

## Comprehensive Sexuality Education

**In a healthy community**, public schools are required to provide medically accurate, age-appropriate comprehensive sexuality education that includes information about abstinence as well as contraception. In a healthy community, sexuality education classes respect the needs of all students, including those who have already had sexual intercourse, are HIV-positive, or are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.

**Getting Started:** There are laws and policies at the federal, state, and local levels that have an impact on your community's ability to provide comprehensive sexuality education in its public schools. Before moving ahead on this checklist, refer to the Plan A Grassroots Toolkit for tips on how to find out about the laws and policies in your area. This information will be critical in helping you assess the unique situation in your community.

- 1. Do your community's public schools offer sexuality education classes?
- 2. What curricula do the schools use?
- 3. At what grade levels are these classes offered?
- 4. Are the sexuality education classes in your community's public schools medically accurate?
- 5. Are the sexuality education classes age appropriate?
- 6. Is parental permission required for these classes?
- 7. Do the classes provide comprehensive information about all contraceptives, including success and failure rates, as they relate to pregnancy prevention and risk reduction for sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?
- 8. Do the classes teach abstinence as the only sure way to avoid pregnancy and STIs?
- 9. Do the classes stress the value of abstinence without ignoring young people who have had sexual intercourse?
- 10. Is the curriculum restricted to abstinence-only-until-marriage?
- 11. Is the curriculum sensitive to lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender (LGBT) issues?
- 12. Does the curriculum promote a single religious belief?
- 13. Are outside speakers invited to the class to talk about human sexuality or abstinence-related issues? If so, who?

### "I want to go further..."

- 1. What is the rate of teen sexual activity in your community?
- 2. What is the adolescent pregnancy rate?
- 3. What is the rate of sexually transmitted infections among young people?
- 4. Does the public school sexuality curriculum promote gender stereotypes?
- 5. Is the curriculum sensitive to HIV-positive young people and to the needs of sexual assault survivors?