

Parents for Choice in Education on Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Alberta



www.parentchoice.ca

In the [Edmonton Journal](#), [Andre Grace at the University of Alberta](#) has stated his wish-list as the province engages in a re-write of Alberta's Sexual Health Education Curriculum, to "give good, *comprehensive sex ed*".

Professor Grace, in several different resources and articles claims that Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) should include the topics of [consent, same sex attraction, pornography and sexting](#).

Parents for Choice in Education believes that parents deserve more than merely an "opt-out" option. Rather, schools should be required to obtain consent (as an "opt-in") from parents, before teaching children any sensitive material in schools.

Parents must be informed of what will be taught, by whom, and by what method it will be taught, and have access to this curriculum so they can discern for themselves their children will actually benefit from this information, or are ready for it, in part or full. The school should be required to have consent from parents, in writing, before students are included in these classes. There are six reasons why:

- 1) Even in a single grade, all children have differing intellectual development and maturity levels, and parents are in the best position to discern whether a child is ready for the material that may be presented in each grade level's sexual education lesson plan.
- 2) Parents may choose to teach sexual education in the safety and privacy of their own homes, because they have deeply sensitive children who would be traumatized if forced to learn this material in a class (for example, children on the autism spectrum, or very shy children).
- 3) Families come from a wide variety of traditions. In some families, the perspective of the sex education they provide must have a stronger focus on abstinence and risk, and less focus on consent or pleasure. Parents, as the primary educators of their children, should be the ones to decide how sexual education will be transmitted to their children. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that parents have the prior right to decide the kind of education that shall be given to their children.
- 4) There are children in care, and guardians (such as foster parents), who may be aware of previous sexual abuse some children have faced. Sexual education classes could be very

traumatising to these children, therefore it is essential that knowledge of what materials will be taught is provided to these homes prior to their introduction in the classroom.

- 5) By providing the materials and lesson plans to all parents who wish to teach the material at home, parents have access to the material. In contrast, an “opt-out” leaves both parents and students ignorant of the material and lessons, even if parents would wish to teach it in the safety and privacy of their homes.
- 6) Parents know their children best, and should therefore be informed of any counselling and teaching their children may be exposed to in school, especially that related to sexual identity and education, so that parents can support their children going forward.

As for what should be added to any rewrite of Sex Education in Alberta:

First and foremost, if we look to the controversy in Ontario with Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), the primary concern of parents is that the new curriculum is not age appropriate. We will have to wait and see if the re-write here will be.

Let’s just look at recent news on what people are calling for in the re-write:

As stated earlier, Dr. Andre Grace has been reported as claiming that [consent, same sex attraction, pornography and sexting](#) be added to the Alberta curriculum.

He also cites from his book, “[Growing into Resilience](#)”, regarding LGBTQ youth:

“...future research on SGM youth should focus on sexual and social well-being, non-heterosexual identities and sexual behaviours, same sex desire, pleasure, intimacy, emotional commitment, and sexual satisfaction as critical aspects of positive sexuality development.”

What these articles ignore is the fact that children are not psychologically or emotionally mature. As many studies show, children are not miniature adults. For example, Dr. Miriam Grossman (Child psychologist, psychiatrist and medical doctor) states: “the adolescent brain functions differently from an adult. The area responsible for reasoning, suppression of impulses and weighing the pros and cons of one’s decisions is not fully developed...Under conditions that are novel and stimulating teens’ decisions are more likely to be short-sighted and driven by emotion.”

Imagine children in a classroom setting learning about pleasure, consent, pornography, sexting and same sex attraction. Such material would be novel and stimulating to students, and dangerous when presented without all the facts.

Many parents are asking: “What about abstinence, and risk of harm?”

Going back to the Ontario revamp, while Andre Grace claims additions are needed because they would be beneficial to students here in Alberta, in Ontario these topics were added with very little information regarding the increased risks youth face when they engage in sexual exploration.

Will Alberta do a better job of informing children and their parents of the dangers youth face if they choose to seek ‘consent’ from their peers, to engage in ‘pleasurable’ sexual encounters?

When we teach children the dangers of smoking they are told the “nitty-gritty” details, and are even shown images of blackened lungs and yellow teeth, and are warned of the early death they may face due to cancer. Yet much of the scientifically known risk factors of early sexual engagement are glossed over in Ontario’s ‘comprehensive’ sexual education (CSE) curriculum, which in fact is not ‘comprehensive’ at all.

To list just a few of the risk factors ignored by Ontario’s new curriculum:

- 1) Women, especially teenage girls, are at a far higher risk for sexually transmitted diseases, due to the immaturity of their cervix.
- 2) Boys and girls who engage in certain modalities of sexual relations with the same sex or heterosexual partners (to avoid pregnancy) are at higher risk for sexually transmitted disease, as the biological tissues of the rectum is thinner and leads directly to the lymphatic system. This is basic science, and children and parents have the right to know.
- 3) Some safe sex options like oral sex (often described as good alternatives in curriculum, to avoid pregnancy) are taught without acknowledgement of the fact that the papilloma virus that can lead to cancer in women, and can also lead to tonsil and throat cancer in men and women, throwing the whole idea of ‘safer’ options into disrepute.
- 4) Finally, many parents don’t even realize that when they are intimate with one another the human body releases oxytocin, which is the same chemical released by a mother when breast-feeding, which increases the emotional bond between mother and child. This emotional bonding is increased in girls because estrogen boosts the effect of oxytocin. However, emotional bonding is decreased in boys by testosterone, because testosterone has the opposite effect. This means that for girls there can be a long-term psychological damage created when numerous intimate relationships break down.

All of these risk factors are ignored in the Ontario CSE program. Parents in Alberta deserve to know that these risk factors can cause long-term damage to the lives of their children. Parents must not be ignored in any re-write of the sexual education curriculum here in Alberta.

Most Importantly:

“Recent studies overwhelmingly confirm that good parenting has a significant, enduring and protective influence on adolescent development.” (Miriam Grossman, MD)

“There is an “93% drop in suicide attempts among youth with strongly supportive parents.”
(Trans Pulse Project-2015 Canadian Press document on Transgender Numbers)

Parents should never be in the dark as it relates to the needs of their children in school, whether that is counselling or education.

To see more from Miriam Grossman, MD go to these links:

[You’re Teaching My Child What? – Heritage Lectures](#)

[Ontario Sexual Education Curriculum Exposed](#)