

**NEW STUDY REVEALS PARENTS' CONCERN
OVER LACK OF SEX ED IN QLD SCHOOLS**

A new study released by Family Planning Queensland (FPQ) today has found as many as 72 per cent of Queensland parents would be concerned if there was no sexuality education in schools.

FPQ Director of Education Services, Cecelia Gore, estimates that "less than five per cent of Queensland children are receiving adequate sexuality education. Our research has revealed that this is in direct contrast to what parents want."

The study found an overwhelming 82 per cent of Queensland parents support the provision of school-based comprehensive sexuality education.

The components of the curriculum which received most support were; preventing sexual abuse, sexual development, relationships and sexual health. The study found that preventing sexual abuse was a topic that mothers (95 per cent surveyed), in particular, are most concerned with.

Queensland parents rate preventing sexual abuse as the most important topic for school children to learn about, followed by sexual development.

The research uncovered that over a third of parents would like children learning about sexual abuse prevention before their first day at primary school, and 71 per cent would like children to begin learning about this topic before high school.

"It is our view that comprehensive sexuality education should be available in all Queensland schools. Without it our young people are being put at risk of everything from unwanted pregnancies to sexually transmitted infections to sexual abuse," said Ms Gore.

"With National Child Protection Week just starting, now is the perfect time for our political leaders to listen to the concerns of Queensland parents on this important issue," added Ms Gore.

The state-wide research found support for comprehensive sexuality education amongst both mothers and fathers, residents in metropolitan and regional areas and different religious beliefs.

The study also found that there is widespread recognition in Queensland that students need information about growing up before they reach puberty, with 86 per cent of parents of this opinion.

In addition, the study found that most parents recognise that the teaching of sexuality issues can increase the use of contraception and safe sex practices and 87 per cent of those surveyed believe that sexuality education can even increase the likelihood of having healthy relationships.

78 per cent of Queensland parents think it appropriate for students to receive more sexuality education in schools and 73 per cent of parents would find it helpful to receive information that would enable them to talk to their children about sexuality issues.

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