

# Comprehensive Sexual Health Education & the California Healthy Youth Act

## TAKE ACTION!

*Under a new law, California students must be taught sexual health education, to help them make healthy decisions and have healthy relationships.*

The California Healthy Youth Act (CHYA) requires that, starting in 2016, California public schools teach medically accurate, age-appropriate, LGBTQ-inclusive<sup>1</sup> comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education to middle school and high school students. The law was expanded to include charter schools, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. Studies show that when science-based comprehensive sexual health education supports a diverse range of young people, it helps students become healthier and more successful adults.<sup>2</sup> For more information about comprehensive sexual health education, read our Parent Fact Sheet.<sup>3</sup>

*Without your help, your local schools may not provide the quality sexual health education required by law.*

The education community, including the California PTA, supported the passage of the California Healthy Youth Act. But passing the law was just the first step—now action must be taken by school districts across the state to adopt sexual health education that aligns with the law. To make the promise of the California Healthy Youth Act a reality in classrooms, students need parents and community members like you to become advocates.



While many school districts recognize the value of the comprehensive, inclusive sexual health education required by the California Healthy Youth Act, they may not yet have taken the time to implement the new law and would benefit from hearing that this is a priority for your family and community. Other districts may be reluctant to adopt sexual health education that meets the requirements of the California

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<sup>1</sup> Instruction cannot in any way be biased against people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ).

<sup>2</sup> FUTURE OF SEX EDUCATION (FOSE), Comprehensive Sex Education: Research and Results (2009), <http://www.futureofsexed.org/compsexed.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Available at [www.aclunc.org/sex\\_ed](http://www.aclunc.org/sex_ed).

Healthy Youth Act without parental and community pressure. And still others may not even know about the new law or about how comprehensive, inclusive sexual health education benefits young people.

*Advocacy by parents and community members makes all the difference.*

Parents and guardians play an indispensable role in preparing young people for the future. Conversations at home about issues like puberty, consent, sex, gender, and relationships help students with healthy development. An overwhelming majority of California parents also support complementing these conversations at home with science-based sexual health education in school.

As parents/guardians and community members, your involvement is critical for making sure your local schools are teaching the comprehensive sexual health education students need to make informed decisions about their relationships and their health. School boards and district administrators value parents' perspectives and respond to parent advocacy—parents and guardians just like you have made dramatic changes in their schools' sexual health education. Join them!

The ACLU of California and Bay Area Communities for Health (BACHE) have created a parent advocacy toolkit titled “Be the Change: Advocacy Toolkit for Ensuring Your Local Schools Provide Comprehensive Sexual Health Education” with a quick and easy overview of the actions you can take in your local school district.

**You can access our parent advocacy toolkit at:**

<https://www.aclunc.org/our-work/know-your-rights-sex-ed-advocacy-toolkit>

