

Sexual Risk Avoidance (SRA) Curricula Aligning with Legislative Authority

ARTICLE | Updated April 2026

The following information is provided so that organizations have a starting point for selecting curricula that clearly adheres to SRAE legislative criteria, supports the priorities of the Administration of Children and Families (ACF), and that best meets the needs of the community and youth to be served. This document summarizes:

1. **Evidence-based** SRAE curricula that have independent, peer-reviewed research showing statistically significant positive behavioral outcomes for youth.
2. **Evidence-informed** SRAE curricula incorporating researched-based components that draw from proven practices that enhance the impact of positive outcomes for youth.
3. Characteristics of Sexual Risk-Reduction (SRR) Curricula **Not Aligned** with SRAE Statutory Authority.

It is important that organizations are deliberate and intentional in the selection of curriculum.

Evidence-Based SRAE Curricula with Research of Effectiveness

The following curricula have independent, peer-reviewed research showing statistically significant positive behavioral outcomes for youth. Details on research studies can be obtained directly from publishers.

Aspire

Aspire is an evidence-based curriculum that helps students understand the benefits of reserving all sexual activity and childbearing for marriage. Aspire 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, providing a clear emphasis on the importance of Sexual Risk Avoidance in protecting their future goals. Aspire encourages academic excellence and includes healthy decision-making skills for avoiding drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and pornography. Aspire is regularly updated with the latest information from the Centers for Disease Control. Includes full PowerPoint presentation and activities. Grades 9-12.

Publisher

Abstinence & Marriage Education Partnership

www.ampartnership.org

Contact Information

Scott Phelps

scott@abstinenceandmarriage.com

Office: (224) 735-3622

411 Business Center Drive, Suite 103

Mount Prospect, IL 60056

Choosing the Best

Choosing the Best, a leader in school-based, SRA-centered curricula, has educated over 4,000,000 students nationwide. 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. Five age-appropriate, medically accurate programs empower students in grades 6-12 to make the healthiest choices, by covering the emotional and physical risks of premarital sex, dangers of social media/sexting, 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.

Publisher

Choosing the Best Publishing

www.choosingthebest.com

Contact Information

1-800-774-BEST (2378)

For Keeps

For Keeps is a 5-day (40-minute sessions) classroom-based curriculum that stresses waiting for sex until marriage and focuses on the benefits of waiting and the physical, emotional, psychological, and economic consequences of early sexual activity. The curriculum emphasizes character development, how STDs and pregnancy can interfere with life goals, and that condoms are not 100% effective in preventing disease and pregnancy and do not protect adolescents from emotional consequences of sexual activity. Finally, the curriculum is designed to address both the sexually experienced and inexperienced by emphasizing the value of choosing to discontinue sex for those who are sexually experienced.

Contact Information

Office: (330) 486-0602

ok@operationkeepsake.com

10568 Ravenna Road, Suite #9

Twinsburg, OH 44087

Game Plan

Game Plan is an evidence-based curriculum that tells the story of three-time NBA Champion A.C. Green of the L.A. Lakers. Game Plan uses a sport-themed approach as A.C. Green teaches teens that Sexual Risk Avoidance 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. Game Plan is a research-based curriculum that is regularly updated with the latest information from the Centers for Disease Control. Includes PowerPoint and activities. Grades 6–9.

Publisher

Abstinence & Marriage Education Partnership

www.ampartnership.org

Contact Information

Scott Phelps

scott@abstinenceandmarriage.com

Office: (224) 735-3622

411 Business Center Drive, Suite 103

Mount Prospect, IL 60056

Heritage Keepers

Heritage Keepers® SRA Education curriculum for middle and high schools is consistent with all of Title V, Section 510 A–H/A–F topics. A year after Heritage Keepers® program, students-initiated sex at a rate 67% lower than comparison students. Certified "medically accurate" by the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention and Medical Institute for Sexual Health, the program (450 minutes) effectively targets scientifically derived predictors of teen sex. Follow-up curricula include Level II (600 minutes) and five Life Skills curricula. Resources include workbooks, media spots, a book for parents and one for teens.

Publisher

Heritage Community Services

www.heritageservices.org

Contact Information

Tammy Bryant, MSW, SRAS, Chief Program Officer

TBryant@heritageservices.org

Heritage Community Services

2265 Clements Ferry Rd, Suite 202

Charleston, SC 29492

work: 843-654-7740 x 110

cell: 843-870-8777

Positive Potential

Grade 6. Positive Potential Be The Exception (Positive Potential) is a school-based, youth development program developed primarily for adolescents attending middle school in rural communities. The Positive Potential program is 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 45- to 50-minute classroom sessions on consecutive days during the 6th grade and includes one class assembly at the end of 6th grade. The program was evaluated in a randomized controlled trial involving 1,438 sixth grade students in 14 public middle and elementary schools in northwestern Indiana. The study found that in schools that delivered the program both the full sample of students and the subgroup of males were significantly less likely to have had sexual intercourse (ever and in the last three months) at the beginning of the seventh grade.

Publisher

Path Inc.

Contact Information

Donna Golob, Executive Director

donna@PositiveTeenHealth.org

Office: (219)-254-2678

REAL Essentials

The Center for Relationship Education's (CRE) REAL Essentials curriculum provides research-aligned relationship education that equips participants with practical skills to build healthy relationships and strengthen interpersonal connections. Grounded in the belief that life success begins with healthy relationships, the curriculum offers evidence-based instruction in communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, emotional awareness, and relationship health. These life skills promote positive youth development, strengthen families and communities, and contribute to improved social, educational, and workforce outcomes.

REAL Essentials is distinguished by three key features: (1) an activity-based design that engages participants through interactive, relevant, and memorable learning experiences; (2) a flexible, modular format that allows facilitators to tailor implementation to meet grant requirements while maintaining fidelity to core relationship education principles; and (3) a scalable train-the-trainer certification model that builds internal organizational capacity for long-term sustainability.

Research supports the curriculum's effectiveness. In a longitudinal evaluation of adolescents ages 12–14 (N = 427), Rue et al. (2012) found significant improvements in attitudes, intentions, and behaviors one year after participation in the 11.5-hour REAL Essentials program. Participants were 3.5 times less likely to initiate sexual activity than youth in a neighboring comparison

community, demonstrating the curriculum's effectiveness in supporting healthy decision-making and delaying sexual activity. Researchers concluded that culturally relevant, values-aligned relationship education reinforces family values and helps protect youth from the risks associated with early sexual activity while supporting broader positive youth development outcomes.

Reference: Rue, L., Chandran, R., Pannu, A., Bruce, D., Singh, R., & Traxler, K. (2012). Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences, 104(3), 32–40.

Publisher

The Center for Relationship Education

www.myrelationshipcenter.org

Contact Information

Lauren Reitsema, President, The Center for Relationship Education

7939 E Arapahoe Road, Ste 285, Greenwood Village, CO 80112

lauren@myrelationshipcenter.org

720-488-8888 ext. 214

Mobile: 20-891-1100

Relationships Under Construction (RUC)

Relationships Under Construction (RUC) curriculum is a five-day program designed for in classroom use with developmentally appropriate lessons for grades 6 through high school. RUC teaches healthy relationships and the consequences of risk behaviors including non-marital sexual activity focusing on primary prevention to achieve optimal health for all students. Relationships Under Construction teaches from the perspective that health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” according to the World Health Organization.

Additionally, Constructing Safe Relationships (CSR) curriculum teaches the dangers of unhealthy relationships, pornography use and addiction that can lead to dating violence and human trafficking. RUC was recently found to meet the definition of medical accuracy with no changes needed by the Federal Family and Youth Services Bureau, FYSB December 2023. Furthermore, an article in The Journal of School Health, January 2024, details how RUC and CSR significantly reduced sexual activity ten percent (odds ratio = 0.56, $p = .046$) and pornography viewing use by 15 percent (OR = 0.62, $p = .04$) among participants.¹ The results of the findings concur that RUC and CSR curriculum presented with fidelity reduce teen sexual activity by 10% and reduce pornography viewing by 15% even at a 3 month follow-up.

1.Ashley O, Shamblen SR, Gluck A, Wood C. A group randomized controlled trial of Relationships Under Construction sexual risk avoidance education. J Sch Health. 2024.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.13441>.

Publisher

ATM Education

www.RUCInc.org

Contact Information

8870 Commerce Loop Drive

Columbus, Ohio 43240

740-965-2046

Evidence-Informed SRAE Curricula

The following curricula have incorporated researched-based components that draw from proven practices that enhance the impact of positive outcomes for youth. This is not an exhaustive list.

Esteem

ESTEEM is a character-based relationship education and SRAE curriculum for students in grades 5 – high school and emerging adults. It equips youth with the knowledge, skills, and encouragement to make healthy, future-focused choices. Designed for schools and community organizations, ESTEEM includes a series of six age-appropriate interactive student journals with parent worksheets that extend learning through ongoing conversations at home. ESTEEM's flexible two-workbook format supports a wide range of implementation needs for opt-in/out policies for sensitive content, Book A: Lessons 1–9, and Book B: Lessons 10–14. The curriculum is medically accurate, research-informed, and grounded in primary prevention, helping students build confidence, self-respect, decision-making skills, and healthy relationship habits. Lessons can be taught by trained facilitators in schools, nonprofits, PRCs, and juvenile justice settings. Program surveys show students reported being 74.8% more likely to abstain when pressured to have sex after completing the ESTEEM course.

Publisher

ESTEEM Journey

www.EsteemJourney.com

Contact Information

Tonya Waite

tonya@EsteemJourney.com

Office: 903-758-2762

Free Teens/Relationship Intelligence Training

Free Teens is a character-based relationship education curriculum that helps youth understand the value of self-respect, commitment, and reserving sexual activity for marriage. Through engaging discussions, media analysis, and interactive lessons, students learn how healthy decision-making supports their future goals and relationships. The program emphasizes sexual risk avoidance, focusing on abstinence as the only way to fully eliminate risk while promoting emotional health and academic success.

Programs are offered in both school-day settings and community programs. Local educators or faith/community leaders typically deliver the lessons after receiving facilitator training from Free Teens USA staff. The model can be adapted for youth ages 10–19.

Publisher

Institute for Relationship Intelligence / Free Teens USA
www.freeteensyouth.org

Contact Information

Dr. Richard Panzer, Founder & Director
Free Teens USA
PO Box 843
Lake Areil, PA 18436

Go For the Gold

Go for the Gold is a relationship-based curriculum designed for high school students that helps teens build healthy relationships and make decisions that support a successful future. The program addresses topics such as dating, communication, conflict resolution, boundaries, sexual integrity, and the benefits of marriage, while helping students understand the risks associated with teen sexual activity. Through a structured nine-day curriculum, students engage in interactive lessons, discussions, and activities that encourage personal responsibility, goal setting, and strong character development. Go for the Gold emphasizes healthy choices, relationship skills, and future success. Grades 9–12.

Publisher

Elizabeth New Life
www.ngye.org

Contact Information

Kim Danon
Elizabeth New Life
4945 Riverton Rd.
Dayton, OH 45414
Phone 937-262-7010

I Decide for Me

I Decide For Me™ is an evidence-informed sexual risk avoidance curriculum for 6th Grade, 8th Grade, and High School students. The holistic health approach of IDFM equips students with truth, facts, and medically accurate data to make the best choices for themselves. At the core of each level of the program is an emphasis on personal value. Discovering their intrinsic value empowers students to prioritize their health, plan for positive futures, and avoid risks that could lead to negative outcomes. Students learn about setting personal boundaries, healthy and unhealthy relationships, assertive language, and refusal skills. Through guided examination, critical thinking, and problem-solving application in real-life scenarios, students build efficacy and self-regulation. PowerPoint presentations and student booklets are regularly updated to reflect current information and statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and other medically accurate sources.

Publisher

Clarity of Central Indiana

www.claritycares.org

Contact Information

Cheryl LaBelle

cheryl.labelle@claritycares.org

3203 Middle Road

Columbus, IN 47203

812-378-4114, ext. 205

Life Choices

Partnering with public and private high schools through the health education classes, we teach Sexual Risk Avoidance Education leading to optimal health and successful life outcomes. We teach the true costs of sexual activity prior to marriage and the potential outcomes of risky sexual behaviors are clearly explored: STD/STI's, pregnancy, parenting, medical facts about abortion and adoption. We teach on the educational, economical and relational impact of risky behaviors. Program serves 9th-12th grade wellness classes. (Faith Based Version is available)

Publisher

Decisions, Choices, and Options, (DCO, Inc.)

www.dcoinc.org

Contact Information

Beth Cox

beth@dcoinc.org

639 E. Main St. Susie b206

Hendersonville, TN 37075

615-429-0056

SHARE

SHARE's program offers age-specific presentations to support students' physical, emotional, and social development. All sessions use PowerPoints and interactive activities.

Elementary: Primarily taught in 5th grade, with an optional 6th-grade follow-up. The presentation addresses natural questions about body changes and emphasizes privacy, safety, and healthy development.

Middle School: Three 1-hour sessions (ideally consecutive days) for 7th or 8th grade. Topics include the importance of boundaries, healthy relationships, freedom from consequence, goal setting, decision-making, and the physical consequences of STIs and pregnancy. The program encourages marriage and monogamy while keeping content engaging and age-appropriate.

High School: Delivered during Health class in any of the four years. Lessons build foundational knowledge relatable to all students and equipping them for college experiences. Topics include Pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Infections, Birth Control, and Healthy Relationships.

Contact Information

SHARE Program Director
3205 South Blvd.
Auburn Hills, MI 48326
Email: info@shareforyou.org

YES You Can!

The YES You Can! (YYC!) Curricula is a comprehensive, developmentally structured program spanning four grade levels, from upper elementary through high school. It is designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to make healthy, responsible decisions. Through engaging, hands-on lessons, the program emphasizes developing strong character traits, effective boundary-setting, and the ability to evaluate friendships and relationships. Content progresses in age-appropriate depth, addressing topics such as puberty, bullying, substance use, and the physical, emotional, and social impacts of high-risk behaviors, including early sexual activity. YYC! connects students' present choices to their future outcomes, encouraging critical thinking about cultural influences, relationship dynamics, and personal goals. By combining interactive activities with practical strategies, the curricula fosters resilience, promotes healthy relationships, and empowers students to establish personal standards that support long-term well-being and success.

Publisher

NJ Physicians Advisory Group
www.njphysicians.org

Contact Information

Peggy Cowan, President
pcowan@njphysicians.org

Sexual Risk-Reduction (SRR) Curricula Not Aligned with SRAE Statutory Authority

Why “SRAE Versions” of SRR Curricula Often Fall Short of Legislative Intent and Statutory Requirements for SRAE Funding

When federal funding for Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE) became available under Title V in the late 1990s and later codified and updated in statute in 2018, many Sexual Risk Reduction (SRR) programs developed “SRAE-adapted” or hybrid versions of SRA/SRR curricula. These were marketed as compliant with SRAE criteria. However, such adaptations frequently fail to meet the explicit requirements of the authorizing statute (Title V, Section 510 of the Social Security Act, as amended; 42 U.S.C. § 710).

Statutory Requirements

The law states that SRAE funding is intended **exclusively** to implement education on sexual risk avoidance—defined as voluntarily refraining from sexual activity. Crucially, programs must:

“ensure that the **unambiguous and primary emphasis and context** for each topic ... is a message to youth that **normalizes the optimal health behavior of avoiding nonmarital sexual activity.**”

This goes well beyond a brief reference to abstinence as “the only 100% effective way to avoid pregnancy and STDs.” Instead, the entire curriculum framework must actively normalize refraining from nonmarital sexual activity as the expected and healthiest choice. Every required topic (the A–F components) must reinforce this central message.

Key Topics and Marriage Context

Official guidance further clarifies that education should emphasize **delaying sexual activity until marriage** as the normative behavior. One required topic specifically addresses “the foundational components of healthy relationships and their impact on the formation of healthy marriages and safe and stable families.”

Why Many Hybrid Versions Fall Short

Hybrid “SRAE versions” of SRR curricula often retain elements of risk-reduction approaches (e.g., normalization of teen sexual activity with risk-mitigation tools) and add only minimal abstinence messaging. Changes are largely **removal-based** rather than **re-design** around

marriage and nonmarital avoidance as the explicit normative framework. These removal-based adaptation give mixed messages about marriage, often using interchangeable words such as a committed partner or partner or someone who shows kindness and respect, or someone who is financially secure as the same as marriage.

This token approach does not satisfy the statutory mandate for **unambiguous, primary emphasis** across all topics. As a result, they may not fully align with the legislative purpose of promoting sexual risk avoidance as the optimal health behavior, including the role of self-sufficiency, emotional maturity, and healthy marriages.

In summary, true compliance requires more than surface-level changes. Curricula must be intentionally designed so that **every element** supports the normalization of avoiding nonmarital sexual activity, consistent with the statute's clear intent. Program developers, states, and grantees should carefully review materials against the full statutory text and HHS guidance to ensure fidelity to these requirements.

For examples of curricula that do not meet these standards, please email us at info@weascend.org.