The Struggle for Sex Education in New Jersey, 1979–2003:
Policy, Persistence and Progress

by Philip E. Mackey, PhD

Network for Family Life Education
Center for Applied Psychology
Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology
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In September 1983, New Jersey’s 600-plus school districts implemented a State Board of Education policy requiring them to provide locally-developed programs in family life and sex education for students in elementary and secondary schools. The Board’s aim was simple: give young people the opportunity to receive information and skills they need to make responsible decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

The mandate, because it concerned sex and sexuality, caused heated debate at the state level, but it led to development and adoption of school district programs with remarkably little local controversy. It also led to development of the Network for Family Life Education, at first in the Center for Community Education at the Rutgers University School of Social Work and now a program of Rutgers’ Center for Applied Psychology. The Network’s original purpose was to help local districts implement the mandate, but it has since expanded its mission to help improve family life and sexuality education in New Jersey and throughout the country.

Anniversaries prompt both celebration and reflection. The Network celebrated the 20th anniversary of the mandate’s implementation with a conference in October 2003 that drew 450 teachers and other youth-serving adults from all over the state to honor the mandate, assess current programs and plan how to strengthen programs for the future. To facilitate reflection, we asked The Fund for New Jersey to support publication of a history of the struggle for school-based family life education programs in New Jersey and the Network’s role in that effort. We are extremely grateful to Executive Director Mark M. Murphy and the Fund’s trustees for providing that support.

Author Philip E. Mackey holds a PhD in history from the University of Pennsylvania and has written eight books and over 25 articles on American history, sociology and education, including New Jersey’s Public Schools: A Biennial Report for the People of New Jersey (2002). Most of his work for this project involved research in Network archives, which are available for other scholars, students and journalists at the Network’s offices on the Rutgers University Livingston campus.

As a member of the State Board of Education from 1977 to 1982, I chaired the subcommittee on family life education that recommended passage of the policy and later became executive coordinator of the Network. This work has shaped my professional life for over 20 years, and I am glad that there is now a historical record to examine. As this book clearly reveals, we have experienced both wins and losses, but we have made great progress on behalf of young people. This history should inspire us as we continue our work.

Our successes have been due to the efforts of the Network’s small but intensely dedicated staff, our teen editorial boards and thousands of educators, advocates and policymakers, whose vision and hard work have helped public school students receive high quality sexuality education. This history is respectfully and gratefully dedicated to all of them.

Susan N. Wilson, MSEd  
Executive Coordinator  
Network for Family Life Education
Executive Summary

Creation of the Mandate, 1979–1983

In late 1979, when a committee of the New Jersey State Board of Education recommended a state mandate for family life education, it initiated a furious battle. On one side were health officials, college faculty and K–12 educators who thought that schools should provide instruction to help young people make informed decisions about their sexuality. On the other were state education associations, conservative organizations and religious groups with a variety of objections, ranging from usurpation of local control and family responsibilities to claims that discussing sex would promote sexual activity.

In January 1980, the state board voted for the proposed regulations and invited public testimony. The public responded with impassioned testimony at state board meetings in February and April. The board voted to adopt amended regulations at the April meeting, but later made further revisions in response to a New Jersey Senate resolution directing reconsideration. The final version of the mandate, adopted at the state board’s August 1980 meeting, provided that:

- every school district must adopt a family life education policy by September 1981 and implement elementary and secondary programs by September 1983;
- curriculum must be developed locally, with involvement of community members;
- parents may review curriculum and instructional materials; and
- parents may have their children excused from any portion of the program that conflicts with their moral or religious beliefs.

Network Milestones

1981 NJ Network for Family Life Education emerges from 1980 conference
1980 Rutgers Center for Community Education sponsors conference on Family Life Education and the Community
1982–83 Network works with districts and communities to prepare for mandate implementation
1984–85 Network begins annual mini-grant program for teachers
1986 Network launches Family Life Matters newsletter for NJ teachers
1987 Network launches Family Life Matters newsletter for NJ teachers

State and National Milestones

1980 Eagleton poll finds 78% of New Jerseyans favor sexuality education
1982 NJ Supreme Court, in Smith v. Ricci, upholds right of State Board to set mandate
1993 Mandate goes into effect throughout NJ, with little local opposition
Opponents of the mandate continued to fight in the courts, but the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled against them in May 1982, and the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case in November 1982.


The Network for Family Life Education arose as a result of an October 1980 conference sponsored by the Center for Community Education of the Rutgers School of Social Work. Attendees, who gathered to discuss implementation of the mandate, recommended that an organization be formed to clarify and facilitate the process. The Network, composed of 19 organizational members, was formed in February 1981. After securing start-up funds, it hired Roberta Knowlton as its executive coordinator in May 1982.

In the next two years, Knowlton led efforts to maintain liaison with member organizations; advocate for efficient implementation of the mandate and against legislative attempts to abolish it; develop a resource center for educators and administrators; and provide information to schools, community groups and media. The mandate went into effect in September 1983 with little controversy.

Knowlton’s successor was Susan Wilson, who added new programs during the remainder of the 1980s, such as collaboration with the Children’s Defense Fund’s national teen pregnancy prevention media campaign; mini-grants to help teachers implement innovative projects; publication of Family Life Matters, a newsletter for educators and other youth-serving adults; a study of the HIV-AIDS threat and how schools should address it; and HIV/AIDS-prevention training for about 1,300 New Jersey teachers.

The Stress-Abstinence Battles, 1988–2002

Beginning in the late 1980s, opposition to New Jersey's family life education policy took the form of “stress-abstinence” legislation, bills requiring all family life programs and materials to stress abstinence and all discussion of contraception or condoms to include their failure rates. To fight this threat, Susan Wilson built and coordinated the Coalition for Comprehensive Family Life and Sexuality Education, including Network members and other statewide organizations.

The Coalition and its allies fought four main battles against stress-abstinence bills:

© In 1988–89, a bill passed the Assembly by a wide margin, but stalled in the Senate Education Committee.

Network Milestones

1988–89 Network trains 1,278 teachers in HIV/AIDS prevention education

1990 Network begins national circulation of Family Life Matters

1992 Network helps develop nation's first K-3 curriculum, Learning About Family Life

1993 Network sponsors Rutgers Professor William Firestone's study of family life education in New Jersey

1994 Network launches SEX, ETC. newsletter, by teens, for teens

1995 Network helps develop state standard for sexuality and family life education

1988 NJ Assembly passes bill (A-3306) requiring teachers to stress abstinence

1990 State board mandates HIV/AIDS prevention education

1992 Eagleton poll finds 87% of New Jerseyans favor sexuality education

1992–94 NJ Assembly and Senate pass, but governor vetoes, stress-abstinence bills (A-316, S-113); Assembly overrides veto, but Senate does not

In 1992–94, a bill passed both houses handily, but Governor Florio’s veto prevented it from becoming law; the Assembly voted to override the veto, but the Senate did not.

In 1994–95, a bill again sailed through the Assembly, but died in the Senate, when the new administration of Governor Whitman opposed it; this opposition stalled similar bills until 2001.

In 2000–02, a bill passed both houses, and Acting Governor DiFrancesco signed it into law.

**Network Activities, 1990–2003**

While the Coalition fought legislative battles, the Network continued to promote and improve family life education programs. Its activities included:

- annual statewide training conferences for teachers;
- publication of the nation’s first family life curriculum for grades K–3;
- sponsorship of a 1992 survey showing large majorities of New Jersey adults supporting comprehensive programs in all junior and senior high schools;
- sponsorship of a 1993 study of what was actually happening in New Jersey family life education classes and how the program could be improved;
- support for a strong human sexuality and family life curriculum content standard; and
- publication, in 1998, of a study of the ten-year-old recommendations of the New Jersey Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy and suggested steps for implementing them.

But the most important new activities of the 1990s were programs focusing on teen-to-teen sexuality education. In early 1994, the Network began shipping *SEX, ETC.*, a newsletter written by teens, for teens, to New Jersey high schools. The newsletter was so popular that distribution soared from 30,000 copies in 1993–94, to 2.2 million, in 50 states, in 2002–03. This success encouraged staff to develop other components of what they named the National Teen-to-Teen Sexuality Education Project, including Discussion Guides to help adults use *SEX, ETC.* with teens; “student action kits” to help teens conduct campaigns for better sexuality education; and collaborations with national media, such as *Teen People* magazine and MTV’s Web site.

The most significant new component was the *SEX, ETC.* Web site, which debuted in early 1998 and gradually added such features as hundreds...
of articles from the newsletter; an “Ask the Expert” section offering teens candid and timely answers to sensitive questions; a hyperlinked, illustrated glossary; and a teen-to-teen bulletin board. Teens responded enthusiastically and in increasingly high numbers—24,000 per day (a rate of 8.7 million per year) in December 2003. Adding the SEX, ETC. newsletter and other programs, Network staff expected to deliver sexual health messages to over ten million teens in 2003–04.

### The View in 2003–2004

In 2003–04, the future of comprehensive programs in New Jersey seems secure. And, though the stress-abstinence law of 2001 is troubling, it seems likely that Network resources and training programs—and the common sense of the vast majority of New Jerseyans—will limit the damage it can do in the classroom. The Network for Family Life Education has been instrumental in putting New Jersey in its favorable position.
First Attempts

New Jersey first addressed sex education (later called family life education and sexuality education) in January 1967, when the State Board of Education\(^*\) adopted a resolution recommending that every district teach the subject in grades K–12. Local implementation of the policy caused controversy in some communities, with a number of groups—bearing such names as People Against Unconstitutional Sex Education, Movement to Restore Decency and Committee to Eliminate Amoral Sex Education—leading the opposition. In July 1969, the state legislature responded with a resolution calling for an inquiry into the policy. Commissioner of Education Carl Marburger then instructed districts to suspend new sex education programs until completion of the study.

A joint legislative committee conducted the inquiry and issued its non-binding report in April 1970. Local districts should be allowed to continue implementing the state board resolution if they wished, the committee said, but the new curriculum should not be part of local graduation or promotion requirements, and parents should be permitted to excuse their children from the classes.

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The State Board Revisits the Issue

The state board reconsidered sex education in the late 1970s, when the New Jersey Departments of Health and Human Services reported problems arising from teen sexual activity, including unintended pregnancy, abortions and sexually transmitted infections. The reports recommended education programs to address them.

The state board responded in January 1979, when its new president, P. Paul Ricci, of Vineland, appointed a five-person committee to consider possible standards for a statewide sex education program. Ricci named board member Susan Wilson, of Princeton, to chair the committee. In August, the committee reported results of a department of education survey showing that only about half of New Jersey districts—serving about 40 percent of students—had implemented sex education programs, very few of which reached elementary students. Citing national polls showing large percentages of adults in favor of sex education, the committee recommended that the state board mandate family life education programs that would:

- be broad and comprehensive;

\(^*\) New Jersey's State Board of Education is a lay body whose 13 members are appointed to six-year terms by the governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, and serve without compensation. The board's function is to set rules (i.e., policies) to carry out state education law, including the constitutional guarantee of a "thorough and efficient" educational system for all children.
be part of a sequential K–12 health education curriculum;

.allow parents to review curricular materials at school board offices and remove their children from any part of the curriculum that conflicted with their moral or religious views;

.include services for pregnant and parenting teens; and

give districts one year, until September 1981, to develop and implement their programs.

The committee chose the term “family life education” because members felt it would be more palatable to a nervous public than “sex education” and was a more precise name for a program requiring instruction on a wide range of topics. The report envisioned that family life education would include “physical, mental, emotional, social, economic, and psychological effects of interpersonal relationships; human development, sexuality and reproduction; and strengthening family life.”

The state board accepted the committee report and directed department of education staff to draft regulations for consideration at the state board meeting of January 1980. After minor changes, the board approved the draft at its February meeting, subject to public comment. The regulations stipulated that:

.instruction would begin in kindergarten and continue through grade 12;

.approximately 20 specific topics would be covered by the end of grade eight (e.g., importance of families, human reproduction, interpersonal relationships, child abuse, sexual assault, incest and “venereal disease prevention”) and another seven by grade 12 (e.g., sexuality and personality development, preparation for marriage, family planning);

.districts would consult with teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, high school pupils and community members in drafting curricula;

.instructors would be required to hold a teaching certificate in one of nine specified areas; and

.parents would be accorded specific rights, including the option to remove children from programs they objected to.

The Public Takes Sides

The outline of arguments for and against the new mandate became clear during the February 6 state board meeting, when 33 speakers testified about whether the regulations should be published in the New Jersey Register, the first step toward formal adoption. Opponents, including parents, concerned citizens and representatives of Right to Life and Catholic organizations, argued that:

.the state was “usurping”—or “attacking” or “destroying”—family responsibilities;

.sex education was a component of humanism, a secular religion promoted by such organizations as SIECUS and Planned Parenthood, and religion may not be taught in the schools;
Sex education: Topic that stirs passions

- teaching students about the use of contraception would enable them to prey on younger children;
- sex education would include such unwanted subjects as abortion, masturbation, homosexuality, bestiality, frigidity and impotence;
- sex education would encourage young people to make their own moral choices, even though morals are already established by religion;
- sex education would usurp the right of parents to protect their children as they see fit;
- sex education would take away time better spent on basic skills; and
- the mandate would erode local control of curriculum and establish a precedent for additional state-mandated curriculum.

The state's three major education associations, often influential in state policy debates, also attacked aspects of the proposed mandate. The New Jersey School Boards Association and New Jersey Association of School Administrators expressed concerns about loss of local control in setting curriculum. The New Jersey Education Association, the state's powerful advocate for teachers' interests, worried about parental review of curricular materials and the possible precedent for censorship.

Proponents of the mandate at the February meeting included teachers, college faculty, physicians and the two student representatives on the state board. Some observers thought that two speakers, Robert Johnson, MD, director of the Division of Adolescent Medicine at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, and Linda Hendrixson, representing the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists, were particularly eloquent. Proponents argued that:

- sexuality is a natural, lifelong phenomenon that begins at birth, and adults need to help young people understand that it is normal;
- sufficient information can enable students to make informed decisions about their sexuality;
- statistics on teen pregnancy and childbirth show that parents are not doing enough to educate their children about sex, so schools need to help; and
- with more information, young people will be more likely to avoid dangerous behaviors.

Following public testimony, Board members discussed the topic briefly before voting 10-1 to publish the proposed regulations in the New Jersey Register, giving the public until March 26 to submit written opinions to the board.

The Sides Line Up Support

The state board action produced hundreds of written comments, most of them opposing the mandate. Many negative comments showed signs of organized local opposition. For example, many postcards opposing the mandate were postmarked in Pomona, Atlantic County; many letters were from Morganville, a small community in Monmouth County; and 25 letters from Monmouth County supported legislation sponsored by Assemblywoman Marie Muhler (R,
that would cripple the mandate by allowing school districts to implement family life education at their discretion.

In the face of such opposition, proponents of the mandate sought to rally support to their cause. In February, they secured a powerful endorsement from Commissioner of Human Services Ann Klein, who said at a state board meeting that at least half of her departmental budget was required simply because some adults didn’t know how to raise their children “in dignity and safety.” Commissioner of Education Fred Burke was less visible, but he backed the board behind the scenes. Susan Wilson, in her role as chair of the state board committee, was vocal in her support, often citing the needs of young people and the failure of local districts to implement courses in the face of opposition from vocal minorities. State Board President Ricci was also an avid and active proponent.

A more surprising supporter of the mandate in these crucial early months of the debate was the New Jersey Catholic Conference, the voice of the state’s Catholic bishops. The Conference entered the battle on March 19 with a letter to the state board suggesting amended language to strengthen the role of parents or guardians and assure that community members, including representatives of the religious community, would be involved in planning local programs. When the board accepted these recommendations, the Conference announced full endorsement of the mandate, a position that tended to undermine religious arguments of other opponents. New Jersey Catholic schools, in fact, had been operating with their own guidelines for instruction in human sexuality since 1971.

New Jersey newspapers began headlining the proposed mandate at the time of the January state board meeting and continued throughout the spring. One important voice was that of Robert Braun, the influential education reporter and columnist for the Star Ledger, the state’s largest newspaper. Braun’s columns took a negative tone from the outset, as suggested by the January 25 headline, “Sex Ed Spells Trouble When It’s Mandated.” The Star Ledger editorial page took a similar position on February 18. Other newspapers supported the mandate, including the Trenton Times and The Trentonian. On May 1, the prestigious New York Times praised the state board action and deplored its detractors:

Regrettably, opposition to the New Jersey program is growing. And people who oppose it in the name of traditional values may in fact be working toward what they do not want. . . . [T]his precisely the family values that these parents rightly prize which best justify the program. Ignorance insures neither innocence nor social health.

While newspapers conducted a dignified debate on the merits of the mandate, some opponents distributed leaflets expressing and encouraging extremist views. One anonymous alert was headlined “Masturbation, Homosexuality, Incest and Intercourse Course Taught K-12 in Your Local School!!!” The two-page flier charged that mandated classes would use “intention changing techniques” to brainwash children and encourage masturbation and homosexuality through classroom discussions and the showing of explicit films. It urged readers to oppose the mandate in letters to the department of education and state legislators.

A second leaflet, distributed by a group called Citizens for New Jersey, bore the headline, “NJ Schools Pushing Sex Perversions.” It told parents that New Jersey schoolchildren would soon be “attending classes in pornography; given homework assignments to practice masturbation in front of a mirror; given demonstrations of contraceptive techniques . . . [and] viewing simulations of sexual intercourse.” The real goal of the program, the flier charged, was to turn “your sons and daughters into mindless perverts who can be easily manipulated by anyone who offers him or her sexual gratification.” The flier urged readers to support legislation sponsored by State Senator Wayne Dumont (R, Warren) and Assemblywoman Muhler to stop the mandate, so supporters “cannot take our children to hell with them.”
The State Board Listens and Acts

This highly diverse public debate came together in the April 8 state board meeting, which had to be moved to the State Library auditorium to accommodate the large crowd. Over 90 speakers signed up to testify at the nine-hour hearing, most of them opposed to the new regulation. Some opponents, including Senator Dumont, Assemblywoman Muhler and representatives of major education organizations, testified calmly. Others waved petitions (one containing an alleged 5,000 names) or hurled charges that the new regulation would turn children into homosexuals, eliminate traditional courtship rituals and shorten childhood by burdening children with adult information. A minister argued, “Normal kids don’t think about things like this.” More emotional opponents shouted disdain for “secular humanism” and “Godless atheism” or demanded, “How are you going to teach my grandchildren masturbation?” One declared that state board members’ souls would go “to hell for eternity.”

Among supporters of the mandate, Newton student James Leck, representing the New Jersey Association of Student Councils, impressed state board members with his claims of student support for the measure. Also significant was testimony by the Catholic Conference, reiterating its support, contingent on some revisions in language.

At the end of nine hours of testimony, a weary state board voted 9 to 1 to adopt the regulation, with amendments to:

- add prenatal care and prevention of sexually transmitted disease as topics to be covered by the end of grade 8;
- require the department of education to provide technical assistance to districts as they implemented the mandate; and
- delay full implementation until September 1983.

The Issue Moves to the Legislature

Now the battle shifted to the legislature, where Assemblywoman Muhler and Senator Dumont had introduced bills to override the mandate, on grounds that it violated freedom of religion, reduced parental decision-making and usurped local school board authority. Party politics would play a role as the two Republicans sought to advance their bills in a Democratic-controlled legislature. The Assembly bill had been bottled up in the Education Committee, and when Muhler and other Republicans sought action to bring it to the floor, Democrats tabled the motion on a straight party vote. She re-introduced the bill the next year, but it never got out of committee.

Dumont’s bill was similarly stalled in the Senate Education Committee, partly because of constitutional concerns about relationships between the executive and legislative branches of government. Committee Chair Matthew Feldman (D, Bergen) sought to avoid these issues by introducing a resolution directing the state board to review and reconsider the mandate, with particular attention to its “detail and specificity . . . as it impacts on local district decision-making”; the role of parents and guardians in developing and reviewing curriculum content; staffing requirements; impact on other curriculum; and procedures for parents or guardians to withdraw children from classes.

When Feldman put both his resolution and the Dumont bill on the committee agenda for May 1, many interested parties testified, generally repriming what they had said at state board meetings. The Catholic Conference again made a big impression, declaring that New Jersey’s bishops “strongly favor mandated family life education in the public schools,” so long as the state board adopted changes to “make parents full partners” in the process. The committee voted 3-2 not to
release the Dumont bill, and 4-1 to release the Feldman resolution for action on the Senate floor. There, on May 5, the Senate adopted it by an overwhelming vote of 32 to 4, all the more emphatic because the four “no” votes were Dumont and other Republicans who wanted to completely nullify the mandate.

**The State Board Responds**

At a meeting the next day, the state board agreed to revisit areas specified in the Senate resolution and make revisions as appropriate. The result, announced at the June 8 board meeting, was a substantial but—board members felt—essential retreat. The changes:

- replaced the term “K-12 curriculum” with “elementary/secondary curriculum,” to give districts more leeway to decide when to offer instruction;
- removed lists of required topics at various grade levels, to give districts more leeway in designing programs;
- strengthened requirements for parental review of curriculum outlines and materials, in accordance with wishes of the Catholic Conference; and
- expanded the definition of family life education to include instruction to “support development of responsible personal behavior.”

Representatives of leading state education organizations applauded the changes, but continued to oppose the mandate. Nevertheless, the board voted 9-0 to publish the revised regulation in the July *New Jersey Register*, thus inviting a new round of public comment.

At the August state board meeting, there were 57 speakers, including angry opponents who decried this “all-out invasion of American families,” shouted “Judas” at the Catholic Conference spokesperson, taunted board members, heckled other speakers and, in the case of one woman, fell to the floor to avoid ejection by police. Undaunted, board members voted 7-1 to adopt the revised resolution. Voting in favor were Board President Paul Ricci, Vice President S. David Brandt, Chancellor of Higher Education Edward Hollander and board members Jack Bagan, Constance Montgomery, Sonia Ruby and Susan Wilson (absentees Anne Dillman, Katherine K. Neuberger and Robert Wolfenbarger had voted for the mandate during earlier meetings). The lone dissenter, as in past votes, was former Board President Ruth Mancuso, who favored sex education, but opposed mandating it. Thus, New Jersey became the first state in the nation to adopt such a policy (Maryland in 1970 had established a similar policy, but only for secondary schools).

The final version of the mandate provided that:

- every local board of education must adopt a family life education policy by September 1981 and implement programs by September 1983;
- programs must be implemented throughout elementary and secondary grades, with instructional units appropriate to pupils’ age and development;
- curriculum must be developed at the local level, with “appropriate consultations” with administrators, teachers, students in grades 9-12, physicians, members of the clergy and other representative members of the community;
- each district must provide parents and guardians with an annual outline of the curriculum, a list of instructional materials and notice about how to review the entire curriculum; and
- parents may have their children excused from any portion of the program that conflicts with their moral or religious beliefs.

The mandate was now official state policy and, according to a new public opinion poll, a popular one among New Jersey adults. The survey, conducted by Rutgers University’s Center for Public Interest Polling in September 1980, found that 78 percent of respondents thought sex education should be taught in junior and senior high school, and 55 percent thought it should be taught in all districts.
Opponents Seek Judicial and Legislative Nullification

Despite their defeat, opponents of the mandate were not ready to give up. Led by an organization called the New Jersey Coalition of Concerned Parents, they sought judicial repeal of the new policy. In October 1980, they filed suit, asking the courts to review the state board action. The case, *Smith v. Ricci*, was argued in February 1982 and decided in May, when the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the board had neither violated the First or Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution nor committed any procedural error. The parents then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which, in November 1982, refused to hear the case.

Opponents also continued to seek legislative nullification of the mandate, supporting a new bill sponsored by Assemblywoman Muhler to prevent state agencies from requiring family life education. The bill was released from committee by a vote of 3-2 in spring 1981, but lost by five votes in the Assembly, despite a strong lobbying effort by New Jersey Concerned Parents, New Jersey Right to Life and fundamentalist ministers from Newark.

After the New Jersey Supreme Court decision of May 1982, opponents launched a campaign for a new bill, sponsored by Assemblyman Joseph Patero (D, Mercer, Somerset and Middlesex), that would prevent state agencies from mandating family life education and require parents to opt into, rather than out of, classes. Backed by an unusual combination of mainline education organizations (like the New Jersey School Boards Association and New Jersey Education Association) and conservative groups (like New Jersey Concerned Parents and Right to Life), the bill was released from committee by a 3-2 vote in July 1982.

The mandate was now official state policy and, according to a new public opinion poll, a popular one.

For many months, Assembly Speaker Alan Karcher (D, Middlesex), who had been a supporter of the mandate, avoided scheduling the Patero bill for floor action. But, after receiving some 4,000 pieces of mail from people unhappy about the mandate, he concluded that the public opposed it and scheduled a vote for June 16, 1983.

Karcher’s sudden turnaround caught mandate supporters unprepared. But they quickly recruited an army of advocates—Commissioner of Education Saul Cooperman, state board members, members of sympathetic organizations and numerous private citizens—to flood the legislator with thousands of letters, post cards and phone calls (Susan Wilson was one of the most direct, visiting Karcher’s Sayreville office to engage the erudite legislator in an hour-long discussion of the philosophy behind sex education). Karcher, impressed by the broad support, issued a press release commending family life education and declaring that he would not bring the bill to a vote.

New Jersey Schools Prepare for Implementation

Notwithstanding legislative threats, state officials and agencies continued efforts to make the new policy a success when it took effect in September 1983. In February 1981, the department of education published non-binding guidelines for family life education. They outlined local district responsibilities, listed sources of information and materials and suggested course content, such as:

- grades K–3: different kinds of families; roles of family members; peer relationships; dealing with strangers; body parts and functions; expressing feelings and emotions; personal responsibility;
- grades 4–6: family conflict and resolution; stages of human growth; the human
reproductive system; sexually transmitted diseases; self-esteem; decision-making; the nature of sexuality; child abuse, sexual assault and incest;

- grades 7–9: dealing with emotions; respect for self and others; dating and responsible behavior; kinds of love feelings; ramifications of non-marital sexual relations; family planning; abortion; sexually transmitted diseases;

- grades 10–12: family finances; adult relationships; teenage pregnancy; sexually transmitted diseases; preparation for marriage; family planning; parenting, aging, death and dying.

Non-governmental organizations also made important contributions to making the policy a success. Among the most helpful, even though they had opposed adoption of the mandate, were the New Jersey School Boards Association and the New Jersey Education Association.

Still, an air of controversy hung over the mandate. In July 1982, Governor Thomas Kean, while reappointing David Brandt, one of Governor Brendan Byrne’s appointees to the state board, conspicuously replaced Susan Wilson, another Byrne appointee. Star-Ledger columnist Robert Braun, a steadfast opponent of the mandate, summed up her tenure in a column Headlined “Board is Losing a Sensitive, Dedicated Education Advocate”:

Wilson gained notoriety—and enemies—from her advocacy of the family life education mandate. She was its strongest supporter, its most traveled campaigner. Probably more than anyone else in the state she believed the process of education could end the human misery associated with abuse and ignorance of, and disrespect for, human sexuality. . . . She understood children and their needs probably better than any member of the board.
Rutgers Incubates the Network

In October 1980, Estelle R. Robinson, Director of the Center for Community Education of the Rutgers School of Social Work and founder of the Rutgers-based New Jersey Network on Adolescent Pregnancy, organized a conference to discuss implementation of the mandate. The 600 school and community attendees at the two-day meeting were upbeat in view of the recent state board action, but apprehensive that implementing the mandate would require hard work and might meet bitter opposition. As Susan Wilson said in a speech to participants, “The mandate is like a pane of glass—it can be easily shattered. Please help us keep it in place for the young people of New Jersey.” Conference evaluation forms showed that most attendees thought some kind of ongoing organization was required to clarify and facilitate the implementation process.

The Center and the New Jersey School Boards Association (an organization that was simultaneously seeking to reverse the mandate and to make it succeed if it survived) then took the lead in convening meetings of representatives of 19 public and private agencies (see Table 1), who, in February 1981, formed the New Jersey Network for Family Life Education. They envisioned “an informal, voluntary association of statewide organizations” that would “promote community awareness and understanding of family life education.” There would be no dues, no hierarchy and a minimal formal structure, so as to attract the widest possible organizational membership. Rutgers University, as part of its community service activities, would provide office space, but no financial assistance.

The Network’s founders cited three initial objectives: to familiarize communities with the history and rationale of the mandate and with the community role in developing and implementing programs; to share information through meetings and newsletters; and to develop model programs that could be replicated throughout the state. The first two objectives could be carried out by member organizations, but the third required funds for an administrator. Network members drafted proposals to possible New Jersey funders and received initial commitments of $28,000 from The Fund for New Jersey and $10,000 from the Rumson-based Huber Foundation to cover anticipated expenditures for the period May 1982 to April 1983.
Table 1: 
Founding Member Organizations of the New Jersey Network for Family Life Education

- American Council on Healthful Living
- Junior League, State Public Affairs Committee
- National Association of Social Workers—New Jersey Chapter
- National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, New Jersey Chapter
- National Council of Jewish Women—New Jersey Chapter
- New Jersey Commission on Children’s Services
- New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers
- New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division on Women
- New Jersey Department of Education
- New Jersey Department of Health
- New Jersey Department of Human Services
- New Jersey Home Economics Association
- New Jersey Parenting Council
- New Jersey School Boards Association
- New Jersey State Board of Education
- Planned Parenthood Affiliates of New Jersey
- Rutgers University, Cook College Department of Home Economics
- Rutgers University, Department of Community Education
- Urban Council on Adolescents and Wellness, Inc.

The Network Starts Its Work

In May 1982, Network members selected Roberta Knowlton, former director of Project ACCESS (a federally funded program for teen mothers), as their first executive coordinator, reporting to Estelle Robinson. Over the next few months, she organized an office at the Rutgers Center for Community Education, hired a part-time secretary, revised and distributed brochures and established an information clearinghouse. At the same time, she traveled the state, making presentations, training teachers, helping districts plan programs and soothing fears of concerned parents.

The scale of Network activity in this period is outlined in Knowlton’s report of activities for 1983: she had spoken directly to about 1,800 people during the year; other “member representatives,” had spoken to another 1,200; and members of a Network speakers bureau had reached an additional 1,200. Knowlton estimated that the Network had worked with over 200 school districts during the year, “providing either speakers, advice, materials or resource referrals.”

The new Network was also successful in establishing media relationships that would help convey its message to the people of the state in the years ahead. Efforts by Knowlton and Network members yielded articles in newspapers and organizational newsletters, as well as appearances on state and local television programs. One effect of this publicity was rapid expansion of the Network’s membership. By the end of 1983, it had more than doubled to 51 organizations (see Appendix A). In addition, the Network counted 70 other groups it had collaborated with to enhance understanding of family life education.

The Mandate is Implemented

In September 1983, the mandate went into effect. Considering the stormy circumstances of its birth, there was remarkably little controversy. Susan Wilson’s study of newspaper articles from the period (part of a National Association of State Boards of Education research project on the New Jersey mandate) concluded that implementing the mandate involved community members in positive ways; few parents (the department of education estimated one percent) sought excusal for their children; school boards approved local policies without much controversy; and support for the mandate did not
arouse opposition to candidates in school board elections. In June 1984, the department of education, after monitoring 150 districts for compliance, declared the policy a success.

This is not to say that opposition had evaporated. There remained three groups of opponents, as Roberta Knowlton wrote at the time. One, responsible for most of the meetings, letters and political and legal opposition, was a small, deeply dedicated, political-religious group (about five percent of the population) that viewed sex education as evil. Another small group (also about five percent) was influenced by the first group, but based its opposition on the belief that sex education would cause more teen promiscuity and pregnancy. A third small group of more sophisticated people thought that school programs wouldn’t teach the subject well, but would give parents an excuse not to discuss sexuality with their children.

The job of the Network, Knowlton thought, was to agree to disagree with the first group, but emphasize that parents could exempt children from subject matter they oppose; show the second group what family life classes are really like; and persuade the third group that family life education is the joint responsibility of parents, schools, churches and social agencies.

The Network Expands Its Programs

Roberta Knowlton stepped down as Network executive coordinator in 1984 to direct the School-Based Youth Services Program of the New Jersey Department of Human Services. She was replaced by Susan Wilson, who, as she assumed the position, recounted Knowlton’s accomplishments in leading the nascent organization:

- monthly meetings of representatives of network member organizations;
- presentations at statewide conferences and local school board meetings, on radio and television programs and before local affiliates of Network member organizations;
- development of an advocacy style that united people in exploring problems facing children, rather than focusing on divisive policies;
- response to hundreds of information requests from schools, community groups and media;
- development of a resource center;
- sponsorship of an October 1984 statewide conference, featuring noted psychiatrist, educator and author Robert Coles, MD, of Harvard University Health Service; and
- coordination of advocacy efforts to defeat legislative attempts to abolish the mandate.

Under Wilson’s leadership, the Network continued its former activities and added many new ones. One, beginning in 1986–87, was a collaboration with the Children’s Defense Fund’s national teen pregnancy prevention media campaign, in which the Network distributed posters to schools throughout the state and secured $1 million worth of free billboard space. Another awarded 15–20 mini-grants per year to teachers and school nurses who proposed innovative projects. Summer 1987 saw publication of the first issue of Family Life Matters, a newsletter for New Jersey's family life educators and other youth-serving adults. Network staff secured support from the Mary Owen Borden Foundation to start the newsletter, hoping to gradually make it self-supporting by charging a nominal subscription fee. The Network mailed 7,000 copies of the first issue, free-of-charge.

The Network also took action to counter the new threat of HIV/AIDS, unknown in 1980, but universally dreaded by 1986, when U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop called for widespread sex education to combat it. In 1987, the Network convened a panel of family life educators and specialists in adolescent development and medicine to discuss AIDS-prevention education. The group concluded that the role of public education was to present all reasonable options, not to emphasize or restrict discussion to one or several. Thus, the panel strongly supported
teaching abstinence as the safest AIDS strategy, but felt it was also vital to discuss ways to prevent disease and unintended pregnancy. The experts also pointed out that for high school students, more than half of whom have sex before they graduate, the messages “don’t get pregnant” and “don’t contract AIDS” were far more realistic than “don’t have sex.”

An opportunity to act on the panel’s recommendations arose in late 1987, when the state department of education contracted with the Network to provide HIV/AIDS-prevention training to New Jersey teachers. The project was a huge responsibility for the still tiny organization. Between May 1988 and June 1989, Network consultants conducted 21 two-day training programs across New Jersey for 1,278 educators. Mindful that the state had never provided funds to train family life educators, Susan Wilson planned the programs to include one day on how to teach family life education and one on how to teach HIV/AIDS-prevention. The Network’s success was demonstrated in the state’s evaluation, which reported positive comments from 100 percent of attendees.

New Jersey law requires that after five years, all policies must be reauthorized or allowed to expire. This “sunset” provision led to state board reconsideration of the mandate in 1985 and 1990. Clearly times were changing. In 1985, the board heard presentations from over 70 speakers, many of them opposed, before voting unanimously for reauthorization as originally written. But in 1990, no one testified or wrote against the policy. The mandate seemed no longer to evoke the passion of a decade before, and the department of education reported that most of the public had accepted sex education in the schools. Still, powerful opponents remained.
The Rise of a New Threat

The Patero bill of 1982–83 (see page 11) was the last serious attempt to nullify the mandate. In the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the main line of opposition to the state’s family life education policy took the form of attempts to restrict the curriculum (though some advocates occasionally hinted that their real aim was repeal or even imposition of abstinence-only programs). The chief vehicle of this strategy was “stress-abstinence” legislation that would require all family life education programs and materials—including every handout or audiovisual—to stress abstinence. It would also require all discussion of contraception or condoms to include their failure rates and the difference between risk reduction, through contraception, and risk elimination, through abstinence. The Network and its allies would fight four main battles against such legislation, in 1988–89, 1992–94, 1994–95 and 2000–02.

The first stress-abstinence bills, Assembly bill A-3306 and Senate bill S-2614, were introduced in 1988, sponsored by Assemblywoman Marion Crecco (R, Essex) and Senator Gerald Cardinale (R, Bergen). Like similar bills in other states, they were drafted by Concerned Women for America (CWA), a national conservative group that opposed comprehensive sex education—programs teaching both the value of abstinence and the positive impacts of contraception and condoms—claiming that a “mixed message” encouraged sexual activity. Leaders of CWA favored abstinence-only curricula, but campaigned for stress-abstinence programs as a step in the right direction.

The Crecco and Cardinale bills were the first New Jersey attempts to codify the moral messages that some opponents had been using in debates about the mandate. They required all programs to “stress the moral aspects of abstinence from sexual activity until they’re ready as adults to establish in the context of marriage, a mutually faithful monogamous relationship.” The mandate, on the other hand, had scrupulously avoided state imposition of values in order to give communities leeway to fashion their own curricula, and local school districts and their communities had responded by designing a wide range of programs.

The new moral tone—and the bills themselves—were part of the political reaction to HIV/AIDS. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of Education William Bennett spoke favorably about abstinence-only programs, and states began to adopt mandates for AIDS and sexuality education programs, some of them requiring specific messages. Rhode Island, for example, required junior high school programs to teach that “abstinence from sex and drugs is the only appropriate behavior” and advised high schools that “responsibility, abstinence and monogamy should be frequently addressed.” The New Jersey Department
of Education's HIV/AIDS policy was at first to encourage, and later to mandate, instruction about AIDS prevention, but without stipulating specific curriculum.*

**The Battle of 1988–89**

Susan Wilson's reaction to the first stress-abstinence bills was to build and coordinate an advocacy organization, the Coalition for Comprehensive Family Life and Sexuality Education, including Network members and other statewide organizations. In 1988–89 and throughout the 1990s, Coalition activities typically consisted of encouraging contacts with legislators and the press; preparing position papers; and distributing materials to legislators, their aides and a wide variety of opinion-shapers, especially in the media. On occasion, Coalition members also provided talking points to help supportive legislators make their case.

In 1988–89, the Coalition and other opponents of stress-abstinence legislation argued that:

- abstinence was already taught as part of virtually every program;
- the bills usurped local decision-making powers and represented an unwarranted intrusion of politics into the classroom;
- such vague legislation would invite trouble, especially from self-appointed "abstinence police";
- it would require costly replacement of most materials now in use;
- it would curtail time available for other topics;
- research showed that comprehensive sex education was effective, but "just-say-no" programs were not; and
- condoms were highly effective when used properly, and stressing inflated failure rates would encourage unprotected sex, not abstinence.

Proponents of the stress-abstinence bills countered that:

- New Jersey districts were ignoring or downplaying abstinence;
- districts were encouraging use of condoms, despite failure rates of 30 percent or higher;
- discussion of prevention increased promiscuity and drove up rates of pregnancy, disease and death;
- teaching about such topics as sexual pleasure, masturbation, sexual alternatives to intercourse, homosexuality and abortion was wrong;
- research showed abstinence education was effective; and
- stressing abstinence wouldn't preclude teaching about other topics.

Proponents soon prevailed in the Assembly, where the Assembly Education Committee released the Crecco bill in October 1988, and the full Assembly passed it by a commanding margin of 57–6 (15 not voting) on November 21. One opponent said that some legislators who should have voted against the bill voted for it either because they were afraid of being seen on the wrong side of what was promoted as a "vote for traditional family values" or because they thought the bill would have no real impact if it became law. Undoubtedly, another factor was the new threat of HIV/AIDS and the difficulty of voting against anything that claimed to combat the epidemic.

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* The state board adopted the mandate in February 1990, requiring all districts to develop elementary and secondary HIV/AIDS-prevention curriculum. As with the family life education mandate, which paved the way for the new requirement, they were to do so in consultation with parents, physicians, members of the clergy and representative members of the community.
The bill ran into trouble, however, in the Senate Education Committee, now headed by Senator Matthew Feldman. In a rancorous, two-hour meeting on April 27, 1989, an unruly crowd cheered or jeered speakers, leading one senator to stalk out in disgust. Senator Cardinale, at the time a candidate for the Republican nomination for governor, added to the contentious atmosphere by branding an assistant commissioner of education "obviously incompetent" and leaping from his chair to shout down a department of health AIDS expert. With three of the five committee members expressing reservations about the bill, Cardinale went along with a decision to postpone consideration; the bill lay dormant for the remainder of the 1988–89 legislative session.

The Battle of 1992–94

Legislative Defeat. Crecco and Cardinale reintroduced their bills in each new session of the legislature, waiting for the right combination of public support, media attention, partisan legislative control and vote trading to secure passage. That combination was absent in 1990–91, when stress-abstinence bills failed to reach the Assembly or Senate floors, but coalesced in 1992–93, after the legislative elections of November 1991 produced huge Republican majorities of 27 to 13 in the Senate and 58 to 22 in the Assembly.

In 1992–93, the story in the Assembly was similar to that of 1988–89. Arguments for and against Crecco’s A-316 (bills are re-numbered in each new session) were much the same; the Coalition for Comprehensive Family Life and Sexuality Education again lobbied legislators by letter and telephone; and the results varied by only a few votes. The Assembly Education Committee released the bill on February 24, 1993, and the entire body, after an emotional debate, passed it on March 8, by a vote of 54-7, with 19 not voting.

The struggle again moved to the Senate Education Committee, and the rival camps scrambled to recruit organizational support for the battle to come. The Coalition was now a formidable alliance of 34 members:

- AIDS Coalition of Southern New Jersey
- American Association of University Women, New Jersey
- Association for Children of New Jersey
- Choice-PAC New Jersey
- Education Law Center
- Family Planning Advocates of New Jersey
- Garden State Coalition for Youth/Families
- HTOPS (Health-Interested Teens’ Own Program on Sexuality)
- Hyacinth AIDS Foundation
- League of Women Voters of New Jersey
- Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey
- National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, New Jersey Chapter
- National Council of Jewish Women, New Jersey Chapter
- National Organization for Women, New Jersey
- New Jersey Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
- New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women
- New Jersey Coalition for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities
- New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers
- New Jersey Education Association
- New Jersey Federation of Business and Professional Women, Inc.
- New Jersey Home Economics Association
- New Jersey NARAL
- New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association
- New Jersey Right to Choose
- New Jersey School Boards Association
- New Jersey State Council of YWCAs
- New Jersey State School Nurses Association
New Jersey Women and AIDS Network
New Jersey Women's Health Cooperative
Parents Anonymous of New Jersey
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Society for Adolescent Medicine, New Jersey Chapter
UMDNJ, Division of Adolescent Medicine
Women's Agenda of New Jersey, Inc.

Lined up for the stress-abstinence bills were Concerned Women for America, New Jersey Right to Life, the New Jersey Catholic Conference, the Christian Coalition, Citizens Concerned for Life, Parents United for Better Schools, the League of American Families, the American Family Association, Cumberland County Parents and Taxpayers, a few school districts and a number of religious organizations.

Groups and individuals from both sides converged on Trenton on May 27, 1993, for the Senate Education Committee’s first hearing on Cardinale’s S-113, the Senate version of the Crecco bill. There were so many potential witnesses—55 just on the opposing side—that the committee, now chaired by Senator John Ewing (R, Somerset) couldn’t hear them all and adjourned without taking a vote. Debate did not resume until after legislative elections, on November 23, when the committee voted to release the bill, but only after amending it in a way that completely undermined the sponsor’s intent. The amendment, suggested by the Coalition and championed by Ewing, required that courses stress methods of prevention as well as abstinence.

The amendment was a tremendous, but short-lived, victory for the Coalition. On December 13, during debate on the Senate floor, the bill’s supporters pushed through two amendments, one restoring the original stress-abstinence language and the other—in a bid to attract wavering votes—allowing school districts to continue using current course materials if parents agreed. Senators then voted narrowly to pass the resulting bill, with 22 voting for, 10 against and 8 not voting (a Senate bill requires 21 votes to pass).

A Veto Saves the Day. Smarting from this sudden reversal of fortunes, Coalition members immediately began an effort to persuade lame-duck Governor Jim Florio (Christie Whitman had narrowly defeated his re-election bid in November) to veto the bill. Their campaign included the conventional call for opponents to flood the governor’s office with mail and phone calls, but also included a critical meeting among gubernatorial advisors Nancy Kaplan and Bill Harla and opponents representing teachers, administrators, school boards, parents and students. The campaign paid off a few days later, on December 28, when the governor conditionally vetoed the bill, calling it a “political intrusion” on development of curriculum and declaring that “legislative mandates are not the answer.”

Republican leaders in both houses responded by scheduling votes to override the veto, which would require 54 votes in the Assembly and 27 in the Senate. They narrowly succeeded in the Assembly on January 10, 1994, with 55 in favor, 9 opposed and 16 not voting. In the Senate, however, the override secured only 23 votes in favor,
while 8 voted against and 9 did not vote. Key to this outcome was the decision of Senator Ewing to break with his party and oppose the override.

The frustrated champions of stress-abstinence were furious at those who had helped to defeat their bill. Senator Cardinale concentrated his ire on the Network. “I’ll see what I can do to get rid of the funding for that group in the budget,” he told the Asbury Park Press just after the Senate vote. The effort was quixotic because the Network received no significant state support. Assemblywoman Crecco had already tried a similar tack in an April 1993 letter to Rutgers President Francis Lawrence, asking him to spell out the state university’s support for the Network. He responded that the organization received no funding from the university.

The Battle of 1994–95

After the drama of the 1992–93 legislative sessions—extended into early 1994 by the veto override campaign—both sides in the stress-abstinence fight positioned themselves for the next round. Proponents were now rid of the governor who had vetoed their bill and had, in his place, a moderate Republican, Christie Whitman, whose views on sex education were unknown, though she was clearly pro-choice. To make the bill more acceptable to the Whitman administration, they modified it slightly to require that all programs “clearly state,” rather than “stress,” the virtues of abstinence. At the same time, Crecco and Cardinale introduced other bills suggesting that their real motivation was not merely to shape curriculum, but to undermine the mandate itself. One required that no child be enrolled without parental permission, another made family life programs optional for districts and a third established committees to review and approve curriculum and materials in each community.

Opponents of stress-abstinence, having lost a supportive governor, were unsure about Governor Whitman’s views and fearful of a renewed offensive. Their strategy was to begin proactive communication with legislators early in the new session and to emphasize that abstinence was already an important component of the curriculum. For example, the Network invited all 120 legislators to attend its October 1994 annual conference “Teaching about Abstinence: Not If, But How.”

As in 1992–93, Crecco’s bill, A-1985, moved first, winning release from the Assembly Education Committee on November 21, 1994, after an amendment removed language requiring teachers to clearly state the value of “no sexual activity until marriage.” In a surprise tactic, the Assembly leadership immediately scheduled the bill for floor debate on December 1, leaving the Coalition little time to rally its forces, especially with the intervening Thanksgiving holiday. The Coalition succeeded in generating many letters and phone calls, plus strong editorials and op-ed articles in leading newspapers, but the bill passed the Assembly by a vote of 52 to 16, with 12 not voting.

Governor Whitman was silent during the Assembly debate. But after the bill passed, her spokeswoman said she was “concerned about the State getting in the curriculum-writing business”
and suggested that she might oppose the bill. Eager to get the support of the administration and to avoid another veto, Senator Cardinale wrote to Peter Verniero, Governor Whitman’s chief counsel, asking him to comment on the Senate version of the Crecco bill. Verniero’s response did not provide what Cardinale had wanted. Without saying directly that Whitman opposed stress-abstinence legislation, Verniero noted that she “has consistently advocated that pupils be educated on the subject of abstinence as part of an overall program of sex education” and suggested that the bill be reworded to emphasize teaching “objective facts” about abstinence. Cardinale offered no such revision, and the Senate Education Committee never released his bill.

Governor Whitman’s support for comprehensive sexuality education programs was a major reason for the dwindling fortunes of stress-abstinence legislation.

1995–99: Whitman Restrains Abstinence Partisans

Governor Whitman’s support for comprehensive sexuality education programs and her ability to counter the more conservative impulses of Republican legislators were major reasons for the dwindling fortunes of stress-abstinence legislation for the remainder of the decade. Neither Crecco’s nor Cardinale’s bill got out of committee in 1996–97, and, though Crecco’s A-690 of 1998–99 was released by the Assembly Education Committee in May 1999, it was never scheduled for a floor vote.

The new federal law also required programs it funded to teach what many observers thought were empty claims or patent falsehoods, including that:

- a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of sexual activity;
- sexual activity outside of the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects; and
- bearing children out-of-wedlock is likely to have harmful consequences for the child, the child’s parents and society.

In New Jersey, opponents of stress-abstinence legislation were appalled that a state that had never provided funding for comprehensive family life education programs might now spend federal and state dollars for untested, abstinence-only programs. In early 1997, the Coalition urged Governor Whitman and Commissioner of Health Len Fishman to reject the federal funds. They

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* The 1996 figure was just the beginning; federal support for abstinence-until-marriage education programs, including the Adolescent Family Life Act, Title V of the welfare reform legislation of 1996 and Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Special Projects of Regional and National Significance, totaled $135 million per year by Fiscal Year 2004.
gave the idea serious consideration, but, in the midst of gubernatorial and legislative election campaigns, bowed to pressure from conservative groups and—like every other state except California—applied for the state's share of the federal money ($843,000, including state matching funds, in each of five years). But the money would go to private, non-profit groups, not the public schools, which, the governor declared in a statement of July 15, were committed to standards requiring a “balanced program” that “includes information on both abstinence and methods of contraception.”

The Battle of 2000–2002

Whitman's Departure Changes the Playing Field. The stress-abstinence bills that Assemblywoman Crecco and Senator Cardinale reintroduced early in the 2000-01 legislative session seemed unlikely to fare any better than in previous years. After all, Governor Whitman opposed such legislation, and her term would not end until January 2002. But, in fact, supporters achieved rapid success in the Assembly. On October 16, 2000, the Assembly Education Committee, after listening to Coalition arguments, voted to release Crecco’s bill A-792. The Republican leadership scheduled it for a quick vote, and the Assembly passed it on October 30, by a vote of 50-15, with 8 abstentions and 7 not voting.

As in the three previous battles, the Coalition fought the bill's progress in the Assembly and, after it passed, redoubled its efforts to hold the bill in the Senate Education Committee. The campaign persuaded members and friends to make direct contact with senators and secured editorial support in such newspapers as the Asbury Park Press, Home News and Tribune, Atlantic City Press and Bergen Record.

That might have been enough two or four years before. But New Jersey's political landscape changed abruptly in early 2001, with consequences that bolstered prospects of stress-abstinence legislation. The shift began in December 2000, when President-Elect George W. Bush appointed Whitman as administrator of the U.S. Department of Environmental Protection. She resigned as governor on February 1, 2001, and was succeeded by state Senator Donald DiFrancesco (R-Union), who, under the New Jersey Constitution, became acting governor, but remained Senate president.

This was only the beginning of a tumultuous year in New Jersey Republican Party politics, with DiFrancesco seeking the Republican gubernatorial nomination, then quitting the race, and with the conservative Bret Schundler defeating the more moderate Bob Franks in the June 27 primary. From the Coalition's point of view, this meant that the supportive Whitman was replaced by an acting governor who was first a gubernatorial candidate in need of support from his party's right wing, and then a lame duck.

The Senate Education Committee meeting of June 14 came during the final weeks of a bitter primary campaign that—given the conservative leanings of the state's registered Republicans—provided strong motivation for Republican legislators to vote for conservative causes. The committee heard many witnesses (including the 21-year-old “Miss District of Columbia,” who declared that she was living proof that a young person could commit to abstinence), briefly debated the bill and voted 3-2 to release it, but with no recommendation—an unusual move that signaled possible trouble for the bill on the Senate floor.

The Sides Define Their Positions. Buoyed by the “no recommendation” vote, the Coalition campaigned for defeat in the Senate, beginning with a letter to all senators on June 25. The Coalition's arguments against the bill were that:

- there was no evidence that stressing abstinence is effective;
- giving more time to abstinence meant giving less time to other topics;
- parents and the public favored comprehensive programs by wide margins;
- educators, not politicians, should control what happens in classrooms;
- New Jersey standards (see page 30) already required teaching abstinence;
abstinence had its own failure rate that endangered some of those who relied on it;

- it would force schools to buy expensive new class materials; and

- it would likely lead to higher rates of pregnancy and abortion.

The Coalition also cited new poll data supporting its claim that the New Jersey public favored comprehensive sexuality education programs. In 2000, the Network had sought foundation funding and commissioned the Rutgers Center for Public Interest Polling to survey the public (as it had in 1992; see page 29). The survey showed that large majorities of parents (see Table 2) and other adults preferred comprehensive over abstinence-only programs (the survey did not inquire about attitudes toward stressing abstinence).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Students</th>
<th>Focus on Abstinence and Contraception</th>
<th>Focus Only on Abstinence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-18</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Rutgers University, Center for Public Interest Polling, 2000

Opponents quickly pointed out that many of these arguments were specious. For example, Dr. Mohn cited the most pessimistic effectiveness rates for condoms and ignored rates published by the authoritative U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She ignored the likelihood that condom failure rates would improve if young people were taught more about proper usage. And she faulted New Jersey for failing to lower its teen pregnancy rate every year, without mentioning that the state’s rate was among the lowest in the nation.

**Stress-Abstinence Becomes Law.** The Senate did not consider these pro and con arguments until December 17, by which time its membership included an unusual number of lame ducks. On a day of hectic, year-end legislative activity, the bill passed by a vote of 25-11.

It seemed highly likely that Acting Governor DiFrancesco would sign the bill, since he had just scheduled it for a vote in his capacity as Senate president and voted for it in his capacity as senator. But the Coalition still tried to dissuade him by urging members and friends to express their opposition in calls and letters.

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* These New Jersey results were consonant with national findings. The Kaiser Family Foundation’s Sex Education in America study of 2000 found that 88 percent of parents thought sexuality education in grades 9-12 should include “all aspects including birth control and safer sex,” and 49 percent favored covering the same topics in grades 7-8.
Susan Wilson described the result as “a sizable parade of people, medical doctors, researchers, professors, teachers, clinic directors, a former head of the national PTA and a group of teens” who wrote the acting governor or spoke with his advisors. The Asbury Park Press, Bergen Record and Star-Ledger helped the cause with particularly strong editorials; the Star-Ledger’s concluded, “Bills rushed into law by lame-duck officials often have a suspicious aroma about them. This one flat-out stinks.”

Nevertheless, DiFrancesco, after receiving assurances from his advisors that the bill would not harm the overall family life education curriculum, signed it on January 2, 2002. The new law was relatively brief. It required that:

- any “sex education” and any “handouts, speakers, notes or audiovisuals” concerning prevention of disease or pregnancy clearly state that abstinence from sexual activity is the only completely reliable means of eliminating sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and of avoiding pregnancy;
- all family life and HIV/AIDS curriculum include instruction on reasons, skills and strategies for remaining or becoming abstinent from sexual activity;
- any instruction on the use of contraception or condoms include information on their failure rates in actual use among adolescents and explain the difference between risk reduction through the use of such devices and risk elimination through abstinence; and
- any course, program or instruction on HIV/AIDS-prevention stress the importance of avoiding intravenous drug use.

Why Didn't Coalition Arguments Prevail? The Coalition had raised powerful arguments against stress-abstinence legislation. Why didn’t they win the day? One factor may have been that many state legislators were more receptive to the simple, emotional sound bites of the bill’s supporters than the more nuanced arguments of opponents. Assemblywoman Crecco could argue, “We teach children to say no to drugs. We teach children to say no to cigarette smoking. We teach children to say no to alcohol. Why shouldn’t we teach them to say no to sex?” or, “When a child twelve, thirteen, fourteen years old goes out and has sex, can we blame them when we’ve given them a how-to?” But the Coalition’s counterarguments were, necessarily, far more subtle and complex. Even Dr. Mohn’s arguments, highly sophisticated in comparison to Crecco’s, were easier to grasp than the detailed responses necessary to refute them.

Legislators had a particularly difficult time understanding the Coalition’s assertion that stress-abstinence legislation would undermine comprehensive programs. As Assemblyman Joseph Malone (R, Burlington) said to the bill’s opponents during Assembly Education Committee hearings in 2000, “I’ve read this bill four times today, and what you are saying, I don’t find in the bill at all. What I’m beginning to think is there’s a hidden agenda, and I’m trying to figure out what that is.” Another Assemblyman dismissed Coalition warnings, calling A-792 a “touchy-feely” bill that wouldn’t really change anything. And Beth Hardy, Acting Governor DiFrancesco’s counsel, said she couldn’t see how it endangered the whole curriculum. This problem was compounded by the tendency of some opponents to argue against abstinence-only or “just-say-no” programs, as if the bills required such outcomes.
In the final analysis, though, it is likely that the victory of stress-abstinence legislation in 2000–02 was due more to clever packaging and fear of political retribution than it was to arguments on either side. To many of those voting for it, stressing abstinence probably sounded like an innocuous, “family-oriented” measure that was dangerous to vote against in a state election year and a milieu of increasing social conservatism.*

* Longtime observers of New Jersey politics report a trend toward increasing conservatism among Republican legislators starting in the mid- to late-1990s, with one-time moderates moving to the right in order to head off threats from more conservative primary opponents.
Improving Instruction and Curriculum

While the Coalition for Comprehensive Family Life and Sexuality Education led the fight against stress-abstinence legislation, the Network broadened its activities aimed at improving program quality. In 1990, for example, the organization convened the first of a series of annual training conferences, each attracting 200–300 attendees, to hear a keynote speaker on the conference theme and participate in multiple small-group sessions on related topics (for themes and keynote speakers, see Appendix B).

New Curriculum for Grades K–3. In 1991, the Network moved into uncharted territory, when it agreed to join Rutgers University Press, writer Barbara Sprung and illustrator Debra Wainwright in filling a glaring gap in family life education materials: the absence of any published curriculum for primary schools. The result, published in December 1992, was Learning About Family Life, the nation’s first family life education curriculum for grades K–3. As the Rutgers Press described it:

the curriculum focuses on a fictional classroom, in which students and teachers explore how both traditional and nontraditional families are formed, grow, change and thrive. One of the teachers, Ms. Ruiz, is pregnant at the beginning of the year, which allows the class to learn about pregnancy and to meet the new baby before the year is over. The students also learn about critical and complex issues of social acceptance, AIDS, alienation and resilience, death and the different ways people grow. They learn about their bodies and the importance of respect for themselves and for others.

The curriculum, though designed to be age-appropriate and scrupulously “non-sexist, multicultural [and] disability-sensitive,” remained controversial simply because it was aimed at such young children. To overcome this natural resistance, the Network, supported by the Schumann Fund for New Jersey, conducted a three-year pilot implementation in 23 New Jersey districts and developed materials to encourage and ease national implementation. These included a 1993 video, Little Questions, Big Questions: The Case for Family Life Education in the Early Grades; a handbook to help teachers implement the curriculum; and a 1997 report, Baby Steps: Implementing Family Life Education in the Early Grades, which reviewed the pilot project and provided recommendations for successful implementation.

The K–3 Curriculum Draws Attacks. Learning About Family Life and the Network’s publications and videos unquestionably increased interest in early family life education, but they also opened
up lines of attack for opponents of comprehensive programs, who saw the curriculum as a new usurpation of parental responsibility. Most parents in the 23 New Jersey pilot districts welcomed the curriculum, but in four communities there were objections to a few of the 43 lessons, and local newspapers picked up the story.

Between June and November 1993, for example, the West Windsor-Plainsboro school district became embroiled in controversy as it considered and then adopted part of the curriculum. The debate culminated in November, with frequent headlines about parental opposition in area newspapers, an opposing op-ed column by a Trenton State College professor in the Trenton Times and the superintendent's defense of the district's actions. This struggle and similar controversies in other districts provided welcome ammunition to opponents of comprehensive programs.

A prominent example was Barbara Dafoe Whitehead's damaging, 16-page article on "The Failure of Sex Education," in the October 1994 Atlantic Monthly. Whitehead, author of the widely discussed article "Dan Quayle Was Right," in the April 1993 issue of the same magazine, argued that comprehensive sexuality education was failing throughout the country and particularly in New Jersey, where, despite its being mandated, rates of births to unwed teen mothers had increased. Whole pages of the article were devoted to attacking the Learning About Family Life curriculum, which Whitehead suggested was being forced on defenseless children throughout the state.

Susan Wilson was quick to point out basic flaws in the article; most notably, it neglected to establish that the programs it accused of failing had ever been widely implemented. In fact, the New Jersey mandate had not imposed comprehensive programs. Districts had adopted a wide variety of curricula, and truly comprehensive programs were relatively rare (as they were in the nation, where SIECUS estimated that only 10 percent of students completed such programs). Moreover, Whitehead cited research of Douglas Kirby and other experts only when it supported her claims. As Wilson wrote in response to the article:

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead's article ignores some of the basic tenets of reasoned debate. She fails to define terms, provides erroneous information, ignores the most recent research, uses selective quotes—and concludes that the substantially untried comprehensive sex education is a failure and is, perhaps, part of the problem. Her criticism seems more rooted in the politics of the day than in any concern for the health needs of young people.

But documenting all these shortcomings, especially in brief letters to the Atlantic Monthly, involved detailed arguments that were harder to communicate than the original attack, and many readers were left with the impression that comprehensive programs had been tried and found wanting. Moreover, the article was reprinted in the Winter 1994–95 issue of American Educator (a publication of the American Federation of Teachers), condensed in the February 1995 Readers Digest and trumpeted in a nationally
syndicated column by conservative commentator Cal Thomas. An upstate New York educator complained in January 1995 that the article “is appearing everywhere in my region.” Of course, the article was a boon to stress-abstinence forces in New Jersey; Senator Cardinale distributed copies to fellow legislators, and at least one, Assemblyman Richard Bagger (R, Union), changed his mind about stress-abstinence legislation as a result and voted for Crecco’s A-1985, in December 1994.

**Sponsoring Research**

Another important Network initiative of the early 1990s was sponsorship of the first study of what was actually happening in New Jersey family life education classes. In 1992, the Network secured funding from The Fund for New Jersey and recruited Rutgers Graduate School of Education Professor William A. Firestone to conduct research on programs throughout the state. The resulting *Is Playing it Safe Unsafe?* was released in March 1993 and reported that:

- the vast majority of students in the state were exposed to family life curriculum, but for a relatively short period of time (averaging 40 hours per year in high schools and 23 hours per year in middle schools);
- family life classes spent little time on “controversial” topics, especially those relating to avoiding or ending pregnancy; conversely, they spent much time on HIV/AIDS;
- the need to address topics that help students avoid negative effects of sexual exploitation was most acute in middle schools; and
- less time was given to family life education in New Jersey’s poorer districts than in richer ones.

Based on these findings, the report offered eleven recommendations for improved instruction, including:

- more time for issues related to prevention;
- earlier instruction on sensitive topics, including prevention;
- less emphasis on HIV/AIDS;
- more outside staff development for teachers in poor, urban schools; and
- more minority and male teachers.

The study was of great importance in understanding results of the mandate and what remained to be done. It was also useful in stress-abstinence debates because it showed that most districts were treating sexuality education gingerly, far from the anything-goes classrooms described by some proponents of the legislation.

The Firestone study also included an opinion survey, conducted by Rutgers University’s Center for Public Interest Polling, which showed increasing support for sex education among New Jersey adults between 1980 and 1992. The 1992 survey found that 87 percent of adults thought that sex education should be taught in both junior and senior high school (compared to 78 percent in 1980) and 69 percent that it should be taught in all districts (compared to 55 percent in 1980). Respondents reported overwhelming support for comprehensive programs: 86 percent said that instruction should include contraceptive measures and safer sex.
Advocating for Supportive State Policies

State Standards and Family Life Education. In the mid-1990s, the New Jersey public education system, like those in many other states, went through a standards-based reform movement, in which the state developed curriculum content standards defining what students should know and be able to do at specific grade-levels. In 1992–93, the state department of education convened panels of educators, business people and other citizens to develop preliminary draft standards in seven academic areas, plus career education. Then, in 1995, similar working groups built upon the preliminary standards and engaged the public in a review process that produced several revised drafts, the last of which was put in final form by department staff.

Recognizing that state standards in health education would shape sexuality education for years to come, the Network and other Coalition members worked intensely to influence the outcome. They met to discuss salient issues and arrive at a unified set of positions; they convened a large group of experts, teachers and parents to present their case to department of education staff; and they assigned teams to speak at the department’s regional hearings to ensure that their views would be reiterated in every part of the state.

The State Board of Education approved the resulting Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards and Progress Indicators in May 1996 as part of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. Included were standards relating to health promotion and disease prevention; health-enhancing personal, interpersonal and life skills; alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; human sexuality and family life; physical education; and fitness.

The human sexuality and family life standard declared that “all students will learn the biological, social, cultural and psychological aspects of human sexuality and family life” and listed “progress indicators” (which, in effect, restored the specificity that the state board, under pressure from state legislators, had removed from the mandate in 1980). For example, the standard stipulated that students should be able:

- by the end of grade 4, to identify ways to show affection and caring that are appropriate for children;
- by the end of grade 8, to develop strategies to support sexual abstinence, and compare and contrast methods of contraception used to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and unintended pregnancy; and
- by the end of grade 12, to compare and contrast risk reduction and prevention strategies, including sexual abstinence, monogamy and methods of contraception (for a complete list of progress indicators, see Appendix C).

The state lacked a mechanism to enforce local district adherence to these progress indicators (like the statewide student assessments it required for some subjects), but they still were a major victory for the Network and the Coalition. The human sexuality and family life standard and indicators replaced the general requirements of the mandate (which allowed districts so inclined to choose abstinence-only programs) with specific directions for the key elements of comprehensive sexuality education.

Thus, the state’s human sexuality and family life standard and indicators of 1996 superseded the state board’s family life education mandate of 1980, but only after the mandate had shaped the educational environment in which the standard
was drafted and adopted. The mandate had produced a profound effect in schools throughout the state, introducing family life education in many districts and expanding and improving it in others. It also brought significant changes to teacher-preparation programs, like those of Kean University, and in-service training activities, like those of Planned Parenthood affiliates, which shaped the attitudes and pedagogy of thousands of educators. For first-hand accounts of the mandate’s impact, see Appendix D.

Policies Relating to Adolescent Pregnancy. In 1998, the Network published an analysis of teen pregnancy in New Jersey and what policymakers could do to reduce it. The study built on the ten-year-old work of the New Jersey Task Force on Adolescent Pregnancy, which the legislature had charged with developing recommendations for comprehensive programs for pregnant adolescents, parenting teens and at-risk youth. The

home, schools, community-based organizations and religious institutions. Next step: Assist schools to fully implement new core curriculum standards by providing adequate teacher training and parent education.

- Task Force recommendation: Establish an Office on Adolescent Pregnancy in the Department of Health to coordinate a comprehensive approach to the needs of pregnant and parenting adolescents and those at risk and to oversee the implementation of Task Force recommendations. Next step: Implement this recommendation.

Legislators were no more spurred to action by No Accident than by the original Task Force report, but the Network publication remains an indispensable roadmap for policymakers who are serious about lowering rates of adolescent pregnancy and providing programs for parenting teens.

Network’s study, No Accident: Adolescent Pregnancy in New Jersey Since 1988, written by Program Manager Ann Schermer, showed how little progress had been made over the decade and suggested steps to implement the original recommendations. For example:

- Task Force recommendation: Provide comprehensive health, mental health, medical and nutrition services to at-risk adolescents, pregnant and parenting teens and their children. Network’s suggested next step: Increase funding for family planning services, inform teens about their availability and initiate a statewide effort to forge strong links between these services and schools.

- Task Force recommendation: Promote a healthy view of human sexuality within the context of human development through

Taking Family Life Matters Nationwide

The 1990s also saw the Network’s first steps toward a national role, first in expanded circulation of Family Life Matters and next in national promotion of K–3 family life education publications and videos. As a sign of its new direction, the organization dropped “New Jersey” from its name in 1993.

As Family Life Matters added subscribers in other states, eventually attaining a circulation of 2,200, it gradually dropped its New Jersey focus and concentrated on practical information for teachers and youth-serving adults throughout the country. Typical issues included feature articles, book and video reviews, lesson plans, classroom “Discussion Starters” and capsule reports
on research findings and other developments designed to increase teachers' knowledge or boost their morale. The titles of articles and of Susan Wilson's editorials provide an index to changing concerns in the field (for more article topics, see Appendix E):

- Beyond "Just Say No": A Positive Approach to Abstinence (Spring 1988)
- Supporting the Needs of Gay and Lesbian Students (Spring 1993)
- Condoms: An Essential Classroom Topic (Fall 1995)
- Let's Focus on Stopping Ignorance, Not Teen Sex (Spring 1997)
- Emergency Contraception, It Can Change Our World (Winter 1999)
- Talking With Youth about Oral Sex (Fall 2000)

The newsletter won the Editorial Excellence Award of the Newsletter Publishers Foundation in 1996.

The idea seemed powerful: teens, with their strong sense of peer identification, would pay close attention to health and safety messages written by fellow teens. The Network, with its experience in publishing Family Life Matters and its extensive contacts in New Jersey, would make the necessary connections to ensure delivery of the newsletter to high school students. And, once the Network demonstrated that it could deliver such a publication, the innovative concept would be attractive to funders, permitting free distribution.

The project started small. Network staff secured a $20,000 grant from the Office of Prevention of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities of the New Jersey Department of Human Services to publish and distribute 10,000 copies of each of three issues in New Jersey. Then they recruited highly diverse high school students to serve on an editorial board that began meeting in September 1993. The threshold question was what to call a teen-to-teen newsletter that would deal largely with teen sexuality, but include articles about drugs and alcohol. One teen proposed a bold, attention-getting title: SEX, ETC. Staff and teens agreed that the name suggested just the right tone of informality and frankness. The Network shipped the first issue of SEX, ETC. to selected New Jersey high schools in early 1994.

Ground rules for the new publication were established with the first several issues. It would contain eight pages and come out three times a year; the teen editorial board would choose topics and write articles, usually consulting sexuality or health experts in the process; Network
consultants or staff with journalism expertise would train and advise the teen editors and error-check articles. The Network would then ship the newsletter free of charge to youth-serving adults—in schools, youth groups, juvenile justice centers, local health departments, family planning clinics and libraries—who would distribute copies to teens.

**Growth of SEX, ETC.** The newsletter was an instant success. Teachers and other youth-serving adults who got the first issues soon clamored for more copies. Not surprisingly, teens were avid to read articles about teen relationships, reasons to postpone sex, contraception and sexual orientation (for a list of topics, see Appendix F), written by fellow teens. The Network distributed 30,000 copies the first year, 150,000 in 1994–95 and 300,000 in 1995–96, including distribution to other states, thanks to a 1996 grant from the Educational Foundation of America. Interest in the newsletter spread fast, especially at national and regional meetings of sexuality educators, and the Network was soon responding to requests for copies from all over the country. Distribution rose to 700,000 by 1996–97, 1.3 million by 1999–2000 and 2.2 million by 2002–03.

The huge success of SEX, ETC. encouraged Network staff to develop other products and services to deepen the impact and extend the reach of what soon became known as the National Teen-to-Teen Sexuality Education Project. The first, in Spring 1997, was **Discussion Guides**, containing classroom activities and discussion topics relating to articles in each issue of the newsletter, to help adults use SEX, ETC. with teens. Another, begun in 1999–2000, was **The Roadmap: A Teen Guide to Changing Your** School’s Sex Ed, a “student action kit” to help teens conduct campaigns for better sexuality education in their schools and communities. Yet another was collaborations with “mainstream,” national media, in which SEX, ETC. editors wrote teen-to-teen columns for Teen People magazine and MTV.com.

The popularity of SEX, ETC., and the novelty of large-scale, teen-to-teen sexuality education, brought the Network new recognition. In May 1997, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy honored SEX, ETC. for “involving youth in the discussion about teen pregnancy” at a White House ceremony hosted by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. In 2001, Advocates for Youth named SEX, ETC. as winner of its first annual “Shining Star” award.

**SEX, ETC. Goes On-Line.** In 1997, Network staff began planning an on-line version of SEX, ETC. to reach teens who lacked access to the newsletter (an increasingly important factor as federally funded abstinence-only programs denied information about contraception and reproductive choice to more and more teens). After securing necessary funds, the Network unveiled the new site, www.sexetc.org, in early 1998.

One of the site’s most popular features was a section inviting teens to e-mail their most sensitive questions and receive timely, balanced, medically accurate responses from a panel of sexuality and medical professionals that the Network hired as consultants. By 2002–03, the experts were answering 15,000 questions per year—about 75 percent of them from females—and an extensive Frequently Asked Questions section enabled other teens to profit from generic versions of the...
answers. The volume of questions showed that many teens were not getting answers from schools, parents or peers. Indeed, the topics showed a disquieting level of ignorance and naiveté among youth: How do you kiss? Do guys expect you to shave your pubic hair? Does having sex mean I’ll fall in love? How can I tell if I’m gay?

Working with the SEX, ETC. editorial board, Network staff continually added new content to make the site more attractive and informative. By early 2004, in addition to “Ask the Expert,” it offered:

- over 325 articles and other features on 12 topics (e.g., deciding about sex; birth control and condoms; gay/lesbian/bisexual issues; abortion);
- an illustrated, interactive glossary of terms, hyper-linked to key words in every article;
- a “Take-Action” section encouraging teens to become advocates for better sexuality education in their schools and communities;
- a bulletin board feature allowing teen visitors to communicate with one another on selected topics; and
- a “Parents and Professionals” section providing information, lesson plans and other classroom aids for teachers and other adults who provide sexuality education to teens.

**By December 2003, the number of teens visiting the SEX, ETC. Web site had grown to 24,000 per day or 8.7 million per year.**

But numbers told only part of the story. More impressive to Network staff and funders was direct evidence from adults and teens that the Teen-to-Teen project was making a real difference. Adult feedback came in response to annual surveys that Network staff conducted among random samples of adults who distributed the newsletter to teens. Year after year, more than 95 percent of respondents expressing an opinion said that teens seem eager to read *SEX, ETC.*; it increases student willingness to discuss sex, drugs, violence and similar topics; it adds to knowledge about sexuality/health issues; and it has the potential to change readers’ attitudes about issues important to their health. Initial research by Amherst College Professor Catherine A. Sanderson, published in the *Journal of Adolescent Research,* provided support for some of these opinions. She found that positive attitudes toward postponing sexual activity and negative attitudes about drugs increased significantly among high school students who had read *SEX, ETC.*, especially African-American students.

Even more gratifying to Network staff were comments from teens from all 50 states and many foreign countries about how the newsletter or Web site had “stopped me from making a mistake that I would regret forever”; “put my mind at ease”; “made me realize that I need to . . . practice safe sex all the time”; “helped me decide to stay a virgin”; or “saved my life!” Such comments suggest the potential of the Teen-to-Teen Project to deliver vital messages to teens even if their schools adopt strict abstinence-only curricula. In that sense, teen-to-teen sexuality education, as embodied in the *SEX, ETC.* Web site—plus the availability of scores of adult-to-teen and adult-to-adult health and sexuality education Web sites—may make future battles about stress-abstinence or abstinence-only curricula less important.

Quantitative and Qualitative Success. The response of teens to the *SEX, ETC.* Web site was nothing short of astonishing. In July 1998, about 200 teens were visiting the site each day, a rate of 73,000 per year. By December 2003, this number had grown more than 100-fold, to 24,000 per day or 8.7 million per year. Adding *SEX, ETC.* and other components of the National Teen-to-Teen Sexuality Education Project to this figure, Network staff expected to deliver sexual health messages to over ten million teens in 2003–04. The Network had clearly become one of the most important sexuality education organizations in the nation.
Effects of the Stress-Abstinence Law

The effects of the stress-abstinence law (see page 24) were not yet clear in early 2004 because New Jersey did not adopt revised comprehensive health and physical education standards (as part of its revision of standards in all subject areas) until April of that year. The revision process sought to produce new standards that would be more clear, specific and rigorous; provide better guidance to teachers and the public about what students are expected to learn; and establish narrower grade spans for progress indicators (K–2, 3–4, 5–6, etc., rather than the previous K–4, 5–8 and 9–12). The new standard on relationships and sexuality contained many positive changes along those lines; for example:

- discussion of puberty, formerly required by grade 8, was now required by grade 4;
- discussion of abstinence and of resisting pressures to become sexually active, formerly required by grade 8, were now required by grade 6;
- discussion of differences between sexual feelings and acting on them, formerly required by grade 8, was now required by grade 6; and
- discussion of sexual orientation, formerly required by grade 12, was now required by grade 8 (for a complete list of progress indicators associated with the revised standard, see Appendix G).

The revised standard also included a subtle change reflecting the new law’s requirement that programs include failure rates of contraception. The old standard had said that students should be able to “compare and contrast risk reduction and prevention strategies, including sexual abstinence, monogamy and methods of contraception.” The new version said that students should be able to “compare and contrast methods of contraception, risk reduction, and risk elimination and explain how reliability . . . may influence their use.”

In view of the language of the revised standard, it is not likely that the stress-abstinence law will compromise the requirement for truly comprehensive sexuality education programs that has been official state policy since 1996. But the law also has the potential to encourage local “morality police” to embroil school districts in endless wrangling about whether they are stressing abstinence enough. In early 2004, it was impossible to tell how much damage this would do.
The Network Today

The rapid expansion of the National Teen-to-Teen Sexuality Education Project produced a sea change in the Network from 1993 to 2003. The organization that had devoted its entire budget and energy to assistance to educators and advocacy from 1981 to 1993, allocated about 85 percent of its budget for programs for teens in 2003–04. And the budgets themselves, fueled by foundations' willingness to support the new teen-to-teen paradigm, grew from $108,000 in 1990–01 to $1.3 million in 2003–04 (for a list of the Network's funders throughout its history, see Appendix H).

In the midst of these changes, the Network redefined its mission in 2001, to focus on the Teen-to-Teen project, with the aim of reaching 15 million teens per year—half the teens in America—by 2005. This new emphasis led to discontinuation of Family Life Matters (though some of its content was shifted into SEX, ETC. Discussion Guides and the “Parents and Professionals” section of the Web site), allocation of additional resources to the Web site and expansion of staffing for the Teen-to-Teen Project (for a complete list of current Network staff, see Appendix I).

But concentration on teen-to-teen programs has not been total. Recognizing the critical importance of teacher training, the Network, with support from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, expanded its professional development activities, including an annual, five-day residential summer institute for teachers, and published a teaching manual, Teaching with SEX, ETC.: Articles and Activities. And the Network continues to advocate for comprehensive sexuality education in New Jersey and at the federal level.

On the 20th anniversary of implementation of the New Jersey mandate for family life education, the future of comprehensive programs in the state seems secure. And, though the stress-abstinence law of 2002 is troubling, it seems likely that Network resources and training programs—and the common sense of the vast majority of New Jerseyans—will limit the damage it can do in the classroom. On the other hand, conservative forces on the national scene have been highly successful in funding and expanding abstinence-until-marriage programs that deprive young people of vital information. And Internet filtering systems that block access to sexuality education Web sites like www.sexetc.org are almost universal in schools and are becoming increasingly common in public libraries.

The Network for Family Life Education, a child of the mandate, has been instrumental in putting New Jersey in its favorable position. Still, given the controversial nature of the subject, it is likely to encounter strong challenges in coming years as it pursues its new mission of helping to improve sexuality education not only in New Jersey, but in the nation as a whole.
Appendix A

Network for Family Life Education
Membership, Fall 1983

(*) = Founding Member

American Academy of Pediatrics, New Jersey Chapter
American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists, New Jersey
American Association of University Women, New Jersey Division

* American Council on Healthful Living
   Association for Children of New Jersey
   Association for Community Education of New Jersey
   Communications Workers of America, New Jersey Chapter
   Dioceses of New Jersey, Family Life Bureau
   Education Information Resource Centers

* Junior League, State Public Affairs Committee
   League of Women Voters of New Jersey
   March of Dimes, New Jersey Chapter
   Montclair State College, Education Center for Human Sexuality

* National Association of Social Workers, New Jersey Chapter

* National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, New Jersey Chapter

* National Council of Jewish Women, New Jersey Chapter
   New Jersey Association of Negro Business and Professional Women
   New Jersey Association of Retarded Citizens

* New Jersey Commission on Children’s Services
   New Jersey Committee of 100 Black Women

* New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers
   New Jersey Cooperative Extension Service, Home Economics Department
   New Jersey Council on Family Relations

* New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division on Women

* New Jersey Department of Education
   New Jersey Department of Education, Parent Involvement Project

* New Jersey Department of Health

* New Jersey Department of Human Services
   New Jersey Division of Alcoholism
   New Jersey Division of Narcotic and Drug Abuse Control
   New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services
   New Jersey Education Association
   New Jersey Family Planning Forum
   New Jersey Health Education Counsel

* New Jersey Home Economics Association
   New Jersey Institute for Human Development
   New Jersey Network on Adolescent Pregnancy

* New Jersey Parenting Council

* New Jersey School Boards Association
   New Jersey School Nurses Association

* New Jersey State Board of Education
   New Jersey State Council of Family Services Agencies

* Planned Parenthood Affiliates of New Jersey
   Puerto Rican Congress of New Jersey

* Rutgers University, Cook College Department of Home Economics

* Rutgers University, Department of Community Education
   Statewide Protective Services Coalition

* Urban Council on Adolescents and Wellness, Inc.
   Urban League of New Jersey
   YWCA, New Jersey State Council
Themes and Keynote Speakers at Network for Family Life Education Annual Conferences, 1990–2003

June 1990  “Family Life Education: Directions for the 1990s,” Jacqueline Darroch Forrest, PhD, Vice President for Research, Alan Guttmacher Institute


October 1993  “Family Life Education: The Need for Boldness,” Deborah Roffman, MS, Sexuality Educator and Consultant

October 1994  “Teaching About Abstinence: Not IF, But HOW,” Marion Howard, PhD, Director, Center for Adolescent Reproductive Health, Emory University

October 1995  “Beyond Saying No: Learning Skills and Strategies that Help Students Reduce Health Risks,” Douglas Kirby, PhD, Director of Research, ETR Associates

October 1996  “A National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy: How Will New Jersey Respond?” Michael A. Carrera, EdD, Director of the National Adolescent Sexuality Training Center of the Children’s Aid Society

October 1997  “Partnership Works: Linking Resources for Successful Solutions,” Michael A. Carrera, EdD, Director of the National Adolescent Sexuality Training Center of the Children’s Aid Society


October 2000  “Breaking the Conspiracy of Silence: Communicating More Effectively with Teens About Sex and Pregnancy,” Doug Most, award-winning reporter for The Record and author of Always in Our Hearts: The Story of Amy Grossberg, Brian Peterson and the Baby They Didn’t Want

October 2001  “The New Jersey Sexuality Education Staff Development Initiative,” Linda Morse, RN, MA, Coordinator, Comprehensive Health and Physical Education, New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Standards and Professional Development

October 2002  “Male Involvement: Where are the Boys?” Wayne Pawlowski, MSW, Director of Training for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America

October 2003  “Twenty Years of Great Sex (Ed); Lessons from the Past, Plans for the Future,” Barbara Huberman, MEd, Director of Training, Advocates for Youth
Progress Indicators Associated with New Jersey’s Human Sexuality and Family Life Standard, 1996

By the end of grade 4, students should be able to:

- identify the stages of human development from conception to death;
- identify ways to show affection and caring that are appropriate for children;
- discuss how family and friends are important throughout life and that [sic] relationships require respect for others;
- explain different kinds of families and that all family members have rights, privileges, and responsibilities; and
- discuss the influence of the media on the development of gender stereotypes.

By the end of grade 8, students should be able to:

- describe the functioning of the human reproductive system and the physical and emotional changes that occur at puberty [the Network and allied organizations lost a battle to include this indicator among those required by the end of grade 4];
- describe and discuss affection, love, commitment, sexual attraction, and the difference between having sexual feelings and acting on them;
- discuss factors that support and sustain relationships such as friendships and marriage;
- describe the responsibilities of parenthood, with an emphasis on teen parenthood, and discuss the impact of parenthood on parents, family members and the child;
- discuss the impact of early sexual activity on physical, emotional and social health;
- develop strategies to support sexual abstinence, and compare and contrast methods of contraception used to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and unintended pregnancy; and
- analyze sexual messages, images and stereotypes presented in the media and discuss their impact on sexual behavior.

By the end of grade 12, students should be able to:

- describe how personal relationships evolve over time, focusing on changes in friendships, family, dating relationships and marriage;
- analyze the responsibilities, joys, demands and challenges of parenthood;
- discuss issues regarding sexual orientation, sexual harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence;
- compare and contrast risk reduction and prevention strategies, including sexual abstinence, monogamy and methods of contraception; and
- identify resources that provide information, assistance and care in addressing sexual and reproductive health and legal issues.
Appendix D

The Impact of New Jersey’s Mandate for Family Life Education: Three First-Hand Accounts

The Impact of the Mandate on an Urban District

Without the state mandated family life education program, there would be no comprehensive sexuality education in the Irvington school system. Until the mandate, the only program in the district was a "mother and daughter" night, when the school nurse showed a film about menstruation.

Urban schools struggle with poor facilities, overcrowded classrooms and minimal supplies, and they rarely have funds to initiate new programs. A new mandate forces them to institute at least minimal responses to program requirements. Irvington scrupulously followed state guidelines associated with the family life education mandate. We convened community coordinating committees, held open houses for parents at each school, used community consensus to develop curriculum and provided teacher training.

The family life education program continues today thanks to the people who fought for and supported the state mandate throughout these twenty years. We owe them thanks on behalf of all the students who have benefited from the program.

Claire Scholz, MA, former Supervisor of Family Life Education and the Intellectually Gifted Programs, Irvington (NJ) Public Schools

The Impact of the Mandate on a Suburban District

The family life education mandate served as a catalyst for the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District. It prompted development of a health curriculum that addressed topics of growth and development, sexuality and strong family life in a comprehensive and sequential manner. It gave the district permission and protection to begin a family life program in the elementary grades, instead of waiting until the secondary grades to address natural stages of human life and the responsibilities that accompany them.

The mandate also opened the door for greater communication and cooperation between district staff, parents and community members. It challenged them to work hand-in-hand to develop a comprehensive program and strive toward a common goal of healthy individuals and strong families.

Finally, the mandate motivated the district to focus greater attention on its role as a vital sexuality education resource for parents. Recognizing that parents are the primary educators of their children, the district has provided numerous parent workshops, seminars, and community meetings on topics such as growth and development, sexuality and parent/child communications skills. The district has also offered technical assistance to parents who choose to opt out of the school’s family life program.

For twenty years I’ve had the privilege of watching the West Windsor-Plainsboro School District’s family life program grow into the great program it is today. I’m convinced that the mandate is what sparked the flame for its development.

Janice Bartolini, RN, MEd, former District Director, Health Services and Health Education, West Windsor/Plainsboro (NJ) School District

The Impact of the Mandate on a Teacher Training Center

Soon after adoption of the mandate, Planned Parenthood of Bergen County changed the name of its Education Department to the Center for Family Life Education, signaling its commitment to the new initiative by providing resources and professional training for sexuality education. In 1985, I left teaching and soon became Director of the Center, where I provided graduate courses in family life education sponsored by Jersey City State College. Inspired by the mandate, hundreds of teachers, supported by their districts, took these courses, which provided a comprehensive approach to sexuality education that focused on values clarification, problem-solving, decision-making and a life-span perspective. Years later, teachers continue to report the impact of the pedagogy they learned, particularly strategies for actively involving students in thinking about their lives, their futures, their choices.

Perhaps the mandate’s most important contribution has been the stimulus it provided for development of the Center’s teaching manuals, which changed the way many educators throughout the state and the nation taught “sex ed.” These manuals rejected the traditional prevention approach that focused on the dangers of sex, in favor of a comprehensive approach that examined sexuality from anthropological, historical, psychological and sociological perspectives and emphasized responsible personal decision-making.

Peggy Brick, MEd, Sexuality Education Consultant and former Director of the Center for Family Life Education, Planned Parenthood of Greater Northern New Jersey
Representative Topics of *Family Life Matters* Articles, 1988–2001

**Editorials (by Susan Wilson)**
- Invite Your Legislators to Class (Spring 1994)
- Farewell to the Fallopian Tubes (Fall 1995)
- When Teens Speak, Do Adults Really Listen? (Winter 1996)
- Let’s Focus on Stopping Ignorance, Not Teen Sex (Spring 1997)
- Politicians: Our New Sexuality Educators? (Winter 1997)
- Expanding Young Women’s Freedom and Sexual Rights (Fall 1999)
- Adolescents as Our Advocates (Winter 2001)

**Discussion Starters**
- Choosing Methods of Protection (Spring 1996)
- You’re a Pregnant Teen: What Do You Do? (Spring 1997)
- Helping Teens Understand Babies’ Needs (Fall 1997)
- Emergency Contraception Quiz (Spring 2000)

**Articles**
- Beyond “Just Say No”: A Positive Approach to Abstinence (Spring 1988)
- Preventing Acquaintance Rape (Fall 1991)
- Addressing Sexual Pleasure in the Classroom (Fall 1992)
- Helping Teens Postpone Sexual Involvement (Spring 1993)
- Talking with Young Children about Masturbation (Spring 1993)
- Supporting the Needs of Gay and Lesbian Students (Spring 1993)
- HIV/AIDS: What Every Student Should Know (Fall 1994)
- Condoms: An Essential Classroom Topic (Fall 1995)
- Values, Family Life Education and Democracy: An Interview with Amy Gutmann (Winter 1995)
- Teaching about Marriage: The Forgotten Subject (Spring 1996)
- Integrating Multiculturalism into Sex Education (Spring 1996)
- Inner-City Teens: Sex and Violence on “The Streets” (Spring 1997)
- Child Sexual Assault: What You Should Know; What You Can Do (Winter 1997)
- The Basics on Abortion: What Educators Need to Know (Spring 1998)
- Sexual Harassment: A Primer for Educators (Fall 1998)
- Latino/Latina Youth: Special Challenges, Special Opportunities (Winter 1998)
- Web Sites for Teachers and Teens (Winter 1998)
- Emergency Contraception: It Can Change Our World: An Interview with James Trussell (Winter 1999)
- Abstinence: Myths versus Facts (Spring 2000)
- Talking with Youth about Oral Sex (Fall 2000)
- HPV: What You (and Teens) Need to Know (Fall 2000)
- Homophobia: How to Fight It (Winter 2000)
- What Works? An Interview with Douglas Kirby (Fall 2001)
- Helping Parents Think and Talk about Sex: An Interview with Deborah Roffman (Winter 2001)
- Teaching the Developmentally Disabled (Winter 2001)
Appendix F

Representative Topics of SEX, ETC. Articles, 1993–2003

To Have Sex or Not?
Pros and cons of virginity
Why more teens are postponing sex
Guys can be virgins too
A teen couple that’s saving sex for marriage
Why some teens wish they’d waited

Safer Sex
The importance of using condoms correctly and consistently
Why responsible sex means visiting a medical clinic
Emergency contraception pills: how they work and how to get them
Sexually transmitted infections—and how to avoid them
What it’s like to get tested for AIDS
Oral sex: is it “sex”? is it safe?
Why alcohol and sex are a dangerous combination

Relationships
How sexual stereotypes prevent females from feeling pleasure
How to deal with betrayal in a relationship
Does sex equal love?
Why some teens say friendship should precede sex
How to tell when to end a relationship
Intimacy: the real road to closeness

Gay and Lesbian Issues
Why homophobia is wrong and how to fight it
Being gay: what’s it like?
How to stop harassment in the hallways
How gay and lesbian teens can find support

Pregnancy and Parenting
First-hand views on how parenting changes teens’ lives
Pregnancy choices: abortion, teen parenthood or adoption
Why some teen girls want to become parents
How to tell your parents you’re pregnant

Violence and Abuse
Abusive relationships and how to get out of them
Rape and sexual assault: what teens need to know
Sexual abuse: a survivor’s story
The invisible wounds inflicted by emotional abuse

Other
Sexuality and disability: how disabled teens cope
What it’s like to live with HIV
Older guys: dreamy or dangerous?
How to fight for better sex ed
How to guard against the dangers of cyberdating
What’s so bad about masturbation?
How teens can get parents and teachers talking about sex
Appendix G

Cumulative Progress Indicators Associated with New Jersey’s Revised Human Sexuality and Family Life Standard, 2004

By the end of Grade 2, students will:

**Relationships**
- Identify different kinds of families and explain that families may differ for many reasons.
- Explain that all family members have certain rights and responsibilities that contribute to the successful functioning of the family.
- Explain that families experiencing a change or crisis can get help if they need it.
- Define friendship and explain that friends are important throughout life.
- Identify appropriate ways for children to show affection and caring.

**Sexuality**
- Explain the physical differences and similarities of the genders.

**Pregnancy and Parenting**
- Explain that human beings develop inside their birth mother, are helpless when born, and must be fed, clothed, and nurtured.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 4, students will:

**Relationships**
- Describe different kinds of families and discuss how families can share love, values, and traditions, provide emotional support, and set boundaries and limits.
- Compare the roles, rights, and responsibilities of various family members.
- Discuss ways that families adjust to changes in the nature or structure of the family.
- Discuss how culture and tradition influence personal and family development.
- Discuss factors that support healthy relationships with friends and family.
- Describe the characteristics of a friend.
- Describe appropriate ways to show affection and caring.

**Sexuality**
- Describe the physical, social, and emotional changes occurring at puberty.
- Discuss why puberty begins and ends at different ages for different people.

**Pregnancy and Parenting**
- Explain that after fertilization, cells divide to create a fetus/embryo that grows and develops inside the uterus during pregnancy.
- Discuss how the health of the birth mother impacts the development of the fetus.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 6, students will:

**Relationships**
- Compare and contrast the interconnected and cooperative roles of family members.
- Investigate ways that individuals and families enhance and support social and emotional health and meet basic human needs.
- Describe the characteristics of a healthy relationship and discuss factors that support and sustain it.
- Describe how peer relationships may change during adolescence.
- Discuss different forms of dating and explain the role of dating in personal growth.
Appendix G

Sexuality
- Describe the individual growth patterns of males and females during adolescence.
- Discuss strategies to remain abstinent and resist pressures to become sexually active.
- Discuss the possible physical, social, and emotional impacts of adolescent sexual activity.
- Describe behaviors that place one at risk for HIV/AIDS, STDs, or unintended pregnancy.
- Identify sexual feelings common to young adolescents and differentiate between having sexual feelings and acting on them.
- Discuss how parents, peers, and the media influence attitudes about sexuality.

Pregnancy and Parenting
- Discuss fertilization, embryonic development, and fetal development.
- Describe the signs and symptoms of pregnancy.
- Recommend prenatal practices that support a healthy pregnancy.
- Discuss the potential challenges faced by adolescent parents and their families.
- Recommend sources of information and help for parents.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 8, students will:

Relationships
- Compare and contrast the current and historical role of marriage and the family in community and society.
- Discuss changes in family structures and the forces that influence change.
- Analyze how relationships evolve over time, focusing on changes in friendships, family, dating relationships, and lifetime commitments such as marriage.
- Discuss factors that enhance and sustain loving, healthy relationships.
- Describe how various cultures date or select life partners.
- Differentiate among affection, love, commitment, and sexual attraction.
- Describe the signs of an unhealthy relationship and develop strategies to end it.
- Develop standards for dating situations, such as dating in groups, setting limits, or only dating someone of the same age.

Sexuality
- Discuss the influence of hormones, heredity, nutrition, and the environment on the physical, social, and emotional changes that occur at puberty.
- Analyze internal and external pressures to become sexually active.
- Describe the physical, emotional, and social benefits of sexual abstinence and develop strategies to resist pressures to become sexually active.
- Discuss the potential short- and long-term physical, emotional, and social impacts of adolescent sexual activity.
- Analyze how certain behaviors place one at greater risk for HIV/AIDS, STDs, and unintended pregnancy.
- Compare and contrast methods of contraception, risk reduction, and risk elimination and explain how reliability, religious beliefs, age, gender, health history, and cost may influence their use.
- Discuss topics regarding sexual orientation.
- Discuss the importance of routine healthcare procedures such as breast self examination and testicular examination.

Pregnancy and Parenting
- Describe fertilization and each stage of embryonic and fetal development.
- Discuss the signs and symptoms of pregnancy and explain how pregnancy is confirmed.
- Analyze the physical and emotional changes that occur during each stage of pregnancy, including the stages of labor and childbirth.
- Discuss the importance of regular prenatal care to help prevent complications that may occur during pregnancy and childbirth.
- Describe the potential impact of alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, medicines, diseases, and environmental hazards on pre-natal and post-natal development.
Appendix G

- Describe the physical, economic, emotional, social, cultural and intellectual responsibilities of parenthood.
- Describe effective parenting strategies and resources for help with parenting.
- Analyze the challenges and responsibilities of being a teen mother and/or teen father.

Building upon knowledge and skills gained in preceding grades, by the end of Grade 12, students will:

Relationships
- Investigate how different family structures, values, rituals, and traditions meet basic human needs.
- Discuss how personal independence, past experiences, and social responsibility influence the choice of friends in young adulthood.
- Recommend strategies to enhance and maintain mature, loving, respectful, and healthy relationships.
- Compare and contrast adolescent and adult dating practices.
- Describe the important characteristics of a spouse or life partner and describe factors to consider when contemplating a lifetime commitment such as marriage.
- Discuss the importance of physical and emotional intimacy in a healthy relationship.
- Develop strategies to address domestic or dating violence and end unhealthy relationships.

Sexuality
- Appraise internal and external influences and pressures to become sexually active and demonstrate strategies to resist those pressures.
- Critique behaviors that place one at greater risk for HIV/AIDS, STDs, and unintended pregnancy.
- Analyze factors that influence the choice, use, and effectiveness of contraception, risk reduction, or risk elimination strategies.
- Predict how cultural and religious beliefs, popular trends and fads, and current and emerging technological advances influence sexuality and reproductive health.
- Investigate current and emerging topics related to sexual orientation.
- Investigate female and male reproductive and sexual health issues and discuss the importance of education and preventive healthcare (e.g., breast/testicular exam).

Pregnancy and Childbirth
- Compare and contrast embryonic and fetal development in single and multiple pregnancies.
- Describe the stages of labor and childbirth and compare childbirth options.
- Analyze the physical and emotional changes that occur during each trimester of pregnancy and postpartum.
- Compare and contrast pregnancy options.
- Discuss physical, emotional, social, cultural, religious, and legal issues related to pregnancy termination.
- Investigate the relationship between prenatal exposure to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, infections, and environmental hazards and the incidence of fetal alcohol syndrome, sudden infant death syndrome, low birth weight, and disabilities.
- Analyze the physical, economic, emotional, social, intellectual, and cultural demands of raising a child.
- Assess and evaluate parenting strategies used at various stages of child development.
- Investigate the legal rights and responsibilities of teen mothers and fathers.
- Discuss factors that influence the decision to have or to adopt a child.
- Analyze trends in teen pregnancy rates, teen births, and out-of-wedlock births, considering shifts in marriage patterns, sexual norms, contraceptive practices, the availability of abortion, and the size and composition of the teen population.
Network for Family Life Education

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Appendix H

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Appendix I

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Danene Sorace, MPP, Program Manager
Joyce Copleman, Office Assistant
Maryhelen Dzuban, Administrative Assistant
Nora Gelperin, MEd, Training Coordinator
Diane Ireland, MBA, Web Producer
Ellen Papazian, Managing Editor
Valerie Pogue, Project Assistant
Silyn Solomon, Publications Coordinator
Patricia Stush, Director of Development
Joyce Szabo, Office Manager
Sources

Archives of the Network for Family Life Education, Center for Applied Psychology, Rutgers University Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology.


