



TP3: Teen Pregnancy Prevention Pilot Project Richfield Youth Interim Focus Group Report

In the spring and summer of 2007, the Hennepin County Strategic Initiatives and Community Engagement Department (SICE) conducted focus groups with teens in Richfield to find-out what they do during their out of school time, to better understand where they are receiving their information about sex and sexual relationships, and to gauge their knowledge of family planning services available in the community. The teens shared a number of insights with focus group interviewers, a summary of which has been prepared to help guide planning efforts and future teen pregnancy prevention and youth development work in the area.

Focus Group Recruitment and Limitations

The findings contained in this report were derived from focus group discussions conducted with eleven groups of teens at Richfield High School, Augsburg Park Library, and Lincoln Hills Education Center. The opinions expressed by focus group participants do not necessarily represent the opinions of all teens. SICE did not attempt to assemble focus groups that were representative in terms of age, gender, race or ethnicity of teens in Richfield as a whole. All focus group participants either received parental consent to participate or, in the case of participants 18 or older, consented themselves to participate.

Nine focus groups were conducted in English and two groups—one of young women and one of young men—were conducted in Spanish. The information gathered in these groups is divided into two sections—Section 1: Focus Groups Conducted in English; and Section 2: Focus Groups Conducted in Spanish.

There were 36 total participants; 12 young men and 24 young women. Of the total female participants, six participated in the focus groups conducted in Spanish. Of the total male participants, five participated in the focus groups conducted in Spanish.

Section 1: Focus Groups Conducted in English

Sex Education: Are Parents Sexuality Educators for the Children?

In 2004, NBC News and People magazine asked teens all over the country where they got most of their information about sex and sexual relationships. Seventy (70) percent of respondents said parents were the main source of their information. Participants in these focus groups were asked to react to that poll. They were skeptical of the poll results, concluding that even though it is important for parents to speak to their children about sex, parents are not teens' number one source of information about sex because both sides are uncomfortable talking to each other about the subject. Summary findings and typical responses included:



Having ‘the talk’ about sex with their teenager might be uncomfortable for parents, but teens are just as reluctant to discuss the subject with their parents.

- “My parents don’t really talk to me about it.”
- “Like nobody really like — nobody that I know really goes and asks their parents like, ‘Hi, how do you do this position?’ Do you know what I’m saying?”
- “Yeah, when they bring it up, I kind of avoid the question, because it’s really awkward to talk to my parents about it.”
- “My dad might. He might be like, “I don’t want to talk about that with you.”
- “I just run away from my mom every time she tries to give me the sex talk.”
- “My mom, she did have like a girls [related to a previous job] and she would talk about like sex and stuff like that. But I could like never see me like going to her and asking her, because it’s like kind of embarrassing to talk to her about it. But I wouldn’t be uncomfortable if she came to me and said something. But I’d be like uncomfortable going to her.”
- “He’d talk to me, but I don’t want to talk to my dad about that, you know.”
- “It’s just an awkward conversation to have with your parents.”
- “I mean, I’d say most people at this age avoid their parents as much as possible.”
- “My mom does not tell me anything.”

Some parents, teens say, are so concerned about making sure their children do not have sex, they end up teaching teens very little about sex or giving a one-sided version of it that leads teens to question whether or not their parents are telling them everything they need to know.

- “Pretty much they just said like, “You shouldn’t have sex until you’re married,” and stuff like that. So they weren’t like being accurate or anything, they were probably just trying to teach you a lesson or trying to make you be good or something.”
- “Like they’re just like, ‘Don’t do it,’ and stuff.”
- “They tell you, ‘Don’t do it, it’s bad.’ They are just like, “No, it’s not good.”
- “I’ve never had a conversation besides like, “Please don’t,” so they haven’t really taught me anything.”
- “They’re going to say, “No, don’t do it.”
- “They’re not going to tell you like whatever feels good. They’re not going to tell you stuff that’s going to be like good. They’re going to tell you what can happen, which like —most people already know what’s going to happen. But they’re not going to like want to tell you the good stuff about it, so they’re just going to bring up the negative stuff.”

Some teens say they’ve talked to their parents about sex, and their parents have supported their decisions because of the relationships they’ve built with them.

- “My parents were more like, ‘When you’re ready, you do it when you’re ready, we’ll be behind you.’ Do you know what I mean? And then — they weren’t like giving me like specific times like, ‘You can’t do it until then.’ It’s like, ‘When you feel you’re ready, then you go ahead.’ And they like know me and that I’d make the right choice.”
- “My mom tells me like if I do it, just be careful and just let her know when I’m ready. That’s what my mom said, and she said — well, then she just talked about what the effects are going to be, what all you’re going to go through, you know.”



- “I think it’s different too, because me and my mom are really close, you know, and it also depends on like how you feel about that subject with your mom. Like me and her talk openly so, I mean, I would tell her everything. So I think it also depends on your relationship with your parents and how comfortable you are with them.”
- “Well, I know my friend, she went to her mom and her mom like talked to her about it and they were cool about it.”
- “My mom is open with everything.”
- “I think I get, like, good information from my parents because — or maybe it’s just me, but my mom, she made the mistake when she was around my age of doing that, and then she got pregnant. And so her stuff that she is telling me has like shown me that I shouldn’t do it around this age.”

Some parents, Richfield teens say, rely too much on school to provide teens with the information they need about sex.

- “I think parents rely on, like, school for information. That’s why they don’t want to address it.”
- “I think some parents are just kind of uncomfortable talking about that with their kid, because I know like my friend’s mom was like 16 when she had her and it’s just embarrassing, I guess, for her mom to talk about it and be like, “Oh, well, I don’t want her to make the same mistake I did, so she can just learn this from school.”
- “I think most parents wait too long to talk about it. Like they’ll wait until a certain point, but then after that you already know about it. And I think most people, like your parents, don’t tell you about STDs because they figure you get it through school. But like if you don’t listen, then you don’t learn pretty much, and then you’re on your own to learn that kind of stuff.”
- “Most parents think that like everything is taught in school, but really it’s not that great.”

Even though it might be difficult for teens and parents to talk about sex, many teens say that teens in Richfield get the best quality information about sex from their parents.

- “I was going to say parents, just because they know you the best.”
- “I think the best information that you can get about sex is just from your parents.”
- “The most quality, not the most information altogether, but the best quality stuff.”
- “They tell you the realistic side of things or consequences, and the information is accurate, because obviously they’ve been through it.”
- “Yeah, they’re not going to tell you something wrong. Like if you have a really good relationship with your parents and you ask them something or if they’re like, ‘Okay, well, let’s just break it down.’ And they just tell you everything and you’re like, ‘Okay, well, why? Why is this like that?’ And they can tell you why because, you know, they experienced it.”

Sex Education: So Where is it Happening? And is it High Quality?

Focus group participants were also asked where young people in Richfield received most of their sex education and where they received the highest quality information. Note that focus group facilitators did not attempt to determine whether or not the information that participants discussed is actually “high quality” information. Rather, the questions were asked to understand



what sources participants *perceive* to be providing the highest quality information. Summary findings and typical responses included:

Focus group participants say that no one source of information provides teens in Richfield with the best quality information about sex, leaving teens to cobble together information from many different sources to get a complete understanding of the subject.

- “I think they don’t [get the best quality information].”
- “I don’t think kids in Richfield get it at all. Like I don’t think kids get it, period. Like they get both sides, but it’s not together. You’ll get a different side from over here and this side from over here, and you’ll have to put them together yourself.”
- “You learn a little bit from everyone. I think a lot of it is just piecing things together and deciding how you want to take it.”

Focus group participants say teens in Richfield get the worst quality information about sex from friends and boyfriends, music and magazines.

- “I think from their friends, their peers...because if you don’t know much about it, they probably don’t either.”
- “Like if your friends are a good influence on you, then it might help but if they’re not, then that might not be good.”
- “Boyfriends.”
 - “Because they just want to get action.”
 - “They just want to get down.”
 - “They want some.”
 - “They want to get down and dirty.”
 - “They don’t care about the outcome, because they can’t get pregnant. So they really don’t care.”
 - “And they could always say, ‘It’s not mine.’”
- “Like every magazine you open, there’s like how to have great sex or how to whatever, and most kids — like even I saw some kids reading that in class, like the perfect sex or good sex or bad sex. So they’re not actually saying what could happen to you if you have unprotected sex, they’re just telling you how to have good sex. I think it’s a bad influence.”
- “I would say the least quality information would probably come from music, because they’re like, ‘Oh, because I’m rich I get to do this, this and this with so many different people.’ But you, you’re not exactly rich and you’re not exactly poor, but you still can’t. You want to try to do it like these people, but you can’t because of your status, and it’s like...”
- “It kind of tells you that it’s okay to just have sex just with random people.”
- “Yeah, that [Music] would be one of those. All it tells you is about the good, you know, how you’re getting laid and all that with a bunch of different girls for free and all that.”

Focus group participants say they would like broader and deeper information than is currently available through the health classes and sex education programs at their school

- “It was just the same thing I’ve learned since middle school.”
- “It was just like too repetitive, mindless kind of work.”
- “We had like one week to focus on that unit. Like we didn’t really have enough time to like learn the whole different types of diseases and all that, like what caused it and how to



prevent it. We just had like a speaker who just talked about it. And they brought movies and we discussed some pictures and that's about it. I mean, I was interested in learning more about it, but there wasn't like enough time."

- "No, because when I was up in health or whatever, she told me — she told the class that this is what you get if you do this and all that sort of stuff, but when we were doing a project and me and my partners, we went to the doctor or the clinic or whatever, and they told us something way different. So maybe her information was from back then. Like what they thought back then."
- "I don't think like the health class really teaches as much as like they could."
- "And they teach the same thing every year."
- "We never talked about birth control at our school."
- "I don't think we learned anything at this school. The health teacher spent like three days on it, and that's it."
- "Health class, they really don't teach you nothing. They really don't say anything about sex. They just talk about, like she said, nutrition and all that. Like they might go into a little sex, you know, thing for a minute, but it's not really about the actual thing. It's just about unplanned pregnancy or whatever."
- "By the time we get sex education here, we already know pretty much everything. They don't teach us anything new. It's the same thing, STDs, abortion, whatever. It's the same thing. And like in fourth grade we already get, 'Oh, you get your period, dah, dah, dah.' And so by now it's just old. It's the same thing being repeated."
- "We had horrible speakers. This guy came in and talked about sex and he was like, 'Yeah, I've been celibate.' And I was like, 'How are you supposed to talk to us about sex if you've never had it, you're celibate?'"
- "Like it's not all sex. Like we spent a week on it like we do every other thing."
 "Yeah, it's like the last thing we do. We do it for like two and a half days."
 "And then you do a — what's it called? You do your presentation and then if the person that has the sex presentation didn't do their work, that's all you know. It's not a good thing."
 "Yeah, we were on nutrition longer than we were on sex."

Focus group participants say they want more information about sex during school health and sex education classes than diseases, consequences and simply being told not to do it. And they want to learn about relationships, dating, and emotions as well as sex.

- "They don't show you the good part. They show you all the bad things. They don't tell you like what's the good part of sex?"
- "Like you always hear — I think it's like everywhere, because you always hear about like all these diseases and like how to get whatever for it, or you just shouldn't have sex. But they don't tell you like if you are, then this is where you should go if you want to get on birth control. They don't really talk about it, like it doesn't exist."
- "Basically it's just a bunch of pictures. "Hey, look what can happen to you if you're stupid."
 "You don't really learn about sex. You just learn about..."
 "The consequences."
 "The consequences, yeah. You never learn about the good side of it, like it's..."
 "It's always the negative."



- “They’re showing you like one side of it. There’s another side of facts that they’re not showing.”
- “They don’t get into too much depth about how to take care of it. It’s says basically, “Don’t do it, and you won’t have to worry about it,” and that’s never going to happen.”
 “Kids are going to do what they’re going to do.”
 “Yeah, they’d be better off telling you, ‘You can do this and this and this, and if you get it, you can go here and take care of it this way.’”
 “The more you tell a kid not to do something, the more likely they are to do it.”
 “Plus then they’re going to be stupid about it whenever they do do it, because you’ve never told them the right way to do things. You just tell them the wrong way.”
 - “It’s telling you about it, but it’s not helping you with anything, like any questions you might have like, ‘Oh, well, I really like him, should I do this, or what about this?’ It’s not giving you all of the information, it’s just telling you like, ‘Okay, well, if you do this, you could catch this and if you do that, you might get this and then you could get pregnant like that.’ It’s not really helpful.”
 - “I don’t know. I think when we talk about it in class, it’s just what can you get and like, ‘What if I really like him?’ And stuff like that, like the emotional side of it, you don’t talk about that. It’s like, ‘Just don’t do it, don’t have sex.’”
 - “That’s what it seems like everybody’s telling you. They’re not telling you why. Like the people that are like, ‘Okay, well, why? Why? Why shouldn’t we have sex, why?’ And you’ve got people that are just like, ‘Don’t have sex, sex is bad, just don’t do it.’ “Why not?” You’ve got everybody — like all the young people over here that have had it are like, ‘Oh, do it, it’s nice, do this, do that, it’s not that bad.’ And then you’ve got the older people over here like, ‘Just don’t do it, it’s bad.’ And you’re like, ‘Okay, why shouldn’t I do it? They told me it was great and you’re telling me it’s bad.’ Like you’re confused.”
 - “It’s just kind of like, ‘Oh, well, these are the diseases you’ll get, so don’t have sex.’ That’s basically it.”
 - “Personally, I don’t think the school explains about it like how they should. I think that’s why so many people are like messing up and getting pregnant and like doing stuff that they shouldn’t be doing.”
 - “I mean, there are like teens here and stuff, but I don’t think every single teen knows how to — like, I mean, knows about sex and everything, because actually I experienced one time — I was in the media center and this guy came in here, and he actually asked the ladies if there was a book on how to use condoms. So, I mean, it happens. Just because you’re 15 or 16 doesn’t mean that you know everything about sex. So I think that the school should be more open to it. Do you know what I mean? Not say, ‘Well, have sex,’ but say, like, not only the consequences, but also, you know, ‘This is what sex is, this is what it’s about.’”

Sex Education: What Should Be Happening?

Focus group participants were asked “How do you think teens want to learn about sex and relationships?” They identified additional speakers, programs at church, peer education programming, information that could be accessed privately, and a group-based sex education elective as possible ways they would like to learn about sex that are not available to them now. Typical responses included:



- “There’s this once a year thing that my religion community holds or whatever, and like they pretty much have this big room where all the teenage girls from 15 to 25 or whatever, 22, stay and then they just pretty much talk about sex, and you probably don’t want to sit next to your parents while some priest is talking about sex. So that’s why they kind of put all the girls and kind of explain the reason why you should wait before you — so I don’t know. But they only do that once a year. And that’s not enough information, and most people don’t attend.”
- “I think like speakers kind of. Like the speakers in health talked about a lot things that I never really thought about.”
- “Probably something private that they wouldn’t have to like let everybody know that they’re trying to find out information. So either like the Internet or like a magazine or something they could read. Something so nobody knows they’re trying to figure out about it.”
- “They need like the thing like I said they have in Minneapolis, that [peer education program]. They need one of those to come up here and talk to people up here.”
- “I think group-wise. Like I think students should have a teacher or a class that’s just like based upon, you know, sex. Like an elective. Like if you want to take it, you take it.”
- “Yeah. Like if you want to learn about it and learn more about it and like know everything emotional-wise and everything, they should have that opportunity. Or like a little group that you go to every like Thursday or something.”

Access to Family Planning Services: What Do Teens Know? What is Important to Them?

Focus group participants were asked a series of questions to gauge their knowledge about where to access family planning services, such as “If a friend asked you where he/she should go to get condoms get the pill or the patch or something like that, what would you tell them?” They were also asked questions to ascertain what factors are most important to teens when they do attempt to access family services. Summary findings and typical responses included:

Focus group participants say condoms are widely available and since you do not need to be a certain age, show an ID, or tell your parents in order to get them, they are a convenient form of birth control.

- “Everyone sells condoms. If you sell things, most likely you have condoms in there somewhere. I mean, you can go to like convenience stores, drugstores, gas station, supermarkets.”
- “You can go to Walgreens or a gas station. They have plenty of condoms.”
- “Go to a gas station and toss it back in your pocket and leave.”
- “You don’t have to be, like, any age to buy condoms. You just walk in and get them.”
 - “I mean, if you want to get condoms, then you just go to a store.”
 - “Right. If you want condoms, you can go anywhere.”
 - “I mean, you’ve got to be old enough to get them.”
 - “I think you can buy them at any age. Well, not any age, not extremely young.”
- “Nope. You can just walk in. You might feel weird, but you can always do this.”
- “You can go on the street when they are handing them out.”



- “You can get that yourself, but, I mean, like birth control’s expensive, and that’s definitely something you want the parents footing the bill for, because they have healthcare and all that kind of stuff, so they can pay for all that, but like condoms, that’s stupid. You can just go get them yourself. It’s like a quarter for one.”
- “You don’t have to tell your parents and have that awkward conversation. ‘I need a condom, Dad.’” “Yeah, I wouldn’t walk up to my dad and be like, ‘Hey, I need to borrow some of your condoms.’”
- “Like you can buy them [condoms] anywhere. You don’t need to have ID.”

Focus group participants would tell younger teens who asked them where they could get contraceptive pills or the patch to talk to their parents, and older teens to talk to their doctor.

- “Well, if it’s prescription birth control, they’d have to talk to their parents or their doctor.”
- “It depends on what age they are because if they’re older — nowadays like once you turn a certain age, like 16, doctors are not giving information to your parents. So like if your parents go to the doctor and say, ‘My daughter needs to go on birth control,’ they will be like, ‘No, we need to hear this from the daughter, not you.’ So once you get older, it’s mostly just the doctors.”
- “You have to actually go to the doctor to get the birth control pill. That’s not like getting a condom. Like I said, a condom, we can walk into a gas station and buy one. A birth control pill, you have to go to a doctor and do all the tests to make sure that you can even take it without dying.”

Focus group participants have heard of the morning-after pill, but they are unsure of its efficacy, what teens need to be able to get it, whether to go to a clinic or a pharmacy, and where it costs more.

- “I don’t even know where they sell them at.”
- “I don’t even know what the morning-after pill is.”
- “Do they sell them at stores?”
“You can’t get them at the store.”
- “I’ve heard of it, but I didn’t think it was like real, like people really used it.”
- “I know what it is, but I don’t really know anything else about it.”
- “I’d tell them to go to GNC first and if they don’t have it at GNC, then go to the doctor.”
- “I have no idea. I’d probably say the doctor or hospital or something.”
- “That don’t work.”
- “Where do you get those, a store or a clinic?”
- “Your clinic has to — like your doctor has to prescribe them for you, and you get them like once a month.”
- “They don’t work. Do they work?”
“Sometimes, for some people.”
- “You’ve got to go to a clinic, or you can buy them over the counter, but they’re more expensive over the counter than a doctor.”
- “I wouldn’t know where to go, but I’ve had friends who’ve done that before. But I would have no idea where to go.”



- “Like I’ve heard that if you go to like Walgreens, it’s really expensive. But if you go to like a hospital or something...”
- “It depends, because I went with my friend and like we went to the Walgreens 24-hour one in Richfield. She had to pay like \$50.”
- “And you have to be 18 to get them.”
 - “Yeah, you have to be 18. But those pills are supposed to be for 17 and under. That’s what they told her. And in the hospital she had to make an appointment to get a prescription, so they’re kind of stricter.”

Focus group participants identified a lack of accessible services and cost as barriers to obtaining contraception in Richfield. Privacy and confidentiality were also important considerations for participants. They value privacy in the sense of not wanting friends or people they know to see them accessing services. Confidentiality, in the sense of health care providers not notifying parents about teens seeking services, is also important; participants were confused about whether or not minors can obtain confidential family planning services.

- “I’d say [getting contraception is] easier in Minneapolis.”
- “And if you happen to go to a place that’s like non-confidential, it’s more likely that your parents will be notified in Richfield. Otherwise if you’re like outside, it’s kind of like well, they don’t have that great of a chance of notifying someone.”
- “That’s most of the problem why teenagers don’t go to the doctor if they feel like they’re pregnant or they’re having a problem... Especially if you’re under 18, you need a parent’s permission.”
- “Yeah, I think it’s because it’s confidential. I think that’s why most people go to clinics.”
- “I guess she wanted it [birth control], but she didn’t want her mom to find out and stuff like that, and she didn’t know where to get it. She was kind of lost.”
- “But, I guess, if you’re young enough and you’re on your parents’ insurance, you can go to the hospital or whatever, but you’d have to let your parents know that way.”
- “I’ve heard they’re not really confidential.... Your parents can get your records really quick there.”
- “You can be — all they do is — it’s confidential. You just make an appointment and then they don’t say, ‘Oh, your parents need to sign this.’ Even though you’re by yourself, you can just get it.”
- “They’re not open with their parents or they’re too scared to like try and go without them. They don’t want to go through the hassle.”
- “Some clinics have like — they’ll seal your information so like they won’t send you nothing or, you know, they’ll ask for a number that they can reach you at without, you know, — they’ll keep it private.”
- “Well, my friend thought she was like pregnant and everything and so she just wanted to like get birth control pills for like after that and everything. And like she went to Walgreens and she couldn’t find it. And then she tried to go to a clinic but her mom found out, and so she got like really mad at her. And then her mom told her that she couldn’t get it.”
- “Well, my friend wanted to but then she couldn’t get them because she wasn’t old enough [15], so she ended up pregnant.”



Access to Family Planning Services: What Would Reduce Barriers and Improve Access?

Focus group participants were asked what would make it easier for teens in their community to obtain family planning services if they needed them. Free or very low-cost birth control and birth control vending machines, more convenient locations such as a school-based clinic or a “birth control bus,” giving teens additional information about doctors and clinics that provide birth control, and removing age limits and providing information about confidential services were some strategies identified by participants. Summary findings and typical responses included:

- “If it was cheaper. That’d help people.”
- “If they had like doctors’ numbers or something.”
“Yeah, because I don’t know any birth control doctors.”
- “Well, if they put it in vending machines, like at SuperAmerica.”
- “I think they should have a big old bus that goes around to like the schools and all the places where sexually active teens hang out and just, you know, offer it, where they can get you birth control or whatever you need or they can help you set up.”
- “Have someone to talk to. A lot of people don’t have anybody to talk to.”
- “I think like more confidentiality and like more people to like come in a school and be like, ‘You can go here and get birth control without your parents knowing,’ because I think if like an actual adult would inform like some of my friends who aren’t on birth control, they’d actually listen and they would get it. But if I say, ‘Oh, if you go here, they won’t tell your parents,’ they don’t believe it.”
- “In health class or something like that, like, if they gave you like a brochure or something, something you could relate to, not even just like a brochure, like they just, you know, give you places like, ‘Okay, well, for birth control you go here, you go here.’ Like the teacher telling you.”
- “I think we need like a sex ed. counselor, like someone who you can just make an appointment with to talk to them about like getting on stuff without telling their parents and they can like help you out with insurance and stuff like that.”
- “Richfield should be more like other schools, because like I know a lot of Minneapolis schools that have like clinics in their schools. Like Southwest has a clinic in their school and they have a daycare so it’s like, okay, you shouldn’t be afraid, you could go to the clinic, its right at your school. It’s like helping people so you don’t have to go anywhere else. You don’t have to look for places or look up numbers. You don’t even have to ask your friends. You can just go down to the clinic and there are professionals and you can talk to them about it. It’s, like, the same thing, it’s their job to tell you.”
- “Just having it at a place where all teenagers can get to. And like how she said, where you don’t have an age on it in case you need it when you’re younger.”

Youth Development Activities: What Appeals to Teens?

Focus group participants were asked a series of questions about what they currently do outside of school time and what they would like to do that is either not available or available but not accessible. Summary findings and typical responses included:

Organized youth development programs do not appeal to some teens in Richfield because the structured environment and activities often cost money and feel too much like being babysat.



- “I don't want to sit around and play board games with a bunch of little kids all day, and that's, like, the only ones I've seen. That's basically what you do is you sit there and there's some like four-year-old guy who's trying to be your friend as you sit around and play like air hockey and stuff.”
- “I'd rather be working and making some money or just hanging out with my friends than doing some organized activity that you probably have to pay for.”
- “I don't think many people in high school really, though, like want to be in an organized after-school activity. Like I can see sports, because some people like that, but like I don't think many people want to go and just hang around with other kids in a classroom environment type situation.”

Focus group participants identified a range of activities—from a drag-strip to music events that appeal to teens, to a peer mediation program—that they would like to participate in but are not available in Richfield. Having fun and being able to hang out with their friends are priorities for participants.

- “Racecars, that's fun.”
“Yeah, if they had, like, a drag strip in Richfield that would be pretty cool.”
- “Well, if the school did more stuff that was related to music that wasn't like jazz or, you know, something that appealed to more people.”
- “Something different. Like there's nothing really fun to do. Like every weekend is the same. I wish there was like something to do where you could like — I just want something different.”
- “I was like — we need like more hang-out places. We don't have many for like teenagers, like here they're making like a Buffalo Wild Wings by the Target where they're building. A lot of kids are excited, because they want to hang out like somewhere like that. We don't have a lot of places that like kids can just hang out.”
- “I think peer mediation.”
- “I would probably say like better community leagues for like different types of sports in the summertime, and that way people would have more things to do.”
- “I want to go look for a job.”
“You need a job to go shopping, so I prefer a job first.”
- “Free stuff...Events.”
“You can't get into anything for free anymore. You have to pay to get in.”
- “Well, I wish there was like a hip-hop dance team. Like, we don't have that.”
- “I wish they had, like, a teen club for the weekend.”



Section 2: Focus Groups Conducted in Spanish

Sex Education: Are Parents Sexuality Educators for the Children?

Participants in the Spanish-language focus groups were also given the NBC/People Magazine poll described above. They, too, were skeptical of the poll results, concluding that even though it is important for parents to speak to their children about sex, parents are not teens' number one source of information about sex because both sides are uncomfortable talking to each other about the subject. Participants identified other resources that they would be more comfortable consulting. Typical responses included:

- "...In some cases parents don't talk to their children about sex, and it is very important for parents to talk about sex to each of their children."
- "You might find one out of ten [parents] that can advise you."
- "Because most of them feel ashamed or uncomfortable of talking to their children about sex, or they think that...I don't know...they feel intimidated."
- "And one feels ashamed or uncomfortable too to tell your mother, "Mom, this happened to me. Or today was my first time."
- "You don't talk about the topic in great detail with the parents. And you can express yourself more openly with friends and teachers."
- "I think that parents would not be the first choice, because there are people who do not have a close relationship with their parents, and in my case I feel that it is easier to talk to a teacher and tell him/her about my problems. But I think it is more difficult to do that with the parents."
- "I think that I am not sure about the parents. I would feel more comfortable or safe with the nurses."

Sex Education: So Where is it Happening? And is it High Quality?

Focus group participants were also asked where young people in Richfield received most of their sex education and where they received the highest quality information. Summary findings and typical responses included:

Latino focus group participants felt that teens in Richfield get the best quality information about sex and sexual relationships in school and at clinics.

- "At school, in Health class. Because they teach you how to protect yourself and not get diseases. And I think it is good so you know what you are getting into."
- "Right now I am taking a Health class, and we are talking about diseases and all that. The teacher brings nurses to talk to us. Last week she brought a specialist on the topic, and he explained how the diseases are spread and all that."
- "At school you can get more accurate information, more exact information of what sex means or is. Another place where you can get precise information is with the nurses and teachers."
- "I think at clinics. You can go and ask your questions, and they always help you. They are never going to say no. And you trust that what they are telling you is correct, since they have studied the topic, it is not just what any person says, like I can ask you and you can tell me one thing, but if a nurse tells me something different, I am going to believe the nurse."



Music and the Internet are two places Latino focus group participants say teens get the least information about sex and sexual relationships.

- “I think Music because music is just music, it is not information. Well, I have never listened to a song that says, ‘This is how you use a condom, this is family planning, these are the contraceptive methods and the diseases you can get.’ Until now, at age 19, I have not heard a song about that and I don’t think there will be one.”
- “I chose Internet and Music as the last two sources...you might not find the same information on the Internet that you would get from a nurse.”

Latino focus group participants say that even though teens get a lot of their information about sex from friends or from their girlfriends or boyfriends, these sources of information aren’t always the best or the most accurate.

- “From friends. It is bad information because they don’t know anything about sex.”
- “Specially boyfriends, because boyfriends don’t care whether you know or not. They just tell you, ‘Come over here!’ and there you go, and you don’t even know what’s going on. At the end you just wonder, “Why did I do it?” There are the consequences.”

Sex Education: What Should Be Happening?

Focus group participants were asked, “How do you think teens want to learn about sex and relationships?” Roundtable discussions and one-to-one, question-and-answer sessions with specialists are two of the ways Latino students participating in these focus groups would like to learn about sex that are not available now. Typical responses included:

- “I think it should be more through meetings like this one. A date should be set and whoever wants to can come, not to a class, but to a round table. They should be fun, not just presentations.”
- “I think that when we each talk, I mean, I, personally do not like to share my personal issues with the public, they are private things. I think it would be better talking to a specialist on a one-to-one basis so that he can give me more information and could be more specific than in a group. Because he could say, “Well, it works this way,” but there is more behind it. So I feel that it would be better if there were programs that would help people on a one-to-one basis. That way a student could learn better and also express what he/she feels.”

Access to Family Planning Services: What Do Teens Know? What is Important to Them?

Focus group participants were asked a series of questions to gauge their knowledge about where to access family planning services, such as “If a friend asked you where he/she should go to get condoms get the pill or the patch or something like that, what would you tell them?” They were also asked questions to ascertain what factors are most important to teens when they do attempt to access family services. Summary findings and typical responses included:

Latino focus group participants know that condoms are widely available in stores, yet they say they would still send teens who want condoms, contraceptive pills, the patch or the morning-after pill to a clinic or health care center to make sure they know how to use it.



- “You can find condoms anywhere. You can find pills in a pharmacy, but I think that it would be better to go to a clinic because... you can receive instruction, in case you don’t know how to use it or to take it. It would be very good for those people to go to the clinic. I think that would be the best place for them to go to.”
- “Well, if you are talking about condoms, you can find them at any store, even at the gas station or drug stores, but if you are talking about pills or the patch, you first need to get a check up, not everyone is a candidate for them, so for that you need to go to a clinic or a place like that.”

In addition to providing good information, a location close-by, confidentiality, flexible hours, and sliding-fee or low-cost services are all important for teens when choosing a clinic.

- “It is very good if the clinics are near and have flexible hours. I have sent a lot of people to clinics where they charge you depending on your income, and if you are a student it is free, and it is confidential, like a secret.”
- “...Location is also important. If there is no place near you, you might not go. If I ask about a clinic and they tell me it is 3 hours away, I wouldn’t go. You always look for some place near.”
- “Good information, cost and location.”
- “I say that the information is very good and also the flexibility on costs. They try to help you. Of course they sometimes have to charge you, otherwise they would not be able to sustain themselves, but they always look for a way to help you.”

It might be easier for Latino teens to obtain contraceptives in Minneapolis, but with a rapidly growing Latino population, the focus group participants say teens should have little trouble getting the contraceptives they need at any local clinic.

- “I think that for the Latin community Minneapolis would be easier. Because I think that language is a barrier and might not help when you want to go to a place like that. So I think Minneapolis would be easier.”
- “Minneapolis, because it is faster and also there are more options, more clinics.”
- “I think that the population of Latin people has grown a lot; there are a lot of Latin people in the United States. And in Minnesota, in Saint Paul, Minneapolis, Richfield and other suburbs, there are now many clinics in Spanish, and there is a lot of help for everybody. I think that it would be easy to get that kind of thing at any place.”

Access to Family Planning Services: What Would Reduce Barriers and Improve Access?

Focus group participants were asked what would make it easier for teens in their community to obtain family planning services if they needed them. In addition, exchanges among focus group participants indicated significant confusion regarding the availability of family planning services that will need to be overcome in order for teens to more easily access services. Summary findings and typical responses included:

Providing Richfield teens with information about clinics they can use to get contraceptives or having a clinic located in Richfield would help teens who needed contraceptives to get them.



- “Well, I really don’t know if there is a clinic in Richfield. Usually you go to Bloomington or Minneapolis. I don’t know if there are any in Richfield, and if there aren’t, I think we need one.”
- “Specifically, a clinic in Richfield. Because, for contraceptive methods such as the condoms, I think people don’t mind paying \$5 or \$6 dollars for the condoms if they want to have sex, but if you are talking about pills, then I think you need to go to a clinic, and that is what we need here.”
- “A clinic or information of where the clinics are located.”

Additional clarification about the rules for getting birth control might be helpful for teens, as they are concerned about privacy and rules related to parental notification, the need for ID and prescriptions, and age limits for obtaining certain kinds of birth control.

- “I know somebody who tried to get contraceptive pills or the Morning-After Pill, but it was denied to him at the clinic because supposedly the girl had to go ask for the pill in person. He was very worried and didn’t know what to do. So, I think that men should be made aware where they can buy or obtain it in case the woman is afraid or ashamed of going to the clinic.”
- “...they ask you to fill out papers and they ask you whether you want it to be a secret without your parents finding out about it. And if you say yes, they don’t tell them. And they ask you for a different telephone number where they can call you if you need to go in for some tests or something.”
- “No, they don’t sell them to you at the pharmacies. They ask you for an ID.”
 - “Uh-hum. They ask you for an ID.”
 - “...you need a prescription from the doctor to get Plan B, otherwise they won’t give it to you.”...
 - “And if they give it to you, you need to be over 18 years old.”
 - “Oh! So you have to have a prescription?”...
 - “But if you are 18 or older?”
 - “I think you can.....”
 - “I don’t know.”

Youth Development Activities: What Appeals to Teens?

Focus group participants were asked a series of questions about what they currently do outside of school time and what they would like to do that is either not available or available but not accessible. Focus group participants responded that after-school programs that offer teens the opportunity to participate in many different activities – including learning about sex and parenting, studying a new language, taking part in a support group or just socializing – are something that Richfield needs. Participants in the focus groups conducted in Spanish were the only focus group participants that expressed concern about gang activity in Richfield, and they noted that a variety of out-of-school time activities could help some teens stay out of gangs.

Typical responses included:

- “There is a need for a program that would offer many other activities, because right now, this is starting to look more like Minneapolis. You see many kids who are in gangs, it is like a virus that spreads, it starts at one place and spreads to other places and there has to be a solution. Because you don’t even feel safe when you go out.”



- “Well, I think that in this area, I mean in Richfield, we need a club where we can learn about sex education. Because I know some girls end up pregnant at 14, 15 or 16, and they end up that way because of lack of education.”
- “Or other type of resources. Because it cannot be avoided, if they get pregnant, they leave. It doesn’t mean that it is the end of the world, but, a resource center to help them, where they can also find education about having and taking care of a child. If they are older, like in their twenties, they look for education about feeding and taking care of the child. But most of the girls who are 16 or 18 don’t do that.”
- “I think that a club that I would be interested in - and I think other people would be too - would be a language club. I’d love to speak different languages, but I do not have the means to go outside of Richfield and pay thousands of dollars at a school to learn languages, and I think it would be good if there was a free program, or at least a reduced-fee program to learn more languages.”
- “I would like it if there was a support group where everybody would get together to help each other with any kinds of problems.”
- “A night club to go dancing!”