



WHO Kollaborationszentrum  
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WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Federal  
Centre for Health Education (BZgA), Germany


# “Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe”

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on behalf of the expert group

1.12.2010



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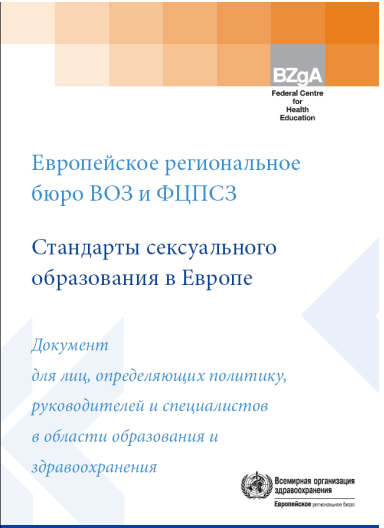
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and BZgA

Standards for  
Sexuality Education  
in Europe

*A framework  
for policy makers,  
educational and health authorities  
and specialists*




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Европейское региональное  
бюро ВОЗ и ФЦПСЗ




Стандарты сексуального  
образования в Европе

*Документ  
для лиц, определяющих политику,  
руководителей и специалистов  
в области образования и  
здравоохранения*



Всемирная организация  
здравоохранения  
Европейское региональное бюро

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## Key new documents on sexuality education

“International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education” (2009): UNESCO

“It’s all one curriculum” (2009): International Sexuality and HIV Curriculum Working Group

“Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe”:  
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


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## Types of sexuality education (worldwide)

- **Abstinence only** (“How to say no”)  
Conservative moralistic. Aims to prevent premarital sex
- **Comprehensive**  
Public health. Aims to prevent sexual ill-health
- **Holistic**  
Human rights. Aims at satisfactory sexual development

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







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### Characteristics of holistic approach

- Human rights based
- Sexuality is a positive human potential
- Orientation on personal growth and development
- Includes physical, emotional, social and moral aspects
- Promotes respect for bodily integrity and acceptance of consensual sexual relationships
- *Also* promotes healthy sexual behaviour

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### Rationales for Sexuality Education

- Sexuality is a central part of being human
- People have a right to be informed
- Informal sexuality education is inadequate in modern society
- Exposure to new media
- Need for sexual health promotion

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## Reasons for Standards

- Many countries express concern about rates of unintended pregnancy and STIs in young people.
- Many countries have independently developed programmes and implement these.
- There are no standards for Europe to define content and delivery of sexuality education.
- Without standards some young people may receive very little or no sexuality education and consequently suffer from sexual ill-health.

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## Variety of sexuality education in Europe

The “SAFE” project gives an overview

- Age
- Number of lessons
- Persons responsible
- Methods
- Content

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## Aims and objectives of 'Standards'

- to assure the quality of sexuality education
- to assure a positive approach to sexuality and support age appropriate development
- to assure the rights of children and youth to comprehensive and correct information
- to reduce negative outcomes
- to give teachers, parents and other stakeholders a framework for their own roles

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## Development of the 'Standards'




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## Purpose and aim of the document

- Define standards for sexuality education
- Describe the framework of **holistic** sexuality education
- Policy document and basis for curricula development


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## What is Sexuality Education? I

The learning about the cognitive, emotional, social, interactive and physical aspects of sexuality.

Sexuality education starts early in childhood and progresses through adolescence and adulthood.

For children and young people it aims at the support and the protection of sexual development.

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## What is Sexuality Education? II

It gradually equips and empowers children and young people with information, skills and positive values to understand and enjoy their sexuality, have safe fulfilling relationships, and take responsibility for their own and other's sexual health and well-being.

It enables them to make choices which enhance the quality of their lives and contributes to a compassionate and just society.

All children and young people have the right to have access to age appropriate sexuality education.




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## Sexuality Education is based on the following principles:

- Human rights (especially sexual and reproductive rights)
- Gender equality
- Self-determination
- Acceptance of diversity
- The assumption that sexuality is an essential part of being human

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## The 'Standards'

### PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. Background
2. Definitions & concepts
3. Rationales for sexuality education
4. Principles and outcomes of sexuality education
5. Target groups and partners
6. How to deliver sexuality education

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## The 'Standards'

### PART II: SEXUALITY EDUCATION MATRIX


1. Introduction to the Sexuality Education Matrix
2. The Matrix
  - Age group 0-9  
Subgroups age 0-4, 4-6 and 6-9
  - Age group 9-15  
Subgroups age 9-12 and 12-15
  - Age group 15 up

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## Characteristics of the Matrix

- Topics are introduced in certain age groups but are revisited in more depth in older groups
- Topics consist of core ('must be done') and additional elements
- Topics are divided in information, skills and attitudes

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## Topic groups in the Matrix



	Information	Skills	Attitudes
Human body			
Fertility / reproduction			
Sexuality			
Emotions			
Relationships			
Sexuality and Health			
Sexuality and Rights			
Social and cultural determinants of sexuality			


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0-4	Information	Skills	Attitudes
The human body and human development	Give information about: <b>all body parts and their functions</b>  <b>different bodies and different sexes</b>  <b>body hygiene</b>  the difference between oneself and others	Enable to:  <b>name the body parts</b>  <b>practice hygiene (wash every part of the body)</b>  <b>recognize body differences</b>  <b>express needs and wishes</b>	Development of:  <b>a positive body-image and self-image: self-esteem</b>  <b>respect for differences</b>  <b>an appreciation of their own body</b>  an appreciation for sense of well-being, closeness and trust created by body experience and experience of bonding  respect for gender equality
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12-15	Information	Skills	Attitudes
The human body and human development	Give information about: <b>body knowledge, body image and body modification (female genital mutilation, circumcision, hymen and hymen repair, anorexia, bulimia, piercing, tattoos)</b>  <b>menstrual cycle; secondary sexual body characteristics, their functions in men and women and accompanying feelings</b>  beauty messages in the media; body changes throughout life  services where teenagers can go for problems related to these topics	Enable to:  <b>describe how people's feelings about their bodies can affect their health, self-image and behavior</b>   come to terms with puberty and resist peer pressure  be critical of media messages and beauty industry	Development of:  critical thinking related to body modification  acceptance and appreciation of different body shapes
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0-4	Information	Skills	Attitudes
Emotions	Give information about: <b>different types of love</b> <b>„yes“ and „no“ feelings</b>  words for feeling  feelings of the need for privacy	Enable to:  <b>feel and show empathy</b>  <b>say yes/no</b>  <b>express and communicate own emotions, wishes and needs</b>   express own need for privacy	Development of:  <b>the understanding that emotions are expressed in many different ways</b>  <b>positive feelings towards their own sex and gender (it is good to be a girl – or a boy)</b>  <b>the attitude that their own experience and expression of emotions is right</b>  a positive attitude towards different emotions in different circumstances
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9-12	Information	Skills	Attitudes
Emotions	Give information about: <b>different emotions e.g. curiosity, falling in love, ambivalence, insecurity shame, fear and jealousy</b>  <b>differences in individual needs for intimacy and privacy</b>  the difference between friendship, love and lust  Friendship and love towards people of the same sex	Enable to:  <b>express and recognize various emotions in themselves and others</b>  <b>express needs, wishes and boundaries and respect those of others</b>  manage disappointments	Development of:  <b>an understanding of emotions and values (e.g. not feeling ashamed or guilty about sexual feelings or desires)</b>  <b>respect for the privacy of others</b>
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9-12	Information	Skills	Attitudes
Social and cultural determinants of sexuality (values/norms)	Give information about: <b>influence of peer pressure, media, pornography, culture, religion, gender, laws and socioeconomic status on sexual decisions, partnerships and behaviour</b>	Enable to: <b>discuss these external influences and make a personal assessment</b>  acquire modern media competence (mobile phone, Internet, dealing with pornography)	Development of: <b>respect for different lifestyles, values and norms</b>  acceptance of different opinions, views and behaviour regarding sexuality

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<p><b>Follow up publications</b></p> <p><b>Implementation Strategy for Standards</b>            A “how to” guide for development of a sexuality education programme            Step-wise approach on what to do, with whom and how            (Expected: early 2012)</p> <p><b>European examples of sexuality education</b>            A collection of “good practices” as a source of inspiration for developing sexuality education            Aims to illustrate what is meant by various “cells” in the Matrix            (Expected: end 2012)</p>	

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# Thank you for your interest!


Contact details:  
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For a pdf version of the Standards:  
[www.bzga-whocc.de](http://www.bzga-whocc.de)

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# Statement 1

- The aim of sexuality education is to prevent harm in the sense of preventing unintended pregnancies, infections and violence.


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## Statement 2



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- Sexuality education should start at age 12, just before children become sexually active, then it has most impact.


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## Statement 3



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- Self-reflection and methodological competency are important preconditions for teaching sexuality education.


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**Statement 4**



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- School sexuality education should cover biological facts only.


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**Statement 5**



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- If sexuality education is delivered in school, an external expert should be the person who delivers it.


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**Statement 7**



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- Children should only get sexuality information if they ask questions.

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