



## **Definitions of Abstinence-Based, Abstinence-Only, Abstinence-Only Until Marriage, and Comprehensive Human Sexuality Programs**

During the spring of 2007 representatives from the Florida Departments of Education and Health attended a national capacity building meeting sponsored by the National Coalition of STD Directors, National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors, The Society of State Directors and the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs. During this meeting the Florida Adolescent Sexual Health Committee was formed. The Mission of the Florida Adolescent and Sexual Health Committee is to work collaboratively to provide support for coordinated efforts to promote a healthy lifestyle among adolescents through prevention of teen pregnancy, STD and HIV. One of our goals is to provide information and resources to the public. In that vein, the committee has compiled definitions of the various types of programs that exist to prevent students from being involved in sexual risk behaviors.

Florida State Statute 1003.42 (2)(n) requires comprehensive health education which incorporates both sex education and disease prevention, and includes language on the awareness of the benefits of sexual abstinence as the expected standard and the consequences of teenage pregnancy. Specific content in any subject matter is determined by local school district policy which gives districts the latitude to determine the type of family life (sexual health education) program that is implemented. The different types of programs are defined below:

**Abstinence-Based (Plus):** emphasizes the benefits of abstinence; includes information about non-coital sexual behavior, contraception, and disease prevention methods; also referred to as abstinence-plus or abstinence-centered.

**Abstinence-Only:** emphasizes abstinence from all sexual behaviors; may not include information regarding contraception, except in terms of failure rates, or disease prevention methods.

**Abstinence-Only Until Marriage:** emphasizes abstinence from all sexual behaviors outside of marriage; may not include any information about contraception, except in terms of failure rates, or disease-prevention methods; typically presents marriage as the only morally correct context for all sexual activity.

**Comprehensive Sexuality Education:** K-12 sexuality education programs view sexuality education as a lifelong process and address sexual development, reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image, gender roles, abstinence, and contraceptive options.

### Sources

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National Guidelines Task Force, 1996