SEX

NSEIL SUPP

in a

E3S9 C65/ E38 1976 A QCSE

SEX EDUCATION IN QUEBEC'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

E3.59

C 65

E38

1976

A

QCSE

CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION

0 2 MAI 2001

DOCUMENTATION

LE COMITÉ CATHOLIQUE DU CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION

QUEBEC, 1977

Publié par le Service général des communications du ministère de l'Éducation Québec, 1977

BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU QUÉBEC

Éléments de catalogage avant publication

Québec (Province) Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. Comité catholique.

Sex education in Quebec's catholic schools / Le comité catholique du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. — Québec: Service général des communications, ministère de l'Éducation,

Publié séparément en français sous le titre: L'éducation sexuelle dans les milieux scolaires catholiques du Québec.

1. Éducation sexuelle — Québec (Province). 2. Éducation sexuelle de la jeunesse. I. Titre. F3S9M5A

Dépôt légal: premier trimestre 1977 Bibliothèque nationale du Québec

Meeting a need	5
Human sexuality	7
The concept of sex education	g
A need and a right of the student	13
The responsibility of the family	15
The responsibility of the school	19
School programs: their orientation and content	23
Referring to moral and religious values	27
An implicit and explicit education	31
Who should be entrusted with sex education?	33
Sex education — respective roles	37

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Schools are being asked more and more to play a part in the sex education of young people. The need has often been expressed by many educators, parents and social workers, well aware of its urgency. During the past few years there have been a number of attempts to meet this need: sex education courses have been planned, programs have been drawn up, texts and audio-visuals have been produced.

The school, thus, finds itself called upon to take on a new responsibility in a field of education which is rather complex. Sex education overlaps biology, psychology, medicine, ethics and religion. Is it a subject that should be dealt with in the classroom? Who should be teaching such a subject which in the first place concerns parents, but which is also of interest to social workers, health specialists and sexologists? What should be the content of a sex education program given in schools? How should it be taught to children and teenagers? These are all potentially controversial questions. They are also questions which need to be clarified and this requires a straight-forward interaction of all those responsible for education.

The Comité catholique, for its part, is aware that it does not have the sole responsibility of deciding what orientations should be given to sex education in schools. It does, however, have a specific contribution to make. On the one hand, sex education is an integral part of the global development of the personality and includes moral and religious issues which cannot be avoided. On the other hand, since school legislation invests the Committee with the authority to approve, from the ethical and religious point of view, the teaching aids used in Catholic schools, the Committee has the responsibility of giving its approval on the curriculum and the teaching materials which are proposed for sex education in the school. Hence, the Committee wishes to make a worthwhile contribution to the setting up of a valid sex education program.

In the present document, the *Comité catholique* wishes to propose the thinking philosophy that guides it in carrying out its mandate relative to sex education. This document, then, is intended to deal with the questions which many parents and educators are asking and to which they are entitled to have an answer regarding the orientation which will be given to sex education in the schools. It is also intended to encourage a concerted effort among those who work at the different levels of the education system, so that a truly educational and sound sex education program may be set up.

Paul Tremblay President of the *Comité catholique* du Conseil supérieur de l'Éducation

FOREWORD

MEETING A NEED



Human sexuality has a very broad meaning. More than just the genital reality, it encompasses the whole human being. It includes at one and the same time instinct, pleasure, relationship and commitment. Its true meaning can only be attained when these various aspects are united in a personality capable of tenderness and love. Sexual growth is a long term process.

Sexuality is basic to the human condition. It impregnates one's whole being. Sexuality determines how one is in-the-world, how one lives as male or female. One is either man or woman, and one acts accordingly, day in day out, as long as one lives. Human beings are completely marked by sex. That is why the word sexuality takes on a broader and more global meaning: it designates biological, psychological, cultural and moral traits which give each person his or her identity as man or woman.

It should be immediately made clear that sexuality cannot be reduced to the limited concept of genitalia. The two realities are related but not identical. In everyday speech they are not always distinguished, and there is a tendency to put sexuality, sex and reproduction on the same footing. Sexuality should be distinguished from reproduction just as the whole may be distinguished from one of its parts. Quite naturally, genitalia or sex are considered an important part of sexuality. On the other hand the non-genital dimensions of sexuality are less well known, and easily forgotten. The term sexuality includes genitality, but goes beyond it: it applies to the whole person as marked by sex and physically and emotionally distinguished by the fact of being a man or a woman. The term genitalia designates what is related to the genital organs, to the sexual encounter, to the reproductive function. The genital life is an expression, a manifestation, but not the be-all and end-all of sexuality.

Since we are dealing here with human sexuality, we should also define the difference between the function and the meaning of sexuality. Sexuality in an animal has no other function than that of prolonging the life of the species. Sexuality in man also has this biological function, but takes on a specifically human meaning. Man in effect can invest things with meaning. An animal utters sounds; man transforms sounds into speech, which conveys meaning and ideas. Hence man can give meaning to his sexuality by making it love-bearing and responsive to the call of conjugal love and of greater human or spiritual endeavour.

The second second

HUMAN SEXUALITY

1.1
An all-inclusive meaning

1.2 Sexuality and genitality

1.3
The function and meaning of sexuality

1.4 Instinct and culture

In every man there is a complex pattern of needs which are expressed by drives or impulses that we also call instincts. The aggression instinct meets the need to live and to develop as an individual; the sex instinct meets the need to exist and to continue as a species. These basic needs are already present and active at the unconcious level during the cryptic years of infancy. As long as he is growing up, the child must learn, through a long and difficult process, to recognize and direct these impulses in a conscientious and independent way. This is why the sexual impulse must be bred, brought up. This involves helping the child little by little, to overcome the first hesitations, particularly the tendency to egocentrism, and gradually to give meaning to the instinctive drives. In sex education, the cultural environment cannot be ignored. One must live and cope with the models and taboos of the cultural milieu. The path which leads to conscious and autonomous sexuality is a long one: one is born male or female, but one must become a man or a woman. It should be stressed that this undertaking is not intended either to repress or crush the sexual impulses and desires as if they were unwanted or wild. Far from being a form of inhibition or repression, our effort is to bring the sexual impulses into the open and give them a more human dimension.

1.5 Desire and pleasure The sexual instinct also expresses itself as a need to love, in the form of desire and pleasure. As psychology shows, desire and pleasure play an active part from the beginning of a child's life, both in the discovery of its body and in the make-up of its personality. Pleasure, so dominant in childhood, is gradually linked to the ability to love as the child grows in affective maturity. Sex education, in fact, is aimed at leading the child towards a happy balance between pleasure and love. But we stress, this balance does not just happen; it is the result of a gradual maturing of the personality.

1.6 Relationship and commitment

Sexuality is not just the fact that two sexual beings, male and female, happen to be in close contact with each other and realize that they are different or complementary. Sexuality links and commits individuals, with their past and their future. Sexuality is that relationship by which one discovers oneself in discovering the other. Sexuality shows that the human condition is twofold: it is the possibility of a relationship with and commitment to another human being who is similar, because he or she belongs to the same human race, yet different because he or she belongs to the opposite sex. Sexuality is the tangible sign that the human being is relational, both "made-for-the-other" and "made-by-the-other".

1.7 Becoming capable of loving

Human sexuality is all at one and the same time instinct, desire, pleasure, relationship and commitment. During the sexual maturing process, these different elements will be integrated in a personality meant for tenderness and love. Of course sexuality does exist as a form of egoism or exploitation. But human sexuality in its totality is truly an *integrating force*, calling forth and finding its fulfillment in tenderness and love.

Sex education is more than describing biological and anatomical data. It underlies and favours the development of the "whole man" and "whole woman". Its basic task is to foster the integration of the sexual dimension into the individual's self-actualization.

The full meaning given to the term "human sexuality" leads us towards a global concept of sex education, i.e. an educational task whose objective is a sound maturing of the personality in its sexual dimension. This means that sex education comprises all that encourages the healthy maturation of the "whole man" and the "whole woman" respectively in every boy and girl. This perspective clearly shows that in sex education the whole person matters: body, feelings, relationships with others, sense of responsibility, becoming of the self. Consequently, it is evident that sex education cannot be restricted to providing information regarding the genitalia and sex behaviour.

It should be added, however, that sex education includes the transmitting and acquiring of a certain amount of basic information and knowledge. This includes physiological and factual information that deals with the genitalia, dating, the process of fertilization, the growth of the foetus, child-bearing, and psycho-sexual development. There is also information concerning male and female psychology, the development of the personality, loving relationships and the meaning of affection and pleasure. Finally, one must not forget information concerning the social and moral questions which young people raise in their search for values in this area of sexuality. Good, solid information, given when it is needed, is essential to understand and direct the expressions of sexuality.

Mere information about sex, however, does not suffice. Sex education, as its name implies, should have educational objectives. This means that it must aim explicitly at supporting and helping young people to discover and affirm their sexual identity, to develop their masculinity of femininity, to become autonomous human beings able to relate to other people, to establish value codes which enable them to make their choices and govern their behaviour. This is a bold undertaking: it surpasses the restrictive objectives of providing sex information.

THE CONCEPT OF SEX EDUCATION

2.1
A global outlook

2.2 Some basic information

2.3 A basic concern: educating



Sex education then is part of a global effort to educate the whole person. It cannot be conceived of as a separate entity. Let us add that it merely deals with one important but not exclusive aspect of the development of the individual. Therefore sex education should be treated as an aspect of the education and development of the young, and not as a solution to "sexual problems" or a tranquilizer to adult fears concerning sexuality. For the same reason, sex education in the schools has to be considered as an integral part of the human development of the child and in line with the objectives of the school itself. (More on this in chapters 5 and 8).

Human sexuality nowadays has become the subject of a great deal of scientific research. Physiology, psychology, biology and sociology have all made worthwhile contributions to our understanding of sexual phenomena. Over the past few years, a new science, called sexology, has grown out of the social sciences. This discipline is based primarily on the study of the biological, psychological and socio-cultural features of human sexuality. One of its main objectives is to describe the processes or stages of psycho-sexual development. Sexology pursues scientific objectives, and is thus very different from sex education, which has clearly educational objectives, i.e. the integration of human sexuality. Naturally, sex education will make use of the insights which the social sciences can provide, but for specifically educational purposes. We are not training these young people to become biologists or sexologists; we are helping them to become themselves.

2.4
An educational approach

2.5
Sex education and sexology



At the various stages of their growth — childhood, adolescence, young adulthood — young people need sex education in order to understand what is happening to them and in order to become responsible for their own development. They have a right to this education; it is an important element in the total educational process.

A NEED AND A RIGHT OF THE STUDENT

Before we even begin to attribute responsibilities for sex education, let us state clearly that young people have the need for and the right to such education. Education would not be an overall training if it neglected the sexual dimension. Sexuality is indeed an important dimension of the human being and cannot be left to look after itself. One cannot close one's eyes to this reality. The child, the adolescent, the young adult are all conscious at some point of the emergence of sexual drives and impulses within themselves. What is more, they are influenced, positively or negatively, every day by the mass media, their neighbours, their friends, their parents, and their environment. From the educational point of view, more understanding of this aspect of their personal growth is needed. This is the responsibility of all educators.

3.1 A right and a necessity

Psychology has described the stages of development which lead to sexual maturity. The first phase begins with infancy when the young child learns, through contact with his parents, what it is to be loved and to feel secure, while at the same time beginning unconsciously to express his instincts. This is followed by the childhood phase which is characterized by curiosity and a sort of psychological stability (the latent period). Then comes the adolescent phase of definite self-assertion and genital awareness. Finally, there is the phase of integration and commitment, when the young adult begins to make decisive choices and becomes capable of a lasting love relationship. We can see, from this enumeration of the more important phases in the process of maturation, that sexuality is closely linked with self-development. It is for this reason that any education which is intended to help the young person reach confident maturity must of necessity take into account the sexual dimension of his or her growth. To ignore this factor would be a serious error, just as it would be a mistake to make too much of it. Sex education is necessary in order to help the young person become aware of the significance of the changes of adolescence and to take responsibility for his or her own development.

Towards self-actualization

3.3 At every stage of growth

Young people need an appropriate education in sexual matters at each of the stages we have mentioned. Sexuality does not suddenly invade one's life as some sort of D-Day indicating the start of puberty. It develops constantly during infancy and adolescence. In the same way, sex education should not be simply associated with some sort of "adolescent crisis". It begins in the cradle, because it is at that stage that the idea of relationship between human beings emerges, and it continues to grow during childhood and adolescence. We should point out that the stages of psycho-sexual growth in themselves indicate clearly where and when the educator should step in; they are indications of the opportune moment, the principal interests of young people and at the same time they suggest who are the best people to help the child at any one stage in his or her growth.

3.4 A recognized right

The child's right to sex education derives from the basic right to education which is recognized in the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man and in the Declaration of the Rights of Children. (1) It is implicity included in a pastoral document published in 1969 by a special committee on the family set up by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. According to this document, sex education and family education are "essential to children through every stage of their development up to adolescence and to young people who are called upon to make decisive choices involving their adult lives" (2) A similar document published by the Catholic Bishops of France confirms this: "We must help children and young people, taking into account the development of the psychological, educational and didactic sciences, to develop their physical, moral and intellectual aptitudes in a balanced way and gradually to acquire a keener sense of their responsibilities. This supposes a determined effort to direct their personal lives with integrity and to seek true freedom by overcoming all obstacles with courage and generosity. They should receive a positive and sensible sexual education which will develop progressively as they themselves grow up."(3)

⁽¹⁾ Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man by the General Assembly of the United Nations, December 10, 1948 and Declaration of the Rights of Children, November 20, 1959.

⁽²⁾ Family and sexual education, by the Special Committee on the family, Canadian Catholic Conference, November 1969.

⁽³⁾ Réflexions de la Commission épiscopale française de la famille sur l'éducation sexuelle, Documentation catholique No. 1645, 1974, p. 25.

Sex education is first and foremost the responsibility of parents. They have a leading and irreplaceable role to play in the sexual and personal development of the child.

When parents give life to their child, they assume the responsibility of bringing it into the world fully, i.e. to help it develop all its potential and to achieve maturity. The sex education of their children then becomes first of all the duty and responsibility of parents. It is also their right.

The importance of the family, the leading role of the mother and father in the psychological and sexual growth of the child are well-known. Many books have been written on the subject and fundamentally we can affirm that the family exerts a decisive and far-reaching influence on the formation of the child's personal identity, on his or her psycho-sexual development and on the way he or she assimilates prevalent standards of sexual behaviour.

This influence is implicit during the whole time the child is growing up. From birth, the child's family atmosphere leaves a lasting impression. Through the parents, the child acquires a certain idea of sexuality. Their fundamental attitude, their agreements and disagreements, the manner in which they share the tasks and roles within the family, their sexual harmony or tensions, the fact that they welcome or tacitly reject their children, all these factors leave their mark on the child. Even if the family were to say absolutely nothing about sexuality, the child would still acquire a long-lasting impression of what it is to be a man, or a woman and what is meant by a happy or unhappy couple.

The influence of the family is permanent, but it also varies according to the stage of development of the child. During the early years of its life, this influence is absolutely fundamental and almost exclusive. The young child identifies completely with the parental figures or with their substitutes. It is in them and through them that the child identifies itself as a boy or a girl, that he or she learns for the first time what is meant by trust, autonomy, love, tenderness. As the child grows, so does its universe: the familiar faces of the mother, father, brothers and sisters are complemented by those of his or her friends, classmates, the teacher, the coach and other children's parents. These new contacts influence a child in its development: it

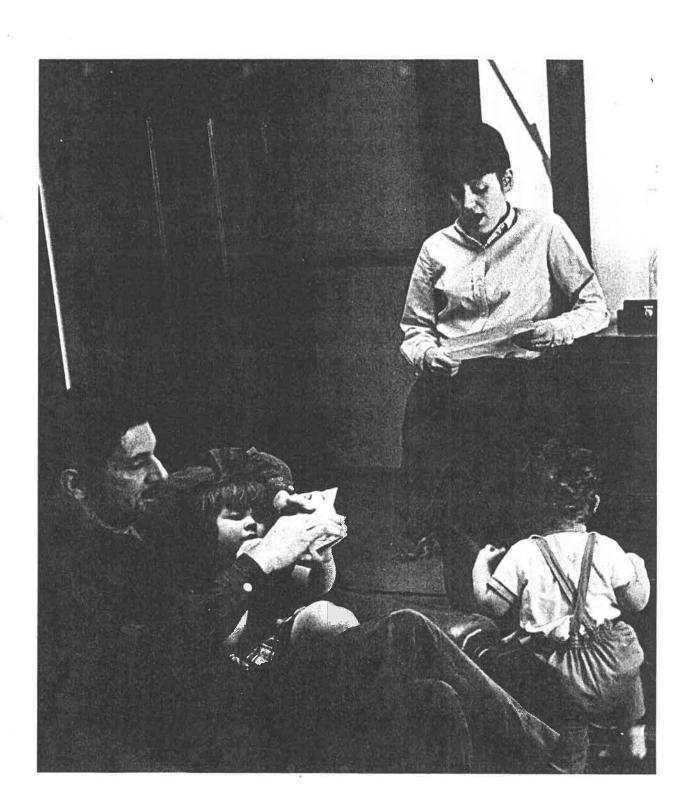
THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FAMILY

4.1

4.2 The importance of the family

4.3 A pervasive influence

4.4 A diversified influence



begins to make comparisons, to realize that there are other ways of being a man or a woman. At this age, the family is by and large the most influential milieu for initiation to sexuality and the first witness to values in that area.

With adolescence, the family goes as it were into eclipse. It is as if the adolescent, having witnessed the example of the parents and seen the values and the style of life that they represent, needs to test everything and to find new sources of inspiration for his or her growth. The family circle is like the egg shell which the teenager must break out of. But despite all appearances, the family continues to play a prominent role in the teenager's attempt to become himself. The family remains an indispensable haven where the young person expects to find the affection, tenderness and security which are essential in this turbulent and many-faceted exploration of life. The adolescent is struggling to find an identity and is being solicited from all sides. In the midst of this confusion he needs to be able to call an occasional truce, to be reassured — and this is what the family is for. This affective anchor is essential if the young person is to be sure that he or she is fundamentally loved and accepted as he is. It is just as important for the adolescent to be sure of the parents' unconditional love as it is for him or her to break away and create new relationships; this break is a necessary step to a new openness. This age is most bewildering for parents, the only answer is a sustained and unfailing love.

We are not trying to draw an ideal portrait of the family. For one thing, it is obvious family life-styles are becoming more and more diversified and the role each one plays varies from family to family. Apart from that, we all know that the family is not always exactly the haven of peace we have just described. Many parents, indeed, feel very uneasy when it comes to dealing with the sexual education of their children. Some have their own hang-ups and personal problems and consequently are shy about discussing sex with their children. Others, because of special family circumstances such as difficult marital relations, separation, one-parent families, find their responsibility a source of anxiety. It is clear that in such families, day-to-day life has more impact on the children than any discussion regarding sex. However, one should try to use these difficult situations to integrate them positively into the child's sex education. At any rate, before throwing the whole responsibility at the school we should seek ways of supporting and helping parents in this vital task of theirs. This could be a challenging part of the work of continuing education.

4.5

4.6 Difficult family situations



The school has a direct responsibility in the area of sex education. This responsibility is not meant to complete what is missing in the family or to compensate for a lack of sex education. As the school is a place where the child and the teenager gain valuable experience in human relationships, it has an important role to play: that of allowing young people to come to grips with the essential elements of their sexual and affective development more systematically and within a wider context than the family unit allows.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL

The intervention of the school in the field of sex education often gives rise to questions, anxiety, even hostility. It is necessary, therefore, to state clearly why such intervention is justifiable. But before arguing the case, we should recognize one undeniable fact: whether we approve or not, sexuality is part of school life and teachers have always had to deal in one way or another with this problem. Sexuality is not a fact of life that one can allow into or exclude from the school at will. Even before anyone started thinking about the pros and cons of an explicit approach to sex education, sexuality was already present within the school and making its presence felt.

5.1
An undeniable fact

Whether the school is co-educational or not, sexuality exists: it is part of the relationship between children, in the classroom, in the corridors, in games and in recreation halls. It is part of the relationship of the teacher and the pupil and we all know how important a role the teacher can play when the child identifies emotionally with him or her. Sexuality enters into certain school subjects: natural sciences, literature, history, health services. It is part of the organization of the school itself in the relationships between the administrative staff, the teachers and the pupils; in the type of educational activity promoted by the school; in the values which underlie school life and influence the affective and sexual development of school children. If sexuality is already present, it is difficult to understand how a school which takes its educational role seriously cannot feel directly concerned by the phenomenon. Rather than leave these various influences to play a haphazard role within the school, it would seem preferable to channel and direct them towards a truly educational objective.

5.2

Beyond the implicit presence of sexuality within the school, one may place direct responsibility for sex education on the school, and this for three reasons: 1) the school has a specific contribution to make to the psycho-sexual growth of young people; 2) the sexual and affective dimension enters into the educational objective of the school; 3) there are deficiencies in family education for which the school must compensate.

5.3 The school's direct responsibility

19

5.4

1) A specific contribution to the development of the young

The school's responsibility stems primarily from the fact that young people feel the need for a sexual education adapted to their growth stage. This education, as we have said, is rooted in the family, but needs to be expanded beyond the family experience. Psychological studies have shown how young people as they gradually begin to acquire a personal identity, feel the need to look outside the family confines, to sort of distance themselves from their parents, to measure themselves against other models, other examples. The same holds for the development towards autonomy and personal responsibility in the domain of sexuality. It is normal that the adolescent should wish to enlarge the framework of information and reference and, consequently, it is inevitable that he or she should enter into contact with other sources of information and other examples.

5.5

This enlarged framework is provided by the school itself. Young people go to school and find themselves in a much wider milieuthan that of the family group. They meet many other people, go through many new experiences, all of which influence them deeply. From then on, it is normal that it should be the school that provides them with the opportunity to reassess the principal elements of their development and particularly of their affective and sexual growth, within a context other than that of their family milieu. The school can play an important role by providing organized and scientifically based information on sexuality, by encouraging the student to talk freely with the educators and to develop healthy relationships with other students of the same age group, and by making it possible for young people to think seriously about what their sexual and emotional development implies and to work out a system of values. In this area, the school does not necessarily do a better job than the parents, it does a different one. In other words it operates in its own way, it is organized and methodical, uses appropriate pedagogical methods and relates to what happens at school. This specific contribution means that the school can extend, complete and renew to a certain extent the educational activity of the parents. This contribution is more than valid, it is indispensable, even if the family itself fulfils its role entirely.

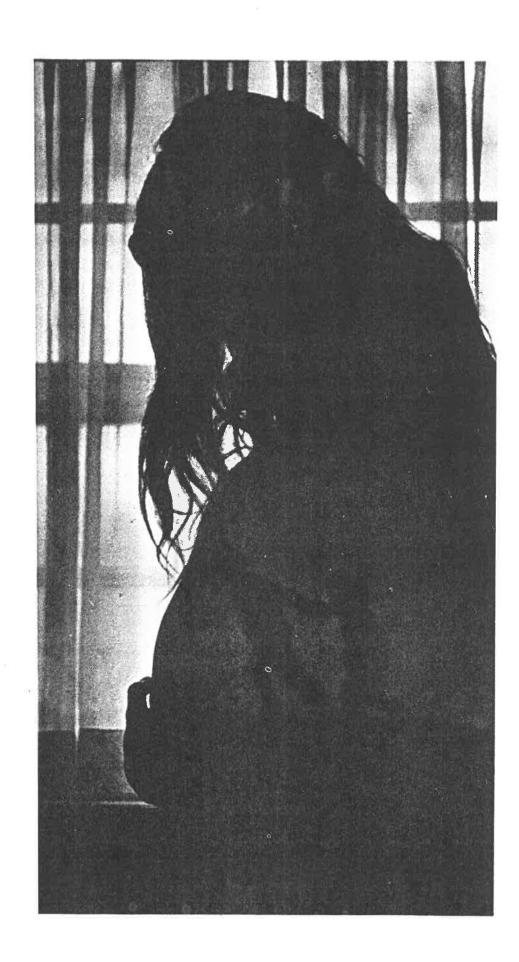
5.6
2) An integral dimension of the educational objective

The direct responsibility of the school in the area of sex education stems likewise from the nature of its overall educational objectives. Since the school is involved with the overall development of young people, it cannot remain indifferent to the sexual and relational dimension of the human being. The school must take into account the sexual growth process, which is a particularly demanding and complex aspect of life, difficult to evaluate, yet absolutely essential to the child's development. In a school centred on simple academic learning, sex education might be considered superfluous. In a school where the aim is to help children grow and live in various situations, such education is vital.

5.7
3) Compensating

The direct intervention of the school in the area of sex education can be justified also insomuch as it plays a complementary, not to say compensatory role. Though we do not wish to exaggerate the problem of deficient sexual education in the family, it is clear that a certain number of parents do not wish to or

are unable to assume their responsibilities adequately in this area. They lack the necessary time, they do not know how to go about it, often they do not have the necessary confidence in themselves which would allow them to deal with the question calmly and serenely. The school then is called upon to compensate for a deficient or non-existent basic teaching in this field. This complementary training is necessary, the child has a right to it and it involves his or her whole future. But let us add one more observation: when the school agrees to provide this complementary training or when it decides to take direct responsibility for sex education, it in no way dispossesses the parents of their rights, it does not usurp their role. It is the parents who have the first right and responsibility for their children's sex education, and the intervention of the school in this domain can never take from them this right and obligation.



The fundamental aim of sex education is to integrate sexuality into the growth process of the child. The role of the school programs is to translate this aim into precise objectives, to plan content and methods adapted to the age of the student. Five factors must be taken into account when designing these programs: the knowledge to be assimilated by the child, the abilities to be acquired, the attitudes to be developed, the values to be recognized and finally the types of social integration intended.

What will be the orientation of sex education in the schools? What will be the objectives and content of the programs? The answer to these questions can vary greatly: it all depends on the meaning one gives to sexuality and on the idea one has of education, of the human being, of fulfillment, of moral responsibility. For this reason, it is important to specify the direction to be given to sex education and the options that it implies. Otherwise, this education is liable to be ambiguous and to be misadapted to the aims pursued by schools recognized as Catholic. We have already indicated the extent of the concept of human sexuality and pointed out that sex education must be linked to the growth and training of the person in the broadest sense. Now we must go one step further and try to list a few indicators which will allow us to assess the orientation and content of planned or suggested programs.

The basic aim of sex education at school can be stated as follows: to help young persons integrate their sexuality, i.e. to develop their identity as a girl or a boy and to become capable of a rewarding friendship or love. In other words to become a man or woman. This aim is no different from that pursued by parents in their educational role at home. The school however, in pursuing this aim, uses it own means and techniques.

The basic aim must be translated into general objectives which allow the educator to follow and support the child during this period of evolution towards sexual maturity. Thus, because of sex education, children should gradually be able:

- to recognize and accept themselves as girls or boys, different from the opposite sex, and happy to be so;
- to understand the changes taking place within themselves and as their minds develop and change, to deal positively with the problems and experiences that occur during the different stages of their sexual growth;



SCHOOL PROGRAMS: THEIR ORIENTATION AND CONTENT

6.1

6.2 The basic aim

6.3 General objectives

- to channel genital and emotional reactions which are more evident and to embody them in a more and more clearly defined value system;
- finally, to love in the deepest sense of the word, with all that this involves in terms of creativity, of self-actualization and commitment.

School programs in sex education should not only determine the objectives to be pursued; they must also clearly specify the content appropriate to each age level. Such specifications are necessary both to guide teachers in their task and to reassure parents, who want to know what we are going to tell their children and at what age we are going to tell them. It should already be clear that the content of the programs must not just be a dry list of subjects to be dealt with and notions to be explained or transmitted. When one is concerned, as we are, with an education in human sexuality, then we must offer a whole learning experience to the child. It should include and provide for:

- the knowledge to be assimilated
- the abilities to be acquired
- the attitudes to be developed
- the values to be recognized
- the type of social integration intended.

Those are the five elements which make up the essential content of sex education within the school, what in fact the school will tell its pupils. If they are to satisfy these objectives, then the programs must provide adequate information regarding each of these elements.

We have already stressed the fact that sex education requires a good deal of basic information concerning the realities of genital and sexual life. For this reason, any program dealing with the subject must leave room for a certain number of notions, descriptions and explanations which should be provided progressively as the child develops. Such information should be clear, simple and precise. It should be a normal part of the educational process.

Sex education should allow young people to acquire certain abilities and skills which encourage affective and sexual development. For example they should be able to use the correct vocabulary when speaking of sexual phenomena, without being vulgar or embarrassed. They should be able to recognize the manifestations of sexuality, with the needs, desires and fears that it arouses. They should learn to be attentive and sensitive to the language of feelings and affections. In general, the programs should relate to everyday school life and especially with creative activities, bodily expression and physical education, activities where young people learn to "live with" their bodies and to express themselves through meaningful actions and behaviour.

6.5

1. The knowledge to be assimilated

6.4

6.6 2. Abilities to be acquired In the course of their psycho-sexual development, young people suffer from anxieties and uneasiness and this often has a paralysing effect on them. The first attitude that needs to be developed is one of confident ease with one's body to clearly establish one's own identity. From this point on, the young person discovers the importance of sexuality in building personality and in relating with other. At the same time other attitudes will be seen as both possible and desirable: the desire to develop feminine or masculine qualities, (and in doing so to go beyond the stereotyped images of "the male" and "the female"); an appreciation of self-discipline; an interest and an opening-up in interpersonal relationships; the desire to learn to be sensitive and tender and to attain a stage where sexual acts become an expression of love.

Sex education in the school should take into account two facts: young people are searching for a value system and this search has a great influence on the integration of their sexuality. They do not see sexuality as a neutral reality, nor with cold objectivity. On the contrary, sexuality for them is the subject of much questioning and considerable anxiety. The young person is worried, first of all, of his or her own worth. This raises questions concerning his or her own behaviour and that of other people; for example, as regards what values are implicit in different sexual behaviour, in public discussions on divorce, free love, etc. Teenagers are particularly vulnerable, since they have reached an age where they must make value judgments and where they are seeking authenticity. Sex education, therefore, must not be dispensed as a clinical exercise where one merely analyses human psychology and physiology. It must aim at helping young people to integrate a value system, i.e. sex education should teach the young to understand what is really at stake, to become aware of the values which they are seeking, or which they wish to develop, and to make the connection between those values and moral and religious options.

Society today bears heavily on sexuality by the images and models it projects, by the various types of information it offers, by the sensationalism and brutality it purveys, by the moral permissiveness it tolerates. Children and adolescents are definitely not sheltered from these influences. Sex education at school cannot ignore this context, or camouflage this reality. If it does so, then its attempt to integrate sexuality into the life-fibre of young people will be short-lived. This is why sex education must teach children to react critically to these different influences, to pick out what is merely fashionable indoctrination, to assess and compare points of view, to distinguish solid values from shallow ones.

6.7

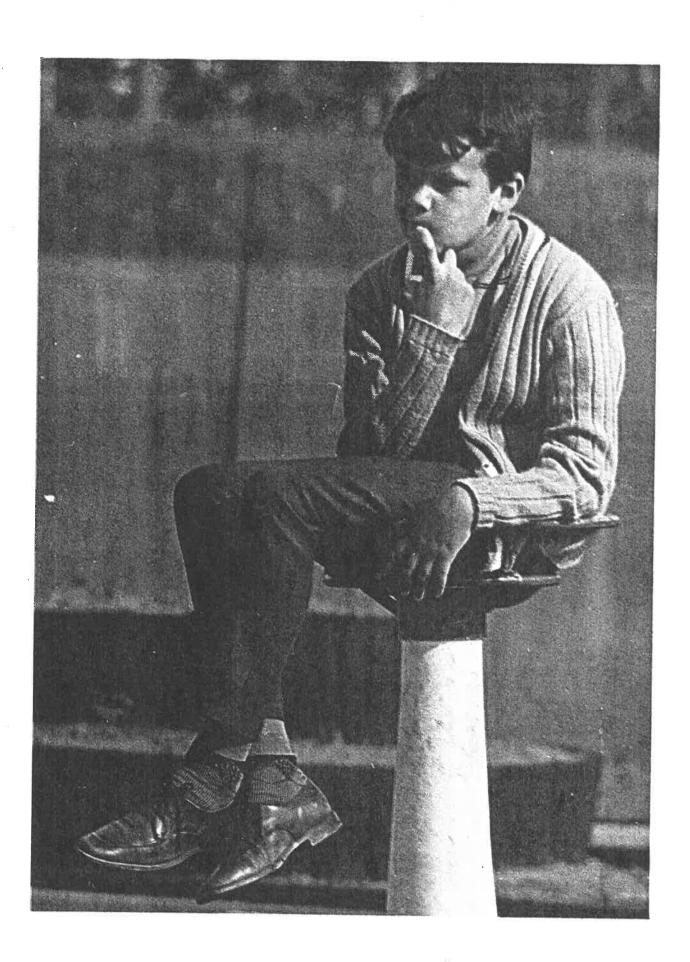
3. Attitudes to be developed

6.8

4. Values to be recognized

6.9

5. Type of social integration intended



Sex education has moral and religious implications which must be explicitly considered. When this education is given in a Catholic school, it must concur with the Christian vision of man and sexuality. Indeed, Christian morality and faith give light and meaning to the choice and search for identity and for a value system.

Since sexual development is admittedly a long human and psychological endeavour, it is normal that sex education should depend to a great extent on the Social Sciences in order to help young people understand what is happening to them. But one must recognize that sexual and affective growth also raises moral and religious questions. Basically, sexuality remains a mystery which cannot really be grasped. In order to "go deeper", in order to shed more light on this reality, one needs to go to other sources, specifically moral and religious sources. Indeed, moral reflection is an effort to strive towards a more human behaviour. In the same way, Christian faith induces us to take a second look at human realities in the light of Revelation. This dual examination, in which science, morals and religion converge, can be of great help to young people in their attempt to develop fully as men and women.

Some people are rather worried by the possible influence of ethics and religion on sexuality, seeing in them only restrictions and repression. On the other hand, there are other parents who have apprehension about sex education without morality and religion. They fear that the school will undermine the moral and religious principles that they wish to instil in their children and this will lead finally to permissiveness. Whatever these fears are based on, it is clear that they underline the need to clarify the rapport between moral and religious values and sex education.

Sex education must certainly refer to a value system. We should remember what we are in fact trying to do, i.e. help young people become responsible for their own sexuality and teach them to opt for responsible choices and behaviour. But if they are to do that young people must be able to establish guidelines and points of reference. These are called values. Sex education cannot remain indifferent to this essential clarification of values and the programs cannot ignore the problem.

To what values should we refer? When answering this question, we must take into account the denominational character of the school. When dealing with a school recognized as Catholic, for example, there should be no hesitation about the reference

7

REFERRING TO MORAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES

7.1

7.2 Some fears

7.3 Value-consciousness

7.4
The Christian concept of man
27

to Christian values. To quote the Regulation of the Catholic Committee of the Superior Council of Education, a Catholic school accepts the Christian concept of man and of the universe "as the inspirational principle and norm of its pedagogical action" (see the preambule to paragraph 7). Consequently, sex education as taught in a Catholic school must, like all other aspects of education, concur with the Christian vision of sexuality. This in no way means that sex education must be transformed into religious education or into some form of moral indoctrination. The autonomous and specific character of the teaching of sexuality must be affirmed and respected. However, both in its inspiration and on the level of the values it transmits, sex education must be in keeping with the Christian vision of sexuality and respect the orientations set down by the Church community.

7.5
The Christian vision of sexuality

To clarify even more the reference that has just been made, let us describe what we mean by "Christian concept of sexuality". If we go back to Revelation, sexuality is seen first as a reality which is part of the order of creation as set down by God. Natural or original order is a nuptial order. "Male and female He created them" says the Bible. It is on this basis that the believer founds his respect for life, for all life, given or to be given. It is in this fundamental truth that men and women see the origin of the drive that brings them together in a common project. For the Christian, this primeval order resounds as a triple call, as an echo of divine life: a call to communion, to fidelity, and to fecundity.

7.6 A call to communion

Sexuality is a call to communion rooted in the flesh. Man is made for communion. His sexuality is a clear sign of this. It is the evidence that he is meant to live and develop through his relationship with others, with another, sharing and enriching one another. This is not a trite statement. On the contrary, it contradicts a current feeling which proclaims that man is doomed to solitude and that communication between human beings is a delusion. The Christian vision of sexuality denies this and affirms that man is fundamentally orientated for communion since he is created in the image of a loving and relational God. Consequently, sexuality is not egoistical self-assertion nor exploitation of others or of the other. It is a drive which promotes an authentic encounter between persons.

7.7 A call to fidelity

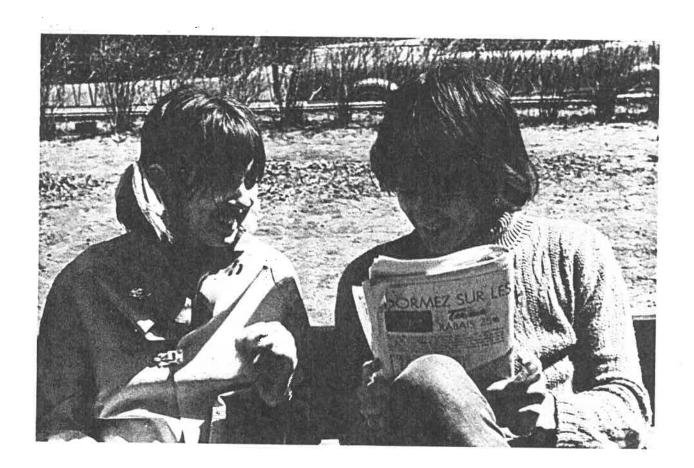
For the believer, sexuality is also a call to creative fidelity. Fidelity to oneself, first of all, expressed by a radical desire to live to the full one's life as a man or as a woman, a desire which can be fulfilled due to the fidelity of others: a father and a mother, a husband or a wife, a friend. Fidelity to others also, which spurs one to a commitment without limits, to friendship or love which cannot founder on the reefs and shoals of time. In a world where it is too easy to become used to broken promises, to shattered fidelities, the Christian vision of sexuality proclaims once again that fidelity is fundamentally superior to infidelity, because the God revealed through Jesus Christ is faithful and gracious: then it is surely safe for us to risk ourselves in passionate fidelity to others.

Finally, sexuality is call to a many-sided fecusion As a dynamic force, it stimulates the development and the most promotion of individuals. As a generating force, it brings we to multiply and create life. This is why the child witnesses the fecundity of the couple, and is part of an overall mants and. As a creative force, sexuality leads to a social and spiritual fecundity which benefits the human family. The Chieffel vision does which benefits the human family. The Chieffel vision does not favour sexual represents a call to a full fee in which the are sterile forces. It represents a call to a full fee in which the sexual force enters into the dynamics of a revening and fruitful love. For the Christian, to answer this call as continue the creative act of God, and to commit oneself, as leads did in his own way, to a creative life.

Following this brief summary of the Christian meaning of sexuality, one should return to a statement which provided it: sexuality is a mystery and will always be so. The social sciences and sex education will never have the last work in spite of our illusions and repeated simplifications such & "When our youngsters know all about it they'll be able to enjoy a calm, untroubled sex life" or "once they start giving sex education in the schools there won't be any more problems. If it is true that sex information and education can help enormously in simplifying the problems and in removing the stramatic, we still should remember that sexuality is not just a problem looking for a solution. It is a mystery, and the roots of this mystery go deep into the human being and touch an infinite number of chords. Capable teachers are aware of this; parents, more than others, know it: it will never be easy to teach those realities enshrouded in mystery.

7.8 A call to fecundity

7.9 A mystery



There is an implicit sex education present throughout the child's schooldays, and great attention should be paid to underlining its positive aspect. This implicit sex education should be completed by an explicit education which is part of a wider program for developing the child as a human being.

AN IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT EDUCATION

Sex education springs first and foremost from the school organization itself and from the prevailing atmosphere of personal relationships which exist there. These dimensions of school life are implicity very powerful: they can have a positive or negative influence, they can support or be detrimental to the aims and objectives of sex education. For example the educational thrust adopted by the school can encourage youngsters to become responsible for themselves and independent-minded, or it can stress on conformity and individual competition. In the same way, coeducation can be experienced simply as rivalry, coexistence or promiscuity between boys and girls. It can also become a true educational factor and teach young people to respect and discover one another over and beyond the stereotyped relationships and cultural indoctrination which force upon boys and girls roles which are often quite alien to the profound reality of "man as a human-being" and "woman as a human-being". Think for example of physical and sporting activities which play an important part in consolidating the physical image and in absorbing the tensions which are so much a part of the teen's emotional life. These examples demonstrate that the school, by its whole structure, plays an important implicit role in sex education. When we recognize this fact, we recognize also that it is as important to improve the school atmosphere as it is to add to the timetable periods of sex education.

8.1 Importance of the implicit education

There is also a place in the elementary school and in the secondary school for explicit sex education. This education should not be thought of, first of all, as formal lectures. It would be preferable to think in terms of a series of mini-courses, reports, discussions, research projects and meetings dealing with sexuality. Such a teaching approach demands a flexible methodology closely linked to day-to-day life, which favours a multiform learning process including information, sensory perception, body language, time for reflection, dialogue and confrontation of ideas.

8.2 An explicit education

8.3

It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to determine the core program in sex education along with its main features: objectives, methodology, division of subject matter according to the age and especially according to the stage of psychosexual growth of the boys and girls concerned. It then becomes the responsibility of School Boards and local schools to establish their institutional programs in line with the overall objectives and the needs of the milieu. This latter point should be stressed; programs must be adapted to the needs of the milieu. It is, indeed, of capital importance that sex education should respect the pace and the direction taken by various groups, schools, regions. Indeed, the situation may be quite different from one place to another and any attempt to impose overall uniformity could end in disaster.

8.4

We should remember that this program should be part of a broader program of personality development. Sexuality will then be placed in its true perspective as an aspect of personal development. Consequently, there can be no question of devising a program covering every school year and dealing exclusively with sexuality. Rather we should think in terms of a series of mini-courses that could be inserted throughout the student's school career at the most appropriate times. Thus organized, it should be possible to ensure the indispensable cooperation of those in charge of sex education, parents, educators responsible for religious and moral instruction and animators in student life and pastoral activities.

8.5 Teaching material

A considerable number of books and teaching instruments for sex education are already available. A certain amount of material has been produced, but of varying quality. In order to evaluate a document which is suggested for sex education one should first ask these four questions. 1. Is it adapted to the psychology of the child or of the adolescent? 2. Does it invite young people to reflect on their own experience and on the path they are taking? 3. Does it open out onto an overall perception of human sexuality? 4. Does it help suggest the values implicit in sexual life? Obviously no one educational instrument can cover everything, say everything. Whether it is a book, a film, a montage or a graphic diagram, each document must be integrated into an overall approach and, above all, one must take into account both the potential and the limitations of the medium used. No one instrument is called upon to achieve all the objectives of the program. For example one document may be designed as an activator, as an opener; another will be aimed at illustrating one specific point. Generally speaking, though, when dealing with this area of sex education, one should be very exacting about the quality of the teaching instruments one is offered. Good teaching material will make the educational task much easier.

The teacher who is given the task of developing sexuality through education must be well-informed and competent in the subject, but he doesn't have to be a specialist in this area. Preference should be given to a good teacher whom the pupils know well and who is close to them and can set an example of the values he or she will teach. Occasionally it will be necessary to call on resource-persons, mainly in order to deal with professional improvement of teachers in this field.

At the elementary level, it is preferable that the home-room teacher be responsible for sex education. The reason for this choice is two-fold. In the first place, the home-room teacher plays a major role in ensuring the unity and coherence of the educational activities of the pupils. In the second place, the child sees the home-room teacher as a parental figure. There is nothing to stop the teacher from occasionally calling in resource-persons: — parents, nurses, doctors, social workers. But basically, it is the home-room teacher who remains the best person to give this education as and when appropriate, since sex education must be carried out in the context of daily life, of personal relationships, of concrete events and experiences.

At the secondary level, where teachers are generally specialists in the subject they teach, it will normally be the teacher in charge of social and personal development who will take over courses in sex education. He or she will probably be a specialist in animation or in the social sciences, but, at least when dealing with the sex education, there is no reason why one should not call on a teacher of history, of biology, of religious instruction or of any other discipline, always providing he or she is competent, has the necessary human qualities, and wishes to teach the subject in line with the orientation laid down in the program. What one must avoid is having teachers coming in "out of the blue", who never see the pupils apart from that one course. Sex education will be more acceptable to the pupils if the teacher is someone they know, who is close to them, and who is, insofar as it is possible, continuously present among them. From this point of view, calling in a specialist is not advisable. The pupils are liable to feel that sexuality is somehow a separate subject which requires special staff and a different set-up.

What should we expect of a teacher responsible for sex education? There are four principal requirements or expectations that can be given. First, we expect him or her to be a competent teacher, i.e. a person able to accompany and support young people in their search for their sexual identity and in the learning process this involves, with its inevitable ups and downs, dangers and difficulties. We expect him or her to listen to what

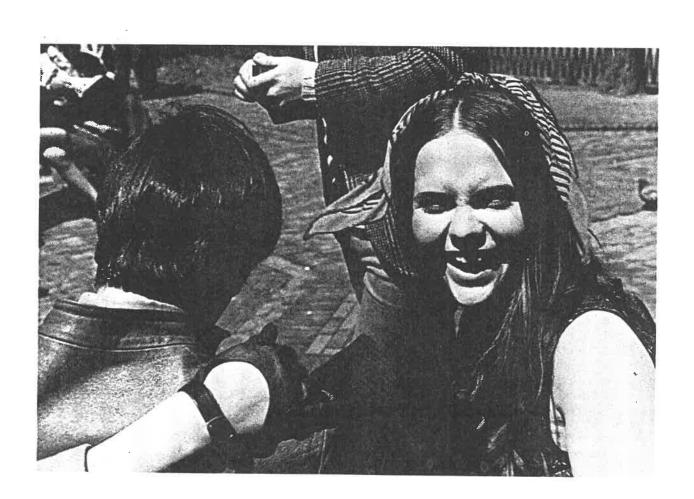


WHO SHOULD BE ENTRUSTED WITH SEX EDUCATION?

9.1 At the elementary level

9.2 At the secondary level

9.3 A competent teacher



young people have to say, to be attentive to their experiences, to be able to reach out to them and help them go beyond conventional behaviour patterns and superficial reactions. We expect him or her to inspire confidence and to communicate easily, for it is in and through this communication that the teacher will become aware of their level of growth and their needs for sex information. Finally, we expect the teacher to be a well-informed person who does not deal in approximations, but is able to transmit accurate information and offer sure and certain guidance.

A second quality is required of teachers responsible for sex education: they must witness to values. The teacher's role is to urge young people to find out for themselves who they want to become, how to grow into men and women, how to become love-able. Yet we know only too well how difficult it is for young people to distinguish true values amid all the contradictions and moral conflicts which assail them. As a result, they often feel powerless and uncertain as to the choices they should make. They need to meet models with which they can identify and which encourage them to develop their human and sexual potential. Teachers, therefore, must be careful to avoid two extremes: they must not appear before young persons as a cold dissector of the sexual reality nor as someone who wishes to force a vision of life upon them. To be relevant and meaningful, teachers should stand before their students in all simplicity and students should be able to look up to them without being overshadowed by them.

Teachers who are responsible for sex education must be clear-thinking persons. They must first be very lucid about themselves. Their task involves their being guite clear about their attitude towards their own sexuality, and being able to separate and distance themselves from their own personal experience. If they cannot do this, there is a danger that they will relive their own childhood and adolescent conflicts through their pupils or project on them the still latent conflicts of their adult life. They must be clear-thinking about their pupils also. The attitude of the teachers as men and women will influence the education they wish to give and the young people they have around them. It is essential, therefore, that teachers question themselves on the quality of their contact with young people. Indeed, underlying and prior to any communication, however coherent and accurate this may be, there is an implicit language which reaches out to the pupils and speaks to them.

Sex education also requires that the teacher be transparent and simple. It is always difficult to hide one's preferences and one's choices from young people. This is particularly true when one is dealing with sexual questions where children and adolescents are eagerly searching for criteria of judgment and points of reference. A clear, transparent, vision is essential. The teacher must never be presented as the only possible model to be copied. The adult who behaves like an overgrown adolescent incapable of any fundamental choice has no place here. One thing is required: let the teacher stand unpretensiously before his students as one who has grown to master his own anxieties and neither overemphasizes nor downplays the reality of sex.

9.4 A witness to values

9.5 A clear-thinking model

9.6
A calm and sincere model

9.7 The training of teachers

It is essential that teachers who will be called upon to give sex education should be properly prepared. Their training should be threefold. First, at the informational level, there is a body of knowledge which has to be assimilated. Secondly, there is the "know-how", i.e. the teacher who wishes to go beyond the information stage, must be able to lead a group in its learning process and be sensitive to the questions young people are really asking. Finally there is self-knowledge: the teacher must be clear about his or her own motivations when giving sex education. Consequently, sound preliminary training is required. But, on the other hand, we must not magnify these requirements or else no one will dare claim to have all the necessary qualifications for the task. Experiences to date indicate that the first requirement is to have trust: parents are able to do their part and are ready to support the school; teachers are also willing to do their part and are seeking constant improvement.

9.8

It will be necessary to devote a certain number of planning days to making both teachers responsible for sex education and teachers in general aware of the problems they must face. Indeed, all teachers may at some point be called upon to play an occasional educational role in this area. When dealing with certain subjects, with a specific question, or when confronted with unacceptable behaviour, the teacher may decide to give information, or even to make a value judgment. He or she must be able to accomplish this task in a tactful manner and with an educational objective and at the same time refer the pupil or pupils to the person in the school who can best help.

9.9 Team support In order that sex education may be implemented without conflict and without misunderstanding, the teachers responsible must feel that they are not the only ones to cope with what concerns the whole school. They will need to feel that they are supported by a responsible team of people who co-ordinate the project, in order to avoid the wrong approach, to perfect the methods employed, to define strategy and to clear up possible misunderstandings. Sex education is the concern of the whole educational community.

Sex education does not begin at school, nor does it end there. It is always exposed to the influence and interaction of parents, teachers, friends and environment. Effective sex education requires a concerted effort of all these persons who act as relays of sorts: each one (or group) picking up from the other and passing it on in turn.

As was outlined in Chapter 4, sex education begins at birth and is affected mostly by the way parents interact as a couple and by the way they integrate their own sexuality into their lives. As the child grows, parents remain the dominant and permanent relay-point. Because of this, schools wanting to contribute effectively must establish an ongoing link with families. If sex education in schools is to be accepted by parents and especially if sex education at school is to continue in parent-child dialogue at home, trust and communication between parents and school is a must.

To insure this mutual confidence, parents must be informed of the nature and orientation of sex education in the schools. To this end, it will be necessary to organize information meetings and discussions between parents and teachers, especially before or after presenting children and teenagers with minicourses in sex education.

These meetings should allow parents to express themselves freely regarding sex education in schools. Some parents will be pleased that the school has finally decided to take on an educational task that they consider important but which they do not dare tackle themselves. Those parents will probably feel relieved, but it is unlikely that they will wish to participate actively in the school's endeavour. Other parents will express fear at the intervention of the school in this domain: they will want to be reassured, and quite rightly so, concerning the competence of the teachers who will be responsible for sex education; they will want to know more about its content; they will want to know what attention will be brought to the sensitivity of each child. It is also probable that some parents will object, right from the start, to the intervention of the school in the domain of sexuality. They will argue that this area is the exclusive responsibility of the child's family. The school must expect to be faced with all these different reactions, to understand them, and to help parents over the obstacles. When they meet, parents and teachers can together assess the dangers of sex education and also the dangers of sexual ignorance. These meetings will provide an opportunity to analyse the validity and orientation of sex education in the school, to better determine

SEX EDUCATION — RESPECTIVE ROLES

10.1
The family as a relay-point

10.2

10.3



how it should be carried out and to define practical means of interaction between the school and the home. Let's face it: sex education is an important challenge to the Home-School relationship. But it is also a unique opportunity for true involvement by parents in school life.

Sex education must find a relay-point in school life. The general impression should be one of frankness and concern. Young people will probably be more affected by the type of relationship which exists between them and their teachers than by courses or lectures on sexuality. By the same token, the values which are stressed in sex education will have little chance of developing in young people unless they are already evident and promoted within the day-to-day life of the school. It would be utopian to expect the integration of sexuality in a milieu which did not encourage communication and mutual respect, which did not urge the child to become a responsible being, and which had no interest in the creativity engendered by individuals and groups. Sex education seeps out of the very presence of persons and their relationship in the school.

Outside the school, there are people, organizations, places where sex education is important. We might just mention health services, social services, community service centres, marriage preparation centres, family movements, family planning centres and various youth movements. All these organizations can ensure some sort of outside extension to sex education in the school. They can also be used by the school to ensure the quality of its own educational work in this field. These people and these organizations can be useful and profitable providing they are prepared to familiarize themselves with the aims of sex education in the school, pursue a common educational objective and not try to modify it. Need we mention it again? Sex education must not be merely practical, informative or preventive; it is given because it helps a person grow to fulfillment.

Sex education is, in the final analysis, the result of many influences at play in society as a whole. Can society insure a follow up to sex education, or is it just a stumbling block to authentic sex education? The question has to be asked and it has to be asked to society. On the one hand, our culture makes information on sexual matters available to young people, information which previous generations never had. On the other hand, this same culture downplays sexuality turning it into a consumer product, a symbol of seduction and power. In the street, in the newspapers, in the cinema, sexuality is very often displayed as daring, exhibitionist and brutal. Thoughtful observers believe that the modern day concept of work and socio-political organizations are responsible for making sexuality an insignificant and readily-available object. Society too often rejects individual values and replaces them by anti-values of frantic consumption, profit and power. Any desire to awaken young people to the responsibilities of sexuality and love must go hand in hand with a critical reflection on our society and its underlying values.

10.4 School life as a relay-point

10.5
The milieu as a relay-point

10.6 Society as a whole: a relay-point or a pitfall?

CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION

QCSE005505