



Selecting Authentic Sexual Risk Avoidance (SRA) Curricula

Sexual health professionals who want to provide optimal sexual health messages for youth seek curricula that:

- has evidence of effectiveness (evidence based)
- provides clear risk avoidance information and skills (prioritizes a 'wait for sex' message)

This document summarizes authentic SRA curricula that have research showing positive behavioral impact for the students they serve. Of course, Ascend does not endorse any curriculum but provides the following information so that organizations have a starting point for selecting a curriculum that is research-based and that meets the needs of the communities and students receiving programming. Medical accuracy of curriculum content should be confirmed directly through the curriculum publisher. Ascend recommends that organizations are deliberate and intentional in the selection of curriculum.

Disclaimer: Other curricula may be promising or may have research showing effectiveness prior to 2000. Additional curriculum is included in SRA Works¹ that does not promote a clear "waiting for sex until marriage" message and is therefore not included in this document. The inclusion of curricula in this document shall not be interpreted to be an endorsement by Ascend.

Steps in the Curriculum Selection Process

1. Learn more about various curricula by consulting the websites of the curricula publishers.
2. Request a preview copy of the curricula of greatest interest.
3. Ask publisher how they assure that their curriculum is medically accurate.
4. Review each requested curriculum, evaluating how it fits the needs, educational style and age appropriateness for your targeted student population.
5. Evaluate your top selections against the parameters detailed in the SMARTool evaluation tool, which can be accessed at <https://www.myrelationshipcenter.org/resources/smartool>
6. Select the curriculum that best fits your needs.
7. It is strongly recommended that your educators be trained to correctly implement the curriculum. Most publishers offer such training.
8. It is also strongly recommended that all leadership and educator staff positions receive the SRAS (Sexual Risk Avoidance Specialist) certification from Ascend prior to implementing an SRA program in the community.

For more information, contact Ascend at info@WeAscend.org or call 202-248-5420

The following SRA curricula have recent ² independent research of effectiveness. Consult the Ascend publication SRA Works or contact the curriculum publisher for more detail on research.¹

Curriculum	Description	Publisher
<p><i>Aspire</i></p>	<p>Description: <i>Aspire</i> is an eight chapter workbook that helps students understand the benefits of reserving all sexual activity and childbearing for marriage. <i>Aspire</i> helps teens consider their future hopes and dreams using an inductive method that encourages interaction and greater understanding. Students learn the difference between risk reduction and risk elimination. <i>Aspire</i> encourages academic excellence and includes healthy decision-making skills for avoiding drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and pornography. <i>Aspire</i> is a research-based program and is regularly updated with the latest information from the Centers for Disease Control. The <i>Aspire Teacher's Guide</i> provides activities and PowerPoint presentation and activities. Grades 8-12. <i>Aspire</i> is one of a four part series from A&M.</p> <p>The Research: Results indicate program success in demonstrating statistically significant gains for participants who completed the program in the areas of "Intent to Practice Abstinence" and "Practice of SRA Behavior". At 6 months, individuals not going through the program demonstrated a greater than 4 times likelihood of engaging in sexual activity.</p>	<p>Abstinence & Marriage Education Resources</p> <p>www.amresources.org</p> <p>Contact Information: Scott Phelps scott@abstinenceandmarriage.com</p> <p>877-517-9264</p>
<p><i>Choosing the Best</i></p>	<p>Description: Choosing the Best, a leader in school-based, SRA-centered curricula, offers five age-appropriate, medically- accurate programs that empower students in grades 6-12 to make the healthiest choice by teaching about goal-setting, healthy relationships, preventing sexual assault/abuse, the emotional and physical risks of teen sex, dangers of social media/sexting and alcohol abuse, the rewards of waiting, and refusal skills. Programs consist of eight 50-minute lessons (except WAY, 6 lessons) that utilize high-impact videos of real life teens, a Leader's Guide, and Student Manuals. Previews available.</p> <p>The Research: A peer-reviewed, published study showed that students who received Choosing the Best were 1.5 times more likely to delay sex than control group students. It also showed that the more lessons a student received, the less likely the student was to initiate sex. A link to the research can be found at: http://www.choosingthebest.com/ctb-is-research-based</p>	<p>Choosing the Best Publishing</p> <p>www.choosingthebest.com</p> <p>Contact Information: info@ctbpublishing.com</p> <p>1-800-774-BEST (2378)</p>
<p><i>Game Plan</i></p>	<p>Description: <i>Game Plan</i> is an eight chapter workbook that tells the story of 3-time NBA Champion A.C. Green of the L.A. Lakers. <i>Game Plan</i> uses a sport-themed approach as A.C. Green provides a model for teens that saving sex for marriage is the safest, healthiest lifestyle and the only sure way to avoid the consequences of premarital sexual activity. Teens are encouraged to avoid sexual pressure with lessons on goal setting, refusal skills, healthy relationships, and media literacy. <i>Game Plan</i> is a research-based curriculum that is regularly updated with the latest information from the Centers for Disease Control. The <i>Game Plan Teacher's Guide</i> includes PowerPoint and activities. Grades 6-9. <i>Game Plan</i> is designed to be used as one of a four-part series from A&M Resources.</p> <p>The Research: Results indicate program success in demonstrating statistically significant gains for participants who completed the program in the areas of "Intent to Practice Abstinence" and "Practice of SRA Behavior". At 6 months, individuals not going through the program demonstrated a greater than 4 times likelihood of engaging in sexual activity.</p>	<p>Abstinence & Marriage Education Resources</p> <p>www.amresources.org</p> <p>Contact Information: Scott Phelps scott@abstinenceandmarriage.com</p> <p>877-517-9264</p>

<p><i>Healthy Futures</i></p>	<p>Description: Healthy Futures is a school-based, holistic positive youth development sex education program for middle school students. The three-year program uses a relationship education curriculum, Nu- CULTURE, that includes 24 lessons (8 per year in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade). Each grade level of the program also provides students with access to virtual classrooms, a website, after-school and summer programs, and workshops designed for parents.</p> <p>The Research: In a cluster randomized controlled trial involving 2,346 students from 15 middle schools in three cities in northeastern Massachusetts, researchers found that at the end of 8th grade, female adolescents in the schools that delivered the intervention were significantly less likely to report ever having vaginal sex. Healthy Futures significantly reduced the prevalence of female and Hispanic students who have ever had vaginal sex by eighth grade follow up. Specifically, 2.9% of girls in the treatment group reported ever having vaginal sex versus 6.4% in the control group (P=.04)</p>	<p>Healthy Futures Healthy-Futures.org Contact Information: Rhea Gordon, Executive Director rhea@healthy-futures.org (978)-458-6064 or (978) 399-8302</p>
<p><i>Heritage Keepers</i></p>	<p>Description: Certified medically accurate by the US HHS Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and the Medical Institute for Sexual Health, the 450-minute program is sensitive to all youth across age, race, gender, sexual history, family history and sexual orientation. Utilizing a “whole person” approach, <i>Heritage Keepers</i>® effectively applies sound theory and methodology to improve research-based mediators/predictors of sexual risk avoidance. <i>Topics Include:</i> the benefits of abstinence/recommitting-to-abstinence and of healthy marriage; healthy marriage (definition /building blocks); integrating values with behavior; reproductive systems; the developing fetus; STDs/STIs; rebuttals to justification for sex; differences between love/lust/infatuation; avoiding objectifying/stereotyping; and recognizing/reporting sexual abuse. Interactive activities focus on consequences of early sex, STD/STI transmission, character traits, healthy relationships, and protective boundaries avoiding risk. <i>Heritage Keepers</i>® curriculum was on the federal Evidence-Based Teen Pregnancy Prevention list for middle and high schools and meets all of Title V, Section 510 guidelines. Optimal Youth Development Resources: <i>Heritage Keepers</i>® Abstinence Education II (600 minutes); <i>Heritage Keepers</i>® Life Skills I-V (12 lessons per workbook)</p> <p>The Research: (2,215 middle and high school students in 41 schools): A year after <i>Heritage Keepers</i>®, program students initiated sex at a rate 67% lower than well-matched comparison students.</p>	<p>Heritage Community Services www.heritageservices.org Contact Information: Anne Badgley, MEd, Founder/CEO abadgley@heritageservices.org (843) 654-7740 x 120</p>
<p><i>Positive Potential</i></p>	<p>Description: Positive Potential curriculum includes Sexual Health Education (Sexual Risk Avoidance) and Positive Youth Development Education. The Positive Potential curriculum is designed to be offered as a supplemental program to the health and physical education curricula adolescents receive as part of their middle school education. The program offers five 50 minute classroom sessions on consecutive days during 6th, 7th, & 8th grade. A supplemental assembly is also offered as a booster. Curricula adaptations and technical assistance available.</p> <p>The Research: The program was evaluated in a randomized controlled trial. Program impacts at 9th grade 12 month long-term follow up demonstrated: 1) Delayed onset of sexual initiation-sexual intercourse abstinence, 2) decreased occurrence of recent sexual intercourse, 3) decreased occurrence of multiple sexual partners, 4) increased contraception use amongst those who reported being sexually active. Program 9th grade participants showed other statistically significant positive health outcomes: decreased occurrence of substance use (i.e. alcohol, tobacco, other drugs), decreased occurrence of peer violence (i.e. fighting and bullying), increased occurrence of communication with parents/guardians, increased occurrence of the following psychosocial outcomes: healthy choice attitudes, sexual intercourse abstinence attitude trait, sexual intercourse avoidance attitudes, behavior intention to postpone sexual intercourse until marriage.</p>	<p>PATH, Inc. www.PositiveTeenHeath.org Contact Information: info@positiveteenhealth.org 219.254.2678</p>

<p><i>Pure & Simple</i></p>	<p>Description: Pure & Simple Health Education, Inc. offers three video series, two with 8 lessons and one with 6 lessons, used as applicable for grades 6-10; each includes discussion questions and activities. Videos use local student actors/actresses with a “soap opera” story-line. Lessons focus on the choices/consequences of high school friends. For children with learning disabilities, two video series for middle and high school use 4 lesson plans and activities to support healthy relationships. All lessons fit differing classroom or after-school time periods. Where applicable, pre and post tests are used. A parent session and permission precedes the programs. Additional single presentations can address targeted issues with parents and/or parent child and community groups. Teacher training is provided. Access to downloading curricula and videos from the website will launch in 2018.</p> <p>The Research: Significant increase in abstinence from pre to post intervention while conversely, participants in the comparison group reported decrease in abstinent responses.</p>	<p>Pure & Simple</p> <p>www.abstainpureandsimple.org</p> <p>Contact Information: Erika Higgins, Program Director info@abstainpureandsimple.org</p> <p>866- 688-0840</p>
<p><i>REAL Essentials</i></p>	<p>Description: REAL Essentials (Relationship Education and Leadership) has 8 units covering impulse-control, self-regulation, and personal power. It seeks to reduce poverty by decreasing non-marital childbearing and increasing future safe, stable family formation. It includes activities about self-discovery, intentionality, expectations, life goals, decision-making, refusal skills, resisting peer pressure, increasing protective factors, positive youth development, building assets and healthy relationships. REAL Essentials is appropriate for diverse populations and settings, covering alcohol, drugs, tobacco use, bullying and early sexual debut. The curriculum was developed utilizing theoretical frameworks and characteristics of effective programs. It is evidenced based, medically accurate, research informed, inclusive, culturally sensitive and age appropriate. Content is aligned with research and supported by ongoing partnership with the University of Denver. Activities are taught to each group with developmentally age-appropriate messaging. REAL Starting Point is for Middle School students and REAL Advance is for High School students.</p> <p>The Research: Middle school students who participated in the program were 3 ½ times more likely to delay sexual activity and reported fewer multiple partners one year after receiving the program.</p>	<p>The Center for Relationship Education</p> <p>www.myrelationshipcenter.org</p> <p>Contact Information: Joneen Mackenzie info@myrelationshipcenter.org</p> <p>720-488-8888</p>
<p><i>YOURFUTURE—ON THELINE™</i></p>	<p>Description: OK, Inc.’s YOURFUTURE—ON THELINE™ middle school curriculum (formerly known as <i>For Keeps</i>) equips students with knowledge and skills for healthy decision-making to increase 1) self-regulation, 2) personal responsibility, 3) goal setting, 4) the ability to avoid all nonmarital sexual risk for optimal economic and life outcomes. An additional curricular component, the middle school magazine, addresses relevant teen challenges in a creative, positive format intended to continue the conversation at home between the students and their parents.</p> <p>The Research: The curriculum was evaluated by the Center for Health Promotion Research at Case Western Reserve university. The independent evaluation revealed a significant effect of OK, Inc.’s curriculum on urban middle school students compared to students in the control group. Results identified 1) an increase in youth’s HIV/STD knowledge, 2) an increase in youth’s intentions to avoid sexual risks until older and until marriage 3) a decline in youth’s intentions to have sex in the next three months and in the next year, and 4) fewer episodes of sexual intercourse and fewer partners for those students who had sex during the intervention in comparison to students in the control group.</p>	<p>Operation Keepsake</p> <p>www.operationkeepsake.com</p> <p>Contact Information: ok@operationkeepsake.com</p> <p>Office: (330) 486-0602</p>

¹ Find SRA Works Document under the “Resource” tab on the Ascend website: WeAscend.org

² Recent research is defined as research after the year 2000