

Sexuality Education

Information for parents of children in
Kindergarten



Kindergarten

Québec schools have been providing sexuality education for nearly 40 years

Québec schools have exercised their responsibility with respect to sexuality education for almost 40 years. Initially, this responsibility was addressed through the implementation of the Personal and Social Education program. Today, sexuality education is even more necessary than it was when it was introduced into schools in the 1980s. The contemporary social context, characterized by modern technologies, reinforces the need to take action.

Sexuality education is essential to the overall development of children and adolescents. For this reason, content in sexuality education has been made compulsory for all students, from elementary school through secondary school. Through this content, the Ministère hopes to ensure that students in Québec have access to sexuality education tailored to their age and level of development.

Content appropriate to the students' age and level of development

The Ministère has defined the content to be covered each year so that it meets children's needs as they grow. The content is not offered as a new subject and it will not be evaluated.

In kindergarten, sexuality education content is not compulsory, but it is available and can be offered to students. Sexuality education in kindergarten enables students to understand and appreciate their bodies and to acquire a basic knowledge of pregnancy and birth.

Sexuality Education

Sexuality education favours a comprehensive, positive vision of sexuality. It allows students not only to acquire knowledge, but also to develop respectful, egalitarian attitudes and behaviours. Sexuality education is rooted in values such as gender equality, respect for diversity, respect for physical and psychological integrity, a sense of responsibility and well-being.

School staff already have certain competencies for teaching sexuality education. They have a good understanding of the students and how they think, as well as the situations they experience every day at school. This expertise can be applied in sexuality education. In addition to being familiar with their students' development, teachers have a meaningful relationship with students. They have pedagogical expertise and the experience and sensitivity necessary to help create a respectful climate for sharing and to choose the opportune moment for intervening in sexuality education.

Sexuality is at the core of each person's identity, interpersonal relationships, personal fulfillment and well-being. Sexuality is not limited, therefore, to sexual behaviours.

The role of parents and schools

The school and the family play complementary roles in sexuality education. The complementary nature of these roles reinforces and optimizes the efforts of both.

Parents play a key role in educating their children about human sexuality and have many opportunities to contribute to their children's well-being, while respecting their values and taking their needs into account. Indeed, it is in the family that children first become aware of different modes of life, social interaction and self-expression. And it is there that they learn to understand themselves and to give and receive affection, love and empathy.

The school contributes to each student's development. Sexuality education is a facet of this contribution, in addition to being part of the school's mission, which is to teach children to live harmoniously with others. School is a place where students can reflect, engage in discussion with their peers and receive consistent, accurate and quality information from adults.

Every adult who plays a significant role in the life of a child or an adolescent has a role to play in sexuality education. This includes parents and members of the school staff.

Themes and Content

Kindergarten

Sexual Growth and Body Image

Identify the parts of the body

- › External parts: arms, head, buttocks, etc.
- › Internal parts: lungs, heart, stomach, brain, etc.
- › External sexual parts: vulva, breasts, penis, scrotum, testicles
- › Internal sexual parts: ovaries, uterus, vagina
- › Functions of the sexual organs: elimination, reproduction
- › Concept of private parts
- › Differences in people's bodies: shape, size, skin colour, etc.
- › Importance of taking care of your body: hygiene, body appreciation

Give examples of what you can express and feel with your body

- › Feeling: five senses (taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing), emotions, sensations (pleasant or unpleasant)
- › Sharing your needs and wishes with others (e.g. friends, adults in your life, etc.): expressing yourself when sensations and feelings are pleasant or unpleasant; saying no and talking to an adult when you do not like a physical contact or being touched, or when you feel uncomfortable; talking to someone when you are not sure about something or when you feel the need

Pregnancy and Birth

Explain the steps involved in making a baby

- › Union of an egg cell and a sperm cell (the two cells needed for a fetus to develop), and implantation in the uterus, multiple pregnancies
- › Pregnancy: changes that take place in the mother's body, development of the fetus
- › Childbirth and place of birth

Name ways of welcoming a baby into a family

- › Preparing for the baby's arrival
- › Needs of a newborn (eating, sleeping, affection, etc.)
- › Different family models: nuclear families, single-parents, same-sex parents, adoptive parents, blended families
- › Welcoming a baby: at birth or at the time of adoption

Being familiar with the parts of their body (including the sexual parts), helps students understand their bodies and what they feel, and to develop a sense of being proud of their bodies.

Please feel free to discuss sexuality education with school staff. The Ministère's website has more in-depth information about sexuality education, how it is planned in the schools and the content offered to students. You can find out more here:
<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/en/teachers/dossiers/sexuality-education>