I learned about sex a very young age, only because my brothers were older than me and their friends would always talk about it. Most of the things I learned about sex and any kind of prevention came from television or from word of mouth, and from overhearing what my older siblings talked about amongst themselves and their friends. When I hear parents talk about there being no need for sex education to be in our school system, it makes me wonder why they get so upset. What is wrong with middle and high school children learning about sex from an educator?

Sex is everywhere in our society. We see it in our public offices and on the national tabloids and local newspapers. Every day there is something flashing in front of our children’s eyes or clogging their ears with the ideas of sex. Just last week the world was shocked with a tween celebrity, Justin Bieber, being accused of fathering a child out of wedlock, in a concert hall bathroom. Another surprise to the political world, GOP candidate Herman Cain is being accused of sexual harassment and misconduct by several female employees back in the earlier 90’s. We see sexual images flashed all over television commercials and splashed over the pages of popular newsstand magazines. “Adolescents face a barrage of inaccurate, unrealistic media messages on sexuality, particularly about body image, sexual performance, making sexual approaches, and gay and lesbian issues” (Kevan, 488). Yet parents still protest the idea of sex being taught to their child at school.
We all need to wake up and see that teen pregnancy is happening at an alarming rate in this country. The rates may only be at 10%, but that is still too high and steps must be taken to help these teens make better decisions and practice safe sex or abstinence. When sexually transmitted infections, or STIs, are on the rise as well, when will we stop and see that sex education needs to be a part of our children’s education curriculum? I’m not talking about teaching them sex positions, but the safety measures and contraceptives that need to be applied if one chooses to engage in sexual activities. Many young people don’t know that sexually transmitted infections can be passed between one another by simply touching. And many more have the mentality that “it can’t happen to me” and do not think twice about the consequences of their actions. Not only is pregnancy a life changing event, so is contracting the HIV/AIDS virus and any other sexually transmitted disease. They can have permanent physical effects on your body and many can lead to death if untreated. “One-fifth of young people believe they would simply "know" if someone else had a sexually transmitted infection even if they were not tested, and one-sixth believe that transmission can only occur when obvious symptoms are present” (Anderson, 101).

Our youth needs to know about the reality of sex; the good and bad consequences of engaging in it. The more information that is out there and the more our children are educated on the subject, the better decisions they will make when it comes to their own sex life. We as a society need to take sex completely out of everyday life and keep it off the shelves for our children, or start being responsible and educating them on what it all means. “A study of 1,700 teens indicates that the more sexual the content they view on television, the more likely teens are to engage in sexual intercourse” (Anderson, 89). There is no sense in telling our educators
that we don’t want to our children to learn about sex in school, but be okay with it being accessed in every other way and our children having misguided ideas about sex. The school system needs to have mandatory classes in middle school and high school for sex education. Just like in Math class, the longer you study and the more refresher courses you take, the better you will understand the material. That is what we need to do with sex education in the school systems.

Our teachers should be allowed to educate our children on this matter and allow students to talk among their peers about the subject. As a teenager, talking about sex with my parents was extremely awkward and uncomfortable for me. It would have been a lot easier to have a class and talk with peers and an educator about a lot of the issues that faced me then. The real problem is not whether parents will allow these courses to be taught in school, because most of us have been involved with some form of sex education in our middle or high school years. It really does come down to what we want taught and the effectiveness of the message that is brought to our children. Many also believe that it is a political issue, since parents do not control what the basis of our school’s curriculum on sex education is. “The problem with sex education in this country is that it has become politicized. Instead of sex education being about providing young people with information and skills so they can decide for themselves, it has become a question of: ‘Should we tell them to do it or not to do it?’”(Feeriman, 24)

We should continue to fight for sex education in our school systems. As a parent, if you do not feel comfortable with what is being taught, you can sign your child out of class for that period of time that this part of the lesson comes up. Just remember, our children are
influenced strongly by their peers and spend most of their time in the care of educators. Would you rather they learn the lessons the hard way or be strongly informed of the consequences of their actions?
