

Uninformed Claims about the Ontario Health Curriculum

(May 2015, Robin Levin King, Toronto Star Reporter)

Claim 1: “In Grade 1 they will learn to reveal their private parts (not just name), they will see posters and flash cards of private parts, they will learn to touch the private area and identify it on themselves and others.”

Source: An anonymous letter written in Arabic and circulated in Peel Region.

Veracity: Students will learn how to correctly name private parts, as well as to recognize “exploitive behaviours” such as inappropriate touching. The curriculum describes a “teacher prompt” that encourages students to talk about “all body parts with respect,” so children will understand that “If I’m hurt or need help, and I know the right words, other people will know what I’m talking about.”

Claim 2: “Grade 6 is about the promotion of self-discovery through masturbation. Our 12-year-old daughter or son, who is not even a teenager yet, will be asked in class to explore his or her own body by touching their private parts, masturbating and pleasuring their body.”

Source: An anonymous letter written in Arabic and circulated in Peel Region.

Veracity: In Grade 6, children are not “taught masturbation,” but they are taught that it is “common and is not harmful and is one way of learning about your body.” Children in that grade also learn about building healthy relationships and how to combat stereotypes.

Claim 3: “Anal Play 101 class in Grade 8 would actually provide instruction on anal sex play.”

Source: An anonymous letter written in Arabic and circulated in Peel Region.

Veracity: “Anal Play 101” is not a lesson plan — the title comes from an online article on the Planned Parenthood Toronto website. In Grade 7, children learn how to communicate that they don’t want to have sex, including anal sex. They learn that it’s best to wait until they are older to have any kind of sexual activity. They also learn how STIs are transmitted during sex, including anal sex.

Claim 4: “In Making Sex Feel Good unit, they will be asked to look at sexy magazines and movies to investigate what arouses and seduces them.”

Source: An anonymous letter written in Arabic and circulated in Peel Region.

Veracity: There is no such lesson called “making sex feel good” — the title comes from an online article on the Planned Parenthood Toronto website. Pornography is not brought up until Grade 9, and then only in the context of staying safe online.

Claim 5: “It will teach Gay-Trans propaganda starting in grade 1 [age 6]. Destroy the idea of gender, natural law, heterosexual family normalcy. You choose your gender.”

Source: An email sent to the Star by opponents of the curriculum.

Veracity: In Grade 3, kids learn that some people have gay parents. In Grade 8, children will be expected to understand gender identity, including transgender identity as well as various sexual orientations. They will also be expected to identify how to “help individuals of all identities and orientations develop a positive self-concept.”

Claim 6: “Ignore Parents as first educators. Parents are mentioned maybe 6 times, and never as 'educators' in regards to sexual education of their own children or as the primary point of contact.”

Source: An email sent to the Star by opponents of the curriculum.

Veracity: Parents are mentioned dozens of times throughout the curriculum and are portrayed as an integral part of a child’s life and source for both answers and guidance. Children are also encouraged to spend time with their family.

Claim 7: “Consider Gender confusion starting in grade 1, with the propaganda that there are 6 genders and 52 sexual orientations.”

Source: An email sent to the Star by opponents of the curriculum.

Veracity: The curriculum does list six kinds of gender identity: male, female, two-spirited, transgender, transsexual and intersex. It only lists four kinds of sexual orientation: heterosexual, gay, lesbian and bisexual.

Claim 8: “Consider dating and sexual suggestiveness and attraction in Grade 4.”

Source: An email sent to the Star by opponents of the curriculum.

Veracity: In Grade 4, kids learn that puberty comes with a host of changes, including changes to social relationships.

“Relationships with friends can change, because sometimes people start being interested in different things at different times. Some people start ‘liking’ others. They want to be more than ‘just friends’ and become interested in going out.”

Claims 9: “Be worried about pregnancy in Grade 5.”

Source: An email sent to the Star by opponents of the curriculum.

Veracity: In Grade 5, kids learn about how pregnancy occurs. But contraception and preventing pregnancy isn’t discussed until Grade 8.

Claims 10: “Replace the words Husband and Wife with 'Partner' by Grade 6.”

Source: An email sent to the Star by opponents of the curriculum.

Veracity: In Grade 6, kids learn that not every couple is heterosexual, and that neutral terms, like partner, are more accepting. “We need to make sure that we don’t assume that all couples are of the opposite sex, and show this by the words we use. For example, we could use a word like ‘partner’ instead of ‘husband’ or ‘wife’.”