based Health Alliance
51. Secular Coalition for America
52. SisterLove, Inc.
53. Southern AIDS Coalition
54. The AIDS Institute
55. The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada
56. The Trevor Project
57. Time Out Youth
58. True Colors Fund
59. Trust for America's Health
60. Union for Reform Judaism
61. URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity