

# Life Skills and Healthy Choices for Middle School Students

## Curriculum Overview

**Designed for:**

- Middle school students (grades 6 through 8)

**Length:**

The 12 1/2-hour course is comprised of 17 lessons.

**Goal:**

The goal of this program is twofold: To help students realize the importance of waiting to engage in sexual activity, and thereby delay becoming a parent until they are emotionally, financially, psychologically and socially ready to take on the demands of parenting; and second, to introduce the skills needed to make healthy choices during adolescence.

**Synopsis:**

The purpose of the Life Skills and Healthy Choices for Middle School curriculum is to provide a high-quality pregnancy prevention program at the middle school level to give students the skills they need to make healthy choices regarding sexual activity before they reach the typical age for dating. When used in conjunction with RealCare<sup>®</sup> Baby and other infant simulators, this program will teach students how to make healthy decisions regarding their current and future health and well-being.

Life Skills and Healthy Choices for Middle School Students is an out-of-the-box, abstinence-plus, comprehensive sexual education and pregnancy prevention program for youth 12-14 years of age. Designed and developed by health educators, curriculum developers and youth specialists, this research-based curriculum is comprised of 17 lessons and includes pre- and post-summative assessments. Each lesson begins with an overview, lesson objectives and a Lesson-at-a-Glance table that lists lesson activities, required materials, suggested preparation steps and approximate class time. The curriculum has been aligned to U.S. National Health Education Standards and National Sex Education Standards.

**Issues Addressed:**

- Self-assessment of attitudes and behavior regarding sexual activity
- Identifying changes in puberty, surviving adolescence, handling media influence on sexual decision-making and having healthy relationships
- Sexual wellness and the law, and sexual harassment
- Sexually-transmitted infection (STI) and HIV prevention
- Birth, caring for an infant and preventing child abuse
- Encouraging abstinence and using good communication skills (including refusal strategies and delay tactics)

**Curriculum Components:**

- Teacher's Guide – complete 17-lesson curriculum, including activity details, time and materials needed, student worksheets, and instructor information for each lesson
- Student Materials – PDF files of all student activity sheets and homework assignments
- Survey and Assessment Tools – to track student knowledge and attitudes prior to and after the learning experience, including summative assessments with answer keys
- Presentation slides in PowerPoint<sup>®</sup> and Acrobat<sup>®</sup> PDF formats for creating overhead transparencies if you don't have PowerPoint<sup>®</sup>
- Hyperlinks to web sites with additional information on the topic being discussed, and resource lists of web sites and other materials for additional information

## **Learning Objectives:**

### **Lesson 1 – Changes, Puberty, Adolescence**

- Understand the difference between human and animal reproduction
- Understand that puberty is a time of life that results in physical changes in the body
- Understand that adolescence is a time of life that results in mental, emotional, and social changes in a person

### **Lesson 2 – What I Need to Know to Survive These Years**

- Understand the basic structure of the male and female reproductive systems
- Understand that puberty is a time of life that results in physical changes in the body
- Understand that adolescence is a time of life that results in mental, emotional, and social changes in a person

### **Lesson 3 – Does the Media Influence My Sexual Decision-Making**

- Identify the effects of media on sexual decision-making and predict the potential consequences of not taking responsibility
- Identify TV shows, movies, magazines, books and songs that contain sexual messages
- Examine a magazine advertisement to determine possible underlying messages regarding sex

### **Lesson 4 – Healthy Relationships**

- Identify the specific traits of healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Understand why doing things in groups (group dating) is extremely important
- Think about and decide on their sexual limits/boundaries

### **Lesson 5 – Where Could Relationships Go?**

- Understand the “teenage sexual relationship continuum”
- Understand the effect of hormones on the body and decision-making when it comes to sexually-related decisions
- Know and begin to use two life skills critical to preventing entering the “danger zone” - These two skills are assertiveness and communication
- Use the critical thinking skills of prediction to look at healthy and unhealthy decisions they may make regarding sexual activity

### **Lesson 6 – Sexual Wellness and the Law**

- Identify specific consequences related to early sexual activity related to wellness
- Identify several practical responsibilities to take to prevent suffering from the unhealthy consequences
- Understand the specific legal parameters designed to protect teens regarding sexual activity
- Identify resources that are available to people with issues regarding sexual activity and the law

### **Lesson 7 – Sexually Harassed**

- Understand what sexual harassment is and how it can be recognized
- Recognize examples of the three types of harassment
- Know specific ways to take action against someone who is harassing them
- Know and be able to use specific communication strategies to combat harassment
- Understand ‘sexting’ and its social/legal consequences

### **Lesson 8 – AIDS Focus**

- Know the names of several STIs and the risks associated with those diseases
- Know the common signs/symptoms of several STIs
- Know specific and effective prevention strategies – abstinence being the most effective strategy
- Search out and find valid sources of information and resources for testing and counseling
- Know the steps to effectively using a condom

### **Lesson 9 – STI Focus**

- Know the names of several STIs and the risks associated with those diseases
- Know the common signs/symptoms of several STIs
- Know specific and effective prevention strategies – abstinence being the most effective strategy
- Search out and find valid sources of information and resources for testing and counseling
- Know the steps to effectively using a condom

### **Lesson 10 – Birth.. a Gift.. a Miracle**

- Describe how humans develop from conceptions
- Identify stages of fetal development in the cycle of 9 month pregnancy

- Gain an understanding of how special the birthing process is
- Understand the risks involved with having a child too young

#### **Lesson 11 – Care and Needs of an Infant**

- Understand and administer care events for the RealCare® Baby infant simulator
- Understand the responsibilities of taking care of the RealCare® Baby infant simulator outside of class

#### **Lesson 12 – The Simulation Experience**

- Understand and respond to the demands of a young infant
- Master the care of the RealCare® Baby infant simulator during the care simulation experience
- Understand that being sexually active as a teen can have real and lasting consequences

#### **Lesson 13 – Simulation Review, Handling Stress and Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome**

- Define Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS)
- Explain why infants and young children are vulnerable to injury by shaking
- Identify areas of the brain that are affected by shaking, and the resulting physical consequences
- Identify methods of coping with stressful situations in caring for one or more infants
- Identify the characteristics or profile of a person most likely to shake an infant
- Formulate a plan for handling frustration, anger and stress when an infant cries

#### **Lesson 14 – An Abstinent Lifestyle Rocks**

- Identify the many positive attributes of abstinence
- Consider their commitment to staying abstinent
- Develop a game plan to remain abstinent and prevent teen pregnancy

#### **Lesson 15 – Communicating and Saying No While Still Having Fun and Keeping Friends**

- Learn three life skills that will help them stay abstinent
- Learn about and practice one-liners they can arm themselves with to prepare and feel comfortable expressing themselves when pressured to be sexually active

#### **Lesson 16 - Post-Summary Assessment**

- Understand how their attitudes about themselves, sexual activity, and parenting have changed over the course of instruction
- Summarize main concepts presented in the course
- Assess their understanding of information presented throughout the course

*Life Skills and Healthy Choices for Middle School Students* is one of two curricula offered on the Healthy Choices Sex Education Program Curriculum. Additional curricula offered include *Healthy Choices: Relationships, Sexuality and Family Planning*.