



Health Standards Talking Points for *Parents and Caregivers*

WHY YOUNG PEOPLE NEED EFFECTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION

- If someone is old enough to ask, they are old enough to hear the correct answer and learn the correct words. We, as parents and caregivers, honor young people's curiosity while also providing important guidance around the information sought.
- Parents and educators need to be credible communicators, and we must provide young people with a consistent source of clear and accurate information. If the trusted adults in their lives, either parents or educators, provide young people with misinformation, our students will lose trust in us.
- It is not enough for programs to include discussions of abstinence and contraception to help young people avoid unintended pregnancy or disease. They also need to be introduced to essential, age-appropriate concepts such as gender identity and expression, sexual orientation and safety lessons on consent and safe touch to minimize sexual abuse. Comprehensive sex education provides young people with honest, age-appropriate information and skills necessary to help them take personal responsibility for their health and well-being.
- Health standards that reflect all students' identities create affirming and protective school environments that are linked to emotional well-being and academic success.
- Health education should occur throughout a student's grade levels, with information appropriate to students' development and cultural background.

PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS ROLE IN SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION

- As parents, we are the primary educators of young people and we understand that youth want to discuss sex, relationships and healthy relationships with trusted adults. As caregivers, we have to remove barriers to accessing complete and age-appropriate information that will help answer young people's questions and supplement the health education that they receive from credible educators in safe school environments.
- As parents, we support education that empowers youth to make healthy choices. This includes respecting young people, acknowledging their need for accurate information and believing they can and will act responsibly when they have the tools and information they need to make responsible decisions.
- Health education that is age appropriate and complete, honest and inclusive should be the standard for all students in Nebraska. Early, age-appropriate conversations protect students' well-being and their ability to make informed decisions about relationships in their lives.
- Nationally, parents and caregivers overwhelming support instruction on abstinence, birth control, STIs, healthy relationships, sexual orientation and puberty in both middle and high school. Effective health education is age-appropriate, complete, honest, inclusive and equitable.