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[Home](#) > Let's Talk About SEX?Education

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Until recently, California law required sex education classes to discuss abstinence from sexual intercourse - this approach focused specifically on heterosexual abstinence and pregnancy prevention and excluded LGBTQ youth. Fortunately, due to [SB 71](#) ^[1], **the law was revised in 2004 to make sex education more inclusive**. That's the good news! **But seven years later, what's *really* happening in California sex education classes?**

GSA Network did a little digging and here's what we found out - In one of California's most popular comprehensive sexual education curricula you will find the following True/False questions listed in a post-test:

Question: Sexual Abstinence is 100% effective in preventing pregnancy.

And the answer is...TRUE! Or is it?

If by sexual abstinence we mean penis/vagina intercourse, then yes, it is absolutely true. But sex does not always involve penis/vagina intercourse. Anal intercourse (between two men or between two women), or penetrative vaginal sex with hands or toys for example, is also 100% effective at preventing pregnancy.

No doubt it is VERY important to teach young people about the effectiveness of abstinence from penis/vagina sex in pregnancy prevention, but when sex education lessons imply that all sex looks stereotypically ?heterosexual? here's what happens:

- **LGBTQ youth are made to feel invisible**
- **LGBTQ youth do not have access to [information](#) ^[2] that will keep them safe and healthy**
- **When LGBTQ youth do not see themselves represented in the curriculum they are more likely to tune out, even during parts of the lesson that may actually be relevant to them, such as building healthy relationships, sexual abuse, drug use and more**

And that's the bad news for LGBTQ youth. But what about straight youth? Many sexual health educators have noticed a trend among young girls who have anal sex as a method of birth

control. This news is alarming considering the fact that pregnancy is still a risk and because the risk of HIV contraction is higher with anal sex. **So, when we teach hetero-centric sex education that stereotypes heterosexuality, we miss important teaching opportunities for ALL young people.**

If you are not getting the sex education you deserve in school, check out these resources:

[Teen Source](#) [2]

[Stop, Think, Be Safe](#) [3]

[Advocates for Youth](#) [4]

[Sex, etc.](#) [5]

And if that still isn't enough, you can [fight for the education you deserve](#) [6] by talking to your teachers and school administrators!

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Links

[1] <https://gsanetwork.org/resources/legal-resources/sb-71-fact-sheet>

[2] <http://www.teensource.org/pages/>

[3] <http://www.stophinkbesafe.org/youngPeople/index.asp>

[4] <http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/>

[5] <http://www.sexetc.org/topic/lgbtq>

[6] <https://gsanetwork.org/get-involved/change-your-school>