

Obama: Sex Ed for Kindergartners ‘Is the Right Thing to Do’

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Then-Sen. Barack Obama speaking at a Planned Parenthood conference in Washington, D.C., on July 17, 2007.

(CNSNews.com) - The Chicago Public Schools this year are mandating that the district’s kindergarten classes include sex education, fulfilling a proposal President Barack Obama supported in 2003 when he served in the Illinois state senate and later defended when he ran for president in the 2008 election cycle.

At a Planned Parenthood convention at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Washington, D.C., on July 17, 2007, a teenage girl who said she worked as a sex-education “peer educator” in the D.C. public schools asked then-U.S. Sen. Obama what he would do to encourage the teaching of “medically accurate, age-appropriate, and responsible sex education.”

Obama first noted that he had worked with Planned Parenthood to push a sex education bill when he served in the Illinois state legislature.

Then he said: “I remember Alan Keyes—I ran against Alan Keyes—but I remember him using this in his campaign against me, saying, ‘Barack Obama supports teaching sex education to kindergartners.

“And you know,” said Obama, “I didn’t know what to tell him. But it is the right thing to do, to provide age-appropriate sex education, science-based sex education in the schools.”

ABCNews.com published a story about what Obama told Planned Parenthood. It carried the headline: [“Sex Ed for Kindergartners ‘Right Thing to Do,’ Says Obama.”](#)

To explain Obama's position further to ABC News, Obama's campaign pointed to an Oct. 6, 2004 story in the Chicago Daily Herald about a speech Obama had given at a Catholic college in Illinois. This story carried the headline: "Obama clarifies sex ed views at Benedictine."

"Nobody's suggesting that kindergartners are going to be getting information about sex in the way that we think about it," Obama is quoted as telling the children. "If they ask a teacher 'where do babies come from,' that providing information that the fact is that it's not a stork is probably not an unhealthy thing. Although again, that's going to be determined on a case by case basis by local communities and local school boards."

To further clarify Obama's position on sex ed for kindergartner's, Obama's campaign spokesman, Bill Burton, pointed MSNBC to the "curriculum for those in kindergarten" produced by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). This [curriculum suggested](#) discussing same-sex relationships—in non-graphic terms—with kindergartners.

In response to a campaign ad that Sen. John McCain later put out focusing on Obama's support for sex education for kindergartners, SIECUS itself [published an explanation](#) of the Illinois state bill Obama had supported. SIECUS explained that the bill Obama supported did indeed extend sex education to kindergartners in Illinois. At that time, Illinois mandated sex education only for children in grades six through 12. SIECUS also said the bill would have removed all mention of "marriage" from sex education in the state's public schools.

"The ad is referring to Senate Bill 99 (SB99), which was assigned to the Health and Human Services Committee in the Illinois Senate in 2003," said SIECUS. "At the time, State Senator Barack Obama was Chairperson of the committee. He did not sponsor the bill, but he did vote in favor of it.

"SB99 proposed to make changes to Illinois' existing sex education law which requires instruction in grades six through 12 that includes teaching about the prevention, transmission, and spread of AIDS," said SIECUS. "Illinois law also states that schools must teach 'honor and respect for monogamous heterosexual marriage.' SB99 would have eliminated all references to marriage in the Illinois sex education code, and required that all material used in classrooms be age- and developmentally appropriate and medically accurate.

"It would also have expanded sexuality education to students in kindergarten through fifth grade and mandated that students be taught the age of consent, positive communication skills, and that they [the pupil] have the power to control behavior," said SIECUS.

Despite Obama's support for it, the bill did not pass and did not become Illinois law.

According to a report published yesterday by the CBS affiliate in Chicago, the new sex education program mandated in Chicago public schools will—like the SIECUS curriculum—instruct kindergartners about same-sex relationships.

"Students will also take a look at the different family structures that exist in today's society," said the CBS report. The report then quoted Stephanie Whyte, the chief health officer of the Chicago Public

Schools: “Whether that means there’s two moms at home, everyone’s home life is different, and we introduce the fact that we all have a diverse background.”

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