

Don't ostrich

A surefire way to guarantee youngsters run into problems with sex is to keep them in the dark.

Shut the controversial subject out of Ontario schools as long as possible.

Have teachers deal with it as little as possible.

Rely on an outdated curriculum.

Let kids learn the facts of life in the playground or by surfing the Internet.

After all this, sit back and watch them struggle with unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, confusion over sexual identity, or having revealing photos of them shared in cyberspace.

No caring parent or responsible adult wants to see any of this happen.

Fair minds might not agree on exactly what needs to be done in the classroom, but all should accept that the subject of sex has to be taught effectively and to all ages.

This is why an update of the province's sexual education curriculum is so welcome.

Much has changed since the old curriculum was introduced 17 years ago.

In 1998, there were no smartphones, nobody was "sexting," social-media platforms were in their infancy and same-sex marriage was illegal.

Today, young lives are being ruined by intimate photos shared on social media.

Today, young people wind up in court on sex-related charges because they don't understand what it means to give and receive consent.

Today, the meaning of family includes homes with a father and a mother, a single parent, two fathers or two mothers.

What's taught in the classroom must reflect this.

Under the new curriculum, schools will begin providing necessary and age-appropriate information to children and teens.

Some parents will be uncomfortable with these changes, but young people need to have information before they are faced with decisions regarding sexual activity.

Education Minister Liz Sandals says the government will stick with this new curriculum and not abandon it as it did five years ago.

All parents should be grateful that the time has come.

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Letters to the editor

Sex-ed must be a partnership with parents

I would like to add my thoughts regarding the sex-education curriculum the province is proposing.

I believe that the sex-education curriculum should be a shared partnership between both the parents and the school system.

The reason being that some parents won't say anything, some will discuss it but omit all the correct terms and make it so flowery or wrong that their kids will be more confused, or, if you're lucky, you have those parents that talk openly and honestly about every detail and question their kids have.

Unfortunately, I came from the type of parents that didn't talk about it.

Sex or anything related to it was looked upon as sinful and wrong.

They didn't tell me anything.

It was a very embarrassing subject given that my family was reli-

gious and didn't talk openly about this sort of thing.

So, the "talk" never happened for me.

Do I really want to learn about sex from parents who don't know the true facts or are too afraid to speak frankly to me?

Do I want to trust the information they may provide to me when they tried to convince me that it was wrong to be curious about my body?

So, I didn't get the sex talk at school and I certainly didn't get it at home so I was left to my own devices.

I was just a kid but left to figure out very adult issues on my own.

I wished someone talked to me. Being educated is not a bad thing.

It creates knowledge, awareness and discussion.

Perhaps this purported sex education curriculum doesn't have to be such a taboo subject.

Rather, it can be informative to save kids from abuse and teach them not to be ashamed of their bodies.

It's gradual and age appropriate learning.

That's the role the schools can

provide to parents who are scared, unsure or uncomfortable to talk to their kids about this stuff.

It starts the discussion.

It creates awareness.

What is so wrong with being informed anyway?

Kids can't be completely sheltered from the world around them.

They are going to learn about the birds and the bees one way or another.

So why not teach them the facts from the start?

S. Coutts

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