

Personal Health and Safety (PHS) & Sexual Health Education (SHE)

School-to-Home Communications Toolkit

Resources and guidance for educators
to support school-to-home communications



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Purpose of This Toolkit

Learning about personal health and safety (PHS) and sexual health education (SHE) is an ongoing conversation that goes beyond the classroom. When providing PHS/SHE, parents and caregivers should be engaged in the learning process that happens at Chicago Public Schools. Communicating with parents and caregivers about PHS/SHE can be daunting, but remains necessary to ensure CPS families feel supported and included throughout their child's learning.

Parents and caregivers all have different communication needs in a variety of formats. This resource aims to **provide tools for educators and schools to engage with parents and caregivers** as partners in providing comprehensive PHS/SHE to CPS students. Various formats are provided.

The communication materials can be used as provided or can be edited and tailored to meet the needs of your school and community. Materials in this file can be copied and pasted onto your school letterhead, emails, and other formats, if desired. Captions are written for website and social media posts. Graphics come with pre-written image descriptions that should be included whenever the graphics are used. Some resources are linked to separate files or websites. If sharing linked resources, please ensure the link URL is correctly copied or typed out in outgoing communications.

Contact the sexualhealth@cps.edu with questions.



How Do Parents and Caregivers Want to Be Engaged?

In a study conducted by researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago, parents and caregivers were interviewed in focus groups to assess communication needs regarding PHS/SHE. A summary of the findings are presented in the table below. Note that a variety of communication formats were requested and that the timing of the communications were requested throughout the year.

Content	PHS/SHE Curriculum & Policy Overview	PHS/SHE Curriculum Topics & Content	PHS/SHE for Parents	PHS/SHE at Home
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official CPS letters Handouts Emails Website or App Videos Graphics/Visuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters Handouts Emails Website or App Videos Graphics/Visuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainings Workshops Classes Books FAQ's Small group meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trainings Workshops Classes Books FAQ's Small group meetings
Frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1x-3x/year One-time events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to PHS/SHE instruction 2 months before SHE instruction Updates throughout SHE instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1x-4x/year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1x-4x/ year
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout the year One-time events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout the year One-time events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall, Throughout the year One-time events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fall, Throughout the year One-time events

Source: Jarpe-Ratner & Belcher. (2021). *Summary Of Family And Caregiver Perspectives On Sexual Health Education Discussion Group Findings*

What we have learned from this is that **parents and caregivers appreciate ongoing communication about the PHS/SHE that their children are receiving**. There is not one method that will work for all parents and caregivers so providing messaging in a plethora of ways is needed.

PHS/SHE Curriculum Notifications

This section provides resources on notifying parents and caregivers about the PHS/SHE curriculum, policies, notifications prior to instruction, and templates for ongoing progress throughout the curriculum.

Official CPS Notification Letters

Schools are **required** to notify parents and caregivers three times, at least once in writing, at least two weeks in advance of lessons starting. In addition to notifying parents, schools should also send parents the [CPS PHS/SHE Scope and Sequence](#) and the [Curriculum Connection](#) (for Pre-K to 5th Grade parents). Because full lesson plans are NOT available publicly, parents and caregivers should be offered an opportunity to meet with the PHS/SHE instructor to review lesson plans if they have questions or concerns. If you plan on having a condom demonstration in your class, this must be included in the parent notification letter.

Grade-level specific notification letter [templates](#) are available in the nine most commonly spoken languages for CPS families: Arabic, Chinese, English, Polish, Spanish, Tagalog, Ukrainian, Urdu, and Vietnamese. The content of the letter can also be used for email communications and message blasts, if desired. More information on notification requirements and parent engagement is provided in the [PHS/SHE Policy Overview](#) and the Sexual Health Education Policy [Implementation Guidance](#).

Emails or Calls

The below scripts can be directly copied and pasted into the body text of an email as a brief reminder that a student will be receiving PHS/SHE. The greeting and sign-off can be edited to your specific class or school greeting. For calls, the text can be read aloud and recorded:

For first email/message blast notification in Fall:

Dear parents and caregivers,

We welcome you to the [20XX] school year! This school year your child will receive [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education] as part of the CPS Sexual Health Education Policy. Students will be receiving comprehensive, age-appropriate [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education] from a certified instructor.

We are committed to partnering with you to provide supplementary instruction to students via the [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education] lessons.

If you have questions about [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education], please contact your child's instructor [name and email] or contact the CPS PHS/SHE team at sexualhealthed@cps.edu for more information.

Sincerely,
[school sign off]

For subsequent update email/call communications:

Dear parents and caregivers,

We hope you are doing well! This is a reminder that students have been receiving [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education] as part of the CPS Sexual Health Education Policy. In class, your child has completed [insert lessons covered in class].

We are committed to partnering with you to provide supplementary instruction to students via the [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education] lessons.

If you have opted your student out of [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education], you can disregard this information. If you have questions about the [Personal Health & Safety lessons] OR [Sexual Health Education] your child has received or about upcoming lessons, please contact your child's instructor [name and email] or contact the CPS PHS/SHE team at sexualhealthed@cps.edu for more information.

Sincerely,
[school sign off]

Text Messages

Text messages can be used as a quick and approachable way to communicate with parents and caregivers. These should be used as reminders, not for relaying in-depth information. Contact information can be included. A text message can fit up to 160 characters before being split into multiple texts. Template texts:

Example 1:

Hi [name], this is a reminder that [school name] students will receive [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education] this year. Please review the letter sent home for more info.

Example 2:

This is a reminder from [school name]: [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education] will begin on [insert date]. Please contact your child's instructor with any questions.

Example 3:

[school name] Reminder: your child/ren will receive [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education] this year. If you have questions, contact your child's instructor.

Reminder Apps

If your school uses a reminder app for communications with families, please refer to [Text Messages](#) for templates of quick, text-based messages to send to parents and caregivers.

School Social Media and Websites

School websites and social media can be a great way to post regular updates, share resources, and maintain contact with parents and caregivers. Posts can also be scheduled ahead of time to reduce the amount of work necessary to send out regular, consistent communications.

The following resources can be used on school websites and social media accounts, if your school utilizes them. In this section, graphics are provided. These graphics have been optimized for their respective websites, but they can be used on other websites and social media. Options to resize the graphics are available in Canva. To edit and download the design, you need a Canva.com account, which is free with your CPS email. The links below will allow you to make a copy, meaning you can edit the text and images, or download it as-is. If you make any edits to the graphics, be sure to update the image description before posting to social media.

Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn

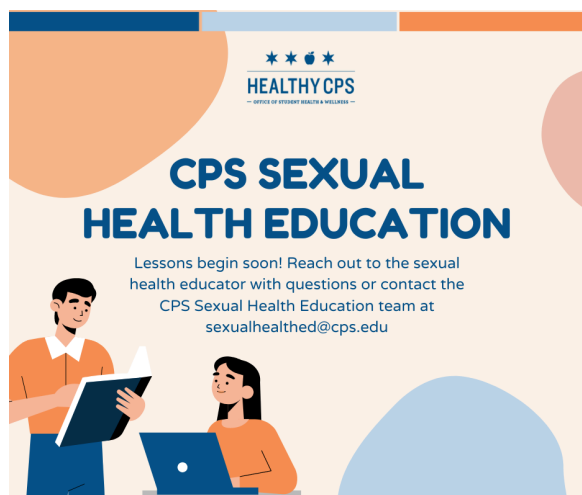
Website and/or social media posts can count as a form of parental notification. Post should start at least two weeks in advance of the first PHS/SHE lesson.

Facebook

[Link to template](#)

Caption: Sexual Health Education Starting!

Image description: An image with a cream background with orange and blue shapes. Centered at the top is the Healthy CPS logo of Chicago stars and an apple. The image states “CPS SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION Lessons begin soon! Reach out to the sexual health educator with questions or contact the CPS Sexual Health Education team at sexualhealth@cps.edu”. An illustration of two people studying with a book and laptop are in the corner.

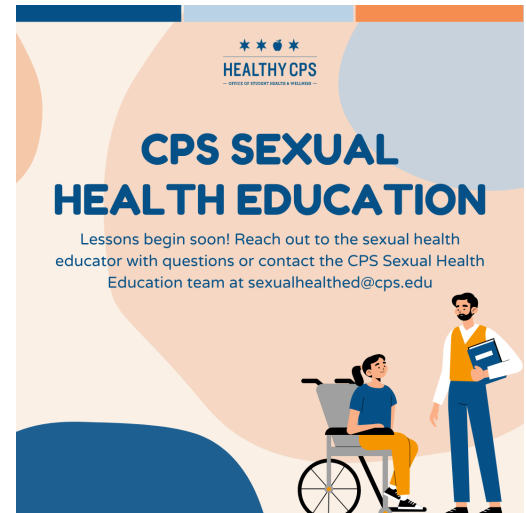


Instagram

[Link to template](#)

Caption: Sexual Health Education Starting!

Image description: An image with a cream background with orange and blue shapes. Centered at the top is the Healthy CPS logo of Chicago stars and an apple. The image states “CPS SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION Lessons begin soon! Reach out to the sexual health educator with questions or contact the CPS Sexual Health Education team at sexualhealth@cps.edu”. An illustration of a person in a wheelchair and a person carrying a book chatting together is below the text.

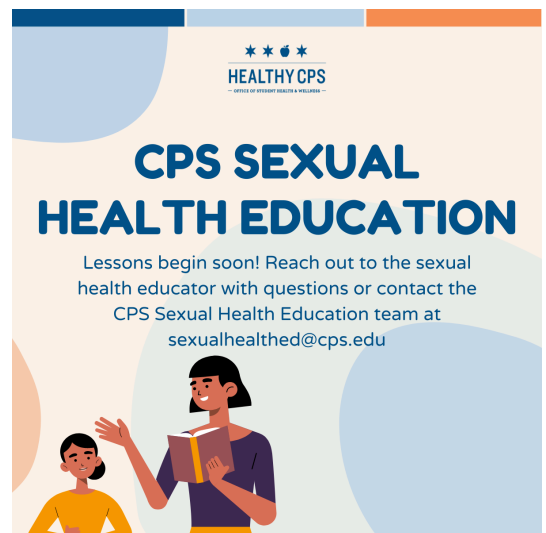


LinkedIn

[Link to template](#)

Caption: Sexual Health Education Starting!

Image description: An image with a cream background with orange and blue shapes. Centered at the top is the Healthy CPS logo of Chicago stars and an apple. The image states “CPS SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION Lessons begin soon! Reach out to the sexual health educator with questions or contact the CPS Sexual Health Education team at sexualhealth@cps.edu”. An illustration of an adult reading to a young person is below the text.



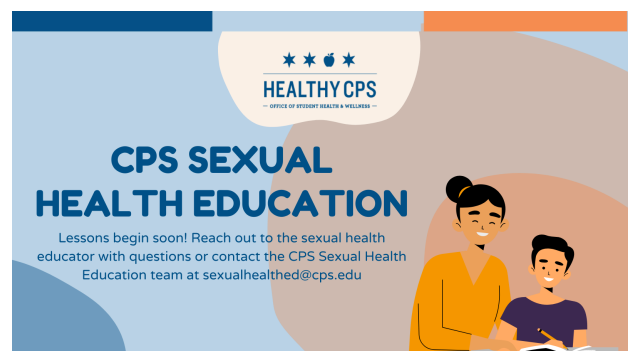
X

Tweets can be used to post quick updates or reminders to your school community.

Image:

[Link to template](#)

Image description: An image with a light blue background with orange and blue shapes. Centered at the top



Last Updated April 2025

is the Healthy CPS logo of Chicago stars and an apple. The image states “CPS SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION Lessons begin soon! Reach out to the sexual health educator with questions or contact the CPS Sexual Health Education team at sexualhealthed@cps.edu”. An illustration of an adult studying with a young person writing in a notebook is in the corner.

Example 1:

This week at [school name], students in [grade #] are learning about [insert lesson name]! Continue the conversation about health at home. If you have questions, reach out to your child’s instructor!

Example 2:

Keep the conversation going at home! Students learned about [insert lesson name] this week. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to keep the discussion going at home. If new questions come up, ask your child’s instructor for support!

Example 3:

Notification Letters about [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education] are going home this week! Make sure to talk to your child/ren about it. If you have any questions about the lessons or topics, reach out to your child’s instructor!

Example 4:

What’s covered in [Personal Health & Safety] OR [Sexual Health Education] at CPS? Here’s an infographic to help you know what your child/ren are learning in the classroom! [attach infographic]

Example 5:

Talking about personal health and safety and sexual health can be difficult! If you’re planning to have “The Talk” with your child/ren, here are resources that can help! [link to Parent Resource Doc]

Additional CPS Resources

In addition to sending notification letters/communications to parents/caregivers, other resources can be shared on the school website or social media pages. Resources are provided below. The resources listed below are also included within the Curriculum Connection. Schools may also find it helpful to share the resources individually. They can be emailed or printed out and distributed to parents and caregivers at school events such as during an Open House or Report Card Pickup Day.

Curriculum Connection

Curriculum Connection is a companion guide for Parents/Caregivers to the CPS PHS/SHE Curriculum. It includes the resources listed below in addition to other parent education materials to help families gain a deeper understanding of PHS/SHE in CPS and have more conversations at home about PHS/SHE. The [curriculum Connection](#) is available for Pre-K-2nd Grade and 3rd-5th Grade in both English and Spanish.

Scope and Sequence

The [CPS PHS/SHE Scope and Sequence](#) is a tool that shows the order of lessons across every grade level. The scope and sequence is not the full curriculum. Rather, it provides a high level overview of lesson topics and objectives and how the topics repeat and advance in detail as students progress through their education. This is a public facing document and can be shared with parents and caregivers and other stakeholders.

Unit Plans

The CPS Unit Plans for each grade level provide a deeper look at each lesson in every grade level but are not the full curriculum. Rather, they provide a deeper look into the curriculum than the scope and sequence by outlining the standards met by each lesson as well as the topics, objectives, and activities in each lesson. The unit plans are public facing and can be shared with parents and caregivers and other stakeholders.

Glossaries

The CPS Sex Education Glossaries highlight the key vocabulary for each grade level. The definitions are written in age appropriate language to make it easier for parents and caregivers to be able to continue the classroom learning at home.

Sex Ed Policies and Laws

This resource includes policy information on: Illinois Laws on Sexual Health Education, the CPS Sexual Health Education Policy, Menstrual Hygiene Management Policy, and LGBTQ+ Protections.

- [Sex Ed Policy One Pager](#)

Parent or Caregiver Information Sessions

Schools can offer parent or caregiver information sessions so that they can learn more about the PHS/SHE program and have their questions answered.

Template slides

Schools can use the provided slide template to lead parent/caregiver information sessions. A complete script is also included in the present notes. If your school community needs a tailored presentation, you can download a copy and make edits to the copy version of the slides.

[English ~ Personal Health and Safety & Sexual Health Education Parent Pr...](#)

[Spanish ~ Personal Health and Safety & Sexual Health Education Parent Pr...](#)

Who should be there?

The sexual health educator(s), principal, school counselor and/or social worker, translators (as needed).

Topics to discuss:

Be sure to find and feel comfortable answering the basic questions about PHS/SHE at your school. In addition to the basic questions, familiarize yourself with the CPS Sex Education Policy including the information regarding the Condom Availability Program and Menstrual Hygiene Management.

Who teaches PHS/SHE

What topics included

When lessons take place

Where will they be taught

Why CPS teaches comprehensive PHS/SHE beginning in PreK

Question and Answer Session

Prior to hosting the information session, consider soliciting questions ahead of time from the parents or caregivers who are interested in attending. During the information session, you can answer the questions anonymously. This is a

great way for you to prepare an answer to any potentially difficult questions and it allows you to model one of the teaching strategies used in many sex ed classrooms - the Question Box!

Print copies of parent resources

Consider printing out copies of CPS parent resources or other parent education materials.

Information about the curriculum

Even though many resources are available to CPS parents/caregivers on the CPS public website, it is helpful to review key features of the curriculum. Review important features of the curriculum including that it is comprehensive, evidence informed, age and developmentally appropriate, medically accurate, trauma informed, and inclusive of all identities.

You can use the Scope and Sequence to discuss how each “unit” or grade-level is structured. Highlight that every sexual health unit begins with a lesson setting classroom norms and group agreements specific to PHS/SHE. Additionally, each unit includes information on safety and identifying reliable sources of information including trusted adults at home, at school, and in the community.

If you have enough trained educators present at the information night, consider breaking up into smaller groups by grade band so parents can preview videos or books that are used in the lessons.

A potential way to work through parent and caregiver concerns is by providing material previews. This is an opportunity to discuss curriculum details and materials that will be used. Lesson plans **should not** be sent home with parents and caregivers. Slides, videos, and/or books utilized in the lesson plans can be previewed and the sexual health educator can explain how it will be used within the curriculum.

Throughout the conversation, discuss how the topics included in PHS/SHE are more holistic than just talking about sexual behaviors, bodies, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). These topics are included at age and developmentally appropriate points in the curriculum. Other topics include consent and healthy relationships, anatomy and physiology, puberty and adolescent sexual development, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation and identity, sexual health, and interpersonal violence.

General Tips

- Share information in an ongoing fashion. Try not to overwhelm parents/caregivers with a lot of information all at once.
- Host a parent night with at least two weeks before the first lesson in the PHS/SHE unit.
- Try to make the event interactive and fun. Consider pairing a PHS/SHE information session with another established school event or information session about another topic.

Handouts

The infographic linked below is a brief 1-page summary of CPS PHS/SHE for parents and caregivers. Key information about PHS/SHE requirements is provided. This infographic can be printed for distribution at parent nights or shared virtually on the school website or social media.

Image description: A flier with a dark blue header and small icons representing hearts, people, and health decorate the top right border. The header states, “For parents and caregivers. CPS Personal Health and Safety and Sexual Health Education. The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) PHS/SHE curriculum builds a foundation of knowledge and skills for students in pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. To help students make informed decisions and safe choices, the CPS curriculum covers topics such as human development, healthy relationships, decision making, abstinence, contraception, and disease prevention. Use this guide to learn more about how PHS/SHE is implemented across the district.”

- [CPS PHS/SHE - Parent One Pager](#) (available in all 9 languages)

PHS/SHE for Parents

This section provides communication tools for resources that parents can use. This includes resources to answer questions, additional materials for parents and caregivers to continue learning, and helpful guides to having conversations about sexual health at home.

Parent Resource List

[This list of resources](#) is intended to help parents and caregivers feel more confident in communicating with their child(ren). Schools can post this on their website and linked on social media accounts. Resources include books, websites, and videos. Resources are available by grade-band, Diverse Learners, and in languages other than English.

Frequently Asked Questions

Commonly asked questions are addressed in this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. [FAQs for Parents](#)

Online Resources

This section includes a few graphics you can use to share helpful resources with parents. While these resources may already be available in a list format, the added visuals are an option for displaying resources in another way.

1. AMAZE

[Link to template](#)

Caption: Looking for ways to continue the conversation around sexual health at home? AMAZE provides fun, animated videos about sex, your body and relationships. Videos are free and available on their website, as well as YouTube. Resources are available in many languages. Visit amaze.org to watch!

Image description:

Slide 1 - a graphic of a light blue blog post with the text “AMAZE Real info in fun, animated videos that give you all the answers you actually want to know about sex, your body, and relationships”. An illustration of two hands touching fingertips with a pink banner reads “a Resource Connection”.

Slide 2 - A blue background shaped like a stamp with black text. The text reads, “What is AMAZE? AMAZE uses digital media to provide young adolescents around the globe with medically accurate, age-appropriate, affirming, and honest sex education they can access directly online—regardless of where they live or what school they attend. AMAZE also strives to assist

adults—parents, caregivers, educators and health care providers around the globe—to communicate effectively and honestly about sex and sexuality with the children and adolescents in their lives. Available in: Arabic, Afrikaans, Indonesian, German, English, Spanish, French, Nigerian, Hindi, Xhosa, Japanese, Khmer, Swahili, Korean, Latvian, Nepali, Portuguese, Russian, Romanian, Slovak, Tagalog, and Turkish.”

Slide 3 - Image of a desktop window with a screenshot of the AMAZE website on it. Background is light blue with white lines drawn on it. Text on the bottom states “Visit amaze.org to view all the videos and resources!”

2. JCFS Services

[Link to template](#)

Caption: Don’t know where to start talking about sex to your kids? Created by JCFS Response for Teens, Don’t Panic: Talking with Your Middle Schooler/High Schooler about Sexuality and Relationships is composed of two separate electronic guides available in four languages that parents and caregivers can easily navigate. Provides parents and caregivers with up-to-date information about basic adolescent development along with tips, strategies, and tools to have difficult conversations that will help their child(ren) make good decisions about dating, relationships, and their bodies throughout their lives. To view the guides, visit this link!

www.jcfs.org/response/parents-professionals/talking-with-teen

Image description:

Slide 1 - a graphic of a light blue blog post with the text “Don’t Panic! Talking with your middle schooler/high schooler about sexuality and relationships”. An illustration of two hands touching fingertips with a purple banner reads “a Resource Connection”.

Slide 2 - A blue background shaped like a stamp with black text. The text reads, “What is Don’t Panic: Talking With Your Teens About Sexuality and Relationships? Two electronic guides: a middle school guide and a high school guide. These guides include what parents need to know about puberty, gender, relationships, and pornography, among other topics. Don’t Panic addresses how to ‘start the conversation’, talk with your child, and emphasize your family values in these discussions. Avail in: English, Spanish, Arabic, Urdu.”

Slide 3 - Image of a desktop window with a screenshot of the Don’t Panic website on it. Background is light purple with white lines drawn on it. Text on

the bottom states “To see the full guides, visit: To see the full guides, visit: <https://www.jcfs.org/response/parents-professionals/talking-with-teen>”
Template link:

Addressing Backlash

Some parents and caregivers may have concerns about their child(ren) receiving PHS/SHE. When communicating with parents and caregivers that are expressing concerns, make sure to listen with an open mind and thank them for sharing their concerns. We never want a parent or caregiver to feel pressured to have their child(ren) participate. This can be a great opportunity to reaffirm that the CPS curriculum is medically accurate, based on best practices in the field of sex education, and in alignment with state laws and national standards.

Remind parents and caregivers that they can **opt their child out of all or only some of the lessons**. The PHS/SHE team is available for additional support and guidance if needed. Reach out at sexualhealthed@cps.edu.

Additional Reading

This academic article, [Talking to Parents About Adolescent Sexuality](#), provides commonly reported anxieties described by parents and teenagers. Best practices are also provided. This resource can be helpful for educators to preview in anticipation of concerns parents may bring to parent night.

Answering Common Parent Questions In-Depth

1. *Why does this education start in PreK/K? They're too young.*

Starting PHS/SHE in PreK/kindergarten isn't about teaching explicit content—it's about laying a foundation for healthy relationships, safety, and body awareness. Here are a few key reasons why it can be beneficial:

- **Body autonomy and safety:** Young kids can learn the correct names for body parts and understand the concept of personal boundaries, which helps protect them from abuse.
- **Healthy communication and relationships:** It encourages kids to express feelings, ask questions, and respect others' boundaries. It teaches children what healthy relationships look like and how to ask for help if they are experiencing an unhealthy relationship.
- **Prevention-focused:** Teaching early helps normalize conversations around health and safety, making it easier to talk about more complex topics as they grow.
- **Age-appropriate:** The content is tailored to developmental stages—kindergarten lessons include understanding the accurate names of

body parts, family diversity, or the importance of consent in simple terms like asking before hugging.

- **Foundational education:** We can't expect older children to have a firm grasp of the content if they haven't been learning it since they were young. For example, we don't keep students from learning math until they are in middle school and then teach them geometry without them having learned the basics. Teaching PHS/SHE to young students builds their foundation of knowledge so that they can learn more complex concepts as they grow up.

2. This content should be taught at home. Why is the school teaching it?

Hats off to you if you have managed to foster a home environment where your child(ren) feel(s) comfortable talking to you about sex and bodies. Not every student lives in that kind of home and not every parent knows how to talk confidently about consent, gender identity, safe sex practices, birth control, and STIs? It's great that you have that kind of home but not every student does.

This statement assumes that home is a safe place for every student, and we know that is not true. If there is an adult in the home who is violent and/or sexually abusing the kids in the home, that child will not feel able to ask them questions about this content.

If you still think this content should not be taught in schools, you can opt your child out of the education. That doesn't mean that the education should not be available to everyone else.

3. Why are my children learning about specific anatomy at their age (ex. Clitoris, penis, vagina)?

General Answer: We start the conversation about personal health starting in Pre-Kindergarten at CPS. Children will learn about private parts which prepares them to eventually learn about sex in later grades. It's better that they learn correct information from you and school, instead of from their friends, movies, or television shows. These words — penis, vagina, etc. — are stated matter-of-factly, with no implied silliness. That way, children learn to use them in a direct manner, without embarrassment, like at the doctor's office.

Rationale for Pre-K to Grade 2: Young children are learning to communicate about their body and its needs. They need you to teach them the right words for their body parts, and how to tell you how their body is feeling. Helping them communicate effectively now will help you care for them and will set them up to take care of themselves later in life.

Additionally, [teaching the accurate names of body parts is sexual abuse prevention](#). If a child is experiencing sexual abuse but doesn't know the words to speak about it, the abuse is likely to continue.

Erin's Law/Legal Reason: Erin's Law requires that all public schools in each state implement a prevention-oriented child sexual abuse program that teaches students in grades Pre-K-12, age-appropriate techniques to recognize child sexual abuse and tell a trusted adult; school personnel about child sexual abuse; and parents and guardians the warning signs of child sexual abuse, plus needed assistance, referral, or resource information to support sexually abused children and their families.

NSES Reason: According to the National Sex Education Standards (NSES), 2nd edition, quality sex ed can help young people delay the onset of sexual activity, reduce the likelihood of unwanted pregnancy, reduce the risk of receiving and spreading sexually transmitted diseases/infections, as well as increases one's "self-protective knowledge and skills" against child sex abuse or sexual assault.

4. Why does my child need to learn about gender?

General Answer: All students need a safe and supportive school environment to progress academically and developmentally. CPS staff, parents, and students all play an important part in creating and sustaining that environment. Creating schools that nurture academic achievement, provide physical and emotional safety and welcome *all students* are common goals for all educators.

Rationale for Pre-K to 2: Research about gender suggests that young people have a strong sense of their own gender identity by 3-6 years old, meaning transgender and/or gender non-conforming children may express gender diversity as young as preschool. This dispels the myth that children and youth are "too young" to know these things about themselves.

Furthermore, students may have transgender family members. By introducing these topics in a simple, age appropriate manner, gender diversity becomes an easy concept for all children to understand (Adapted from CPS Supporting Gender Diversity Toolkit).

Data Rationale: Talking about gender is a relevant topic for our CPS community. Based on the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 22.7% of CPS high school students identify as LGBTQ. Transgender, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming students are more likely than their cisgender peers to have negative experiences at school. They suffer stigma, discrimination, harassment, and violence that adversely affect health and educational outcomes. Research shows that supportive educators and schools protect transgender students against negative educational and health outcomes (GLSEN 2013 National School Climate Survey).

NSES Reason: According to the National Sex Education Standards (NSES), 2nd edition, quality sex education increases acceptance of students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ), many of whom are at disproportionate risk for school absenteeism, dropping out, bullying, and detrimental sexual health outcomes such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), other STDs/STIs, and unintended pregnancy. To support the ongoing health of our students, we start these conversations early and often to encourage acceptance and promote self-protective knowledge and skills. Academic achievement and the health status of students are interrelated and should be recognized as such. Physical and emotional health-related problems may inhibit young people from learning by reducing their motivation to learn; diminishing their feelings of connectedness to school; and contributing to absenteeism and drop out.

Educator Resources for Engaging Parents and Caregivers

This resource, [Engaging Parents as Partners in Adolescent HIV/STD Prevention](#), from the Safe and Supportive Schools Project of the American Physiological Society includes strategies for effectively engaging with caregivers about health education.

Addressing Follow Up Concerns

If parents and caregivers have questions, their first point of contact should be the school's PHS/SHE educators. Additional information can be found on the CPS [Sexual Health Education website](#). Educators can reach out to sexualhealthed@cps.edu for technical assistance and support.