

ATTITUDES OF PARENTS
TOWARD CERTAIN ASPECTS OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION
IN A KANSAS HIGH SCHOOL

by

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INTRODUCTION

It is becoming increasingly apparent that adequate adjustment to marriage and to family situations demands some sort of preparation in the form of education. The present increasing incidence of early adolescent marriages brings this very dramatically to one's attention, and raises the question, what is the school's responsibility in regard to helping young people cope with their emotions, and the inextricable relationship of sex to life.

In the past, education for marriage was carried on casually and incidentally by the family, the community, and the church. Social and cultural developments, however, have brought changes into the pattern of adult living which confuse the goals and the ideals of young people, and which have changed the traditional modes of guidance and instruction in the intimate matters of sex and family life. It would seem, therefore, that many boys and girls may have grown up poorly prepared to meet the vital problems of men and women.

Some of these changed conditions have raised new problems in mental and social health. The population trend has been urban, away from the daily contact with plant and animal life which earlier generations took for granted and which put the learning of reproduction naturally into focus. Industry has been removing adults, especially mothers, from the routine of the home in which important educational influences formerly accompanied normal family life. Families have become smaller. More and more,

children are segregated outside the home into groups of about the same age which tends to lessen the sharing of learnings, problems and responsibilities peculiar to various age levels and sex.

Along with the growth of cities and of industries, extensive immigration brought together families from varied cultural backgrounds. As a result, old customs weakened. The folkways which had served each of the several groups as a means of social control came into conflict with strange ways, practices, and beliefs.

Education regarding morals and adult relationships and responsibilities goes on through the association with others, including education in some manner with respect to sex. The task of adjusting wholesomely to adult life, however, is complicated by the fact that many adolescents have anxieties and fears about sex in addition to a multitude of ideas, often unsound, regarding sex and reproduction. Many media of entertainment including motion pictures, television programs, and much current literature create unsound attitudes for the world of reality. Even much of the advertising is likely to present inaccurate values to youth.

Dr. Parran has said:

Much that is good and evil in man has its origin in the sex impulse. Whether he follows the promptings of the sex impulse blindly or directs it and controls it for individually and socially desirable ends determines, in large part, whether he lives a life of physical and mental health or physical and mental disease.¹

A frequent criticism of education has been that too often one

¹Benjamin C. Gruenberg, and J. L. Kaukonen, foreword by Dr. Thomas Parran, High Schools and Sex Education, 1940. p iii.

tries to teach children before the readiness is there. Apparently, it cannot be said that young people do not need to know about sex and its many implications. Above all subjects, it seems to be the one about which, at high school age, they most wish to learn, although some parents would say, "Wait until marriage." Adolescents are often wiser in their demands than those who plan for their supply. A course in this field probably would need not be required for it would most likely be desired.

The most frequent reason offered by educators in the public schools for the omissions in this fundamental phase of preparation for living is that sex education should be carried on in the home. Unfortunately, many parents are not prepared for such teaching. Many are still shackled by their own lack of sex orientation in childhood and still groping for help. It would seem that if the parents of tomorrow receive suitable instruction in the course of their public school life, they will be able and willing to do their part in such education.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As is evident from the review of literature, the question then concerning sex education is not whether sex instruction should be given; children receive it in some manner. The question is: "Who shall give it?" Shall sex instruction be given in the home or in the school or on the street? The home, ideally, would be the place to give it if there were mothers and fathers who, from the beginning, had the attitude toward sex that made it possible for them to speak of sex matters without self consciousness

and with simplicity, and who had the knowledge to speak with scientific accuracy. Howard Whitman has stated:

In 1905 three pioneers--the late Dr. Prince Morrow, Dr. Charles Elliot of Harvard and Dr. Maurice Bigelow of Columbia--brought forth the basic ideas for teaching "sex hygiene" in the schools. So doing, they fired the opening gun in a battle of half a century and the volleys still thunder. Sex education in the public schools has been and remains an explosive issue in hundreds of communities. While today virtually no one denies that sex education is a job which must be done, there is still a lively battle over just who should do it.

Are parents competent purveyors of the truth? Are they sometimes too blocked, timid, confused and uninformed to give their children a sound sex education? Should the schools come to the rescue? Even when parents do a good job, should the schools carry the ball from there? Should they make sex education as free, open and aboveboard as education in honesty, perseverance, good manners and civic responsibility?¹

The following was taken from the foreword of a book by E. B. Lowry, M. D., written in 1914, which leads to the conclusion that the subject of sex education has been of interest to educators for almost half a century:

At the recent International Congress of School Hygiene which was attended by hundreds of teachers and others engaged in educational work, there was no subject that called forth more interest than that of sex education. By all present this was felt to be the most critical subject of the day in educational circles.

The policy of silence was thus declared to have failed disastrously. Innocence and ignorance were found not to be synonymous. But so long had false modesty prevailed that no one felt prepared to throw much light upon this hitherto veiled subject. When, where and how the necessary instruction should be given, whether it was the duty of the educator to try to introduce it into the school, and, if so, how, were the questions paramount in the minds of many.²

¹Howard Whitman, Let's Tell the Truth About Sex, 1948, p. 161.

²E. B. Lowry, M.D., Teaching Sex Hygiene in the Public School, Foreword. 1914. 184 p.

Horrocks stated:

Despite the fact that sex information is badly needed, parents and other adults have often imposed a wall of silence around sex and all that it implies. They pretend it does not exist so far as their children are concerned, and when it is called to their attention they look the other way.¹

In the most recent work of Alfred C. Kinsey and others, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female, is the following information:

Within the last thirty years, parents in increasing numbers have come to realize the importance of the early education of their children in matters of sex. But what things children should be taught, who should teach them, at what age they should be taught, and how the teaching should be conducted, are matters about which there has been much theory but few data on which to base any program of sex education. Although some persons insist that the sex education of the child should be undertaken only by the child's parents or religious mentors, not more than a few per cent --perhaps not more than 5%--of all the subjects in the present study recalled that they had received anything more than the most incidental sort of information from either of those sources. Most of the children had acquired their earliest information from other children. Whether it is more desirable, in terms of the ultimate effects upon their lives, that such information should come first from more experienced adults, or whether it is better that children should learn about sex from other children, is a question which we are not yet able to answer. At this stage in our study we are quite certain that no one has any sufficient information to evaluate objectively the relative merits of these diverse sources of sexual education.

It is apparent, however, that if parents or other adults are to be sources of the child's first information on sex, they must give that information by the time the child is ten or twelve, and in many instances at some earlier age. Otherwise the child, whatever the parents may wish will have previously acquired the information from its companions.²

Ione E. Wilshin, a teacher of health and human relations,

¹John E. Horrocks, The Psychology of Adolescence, p. 73.

²Alfred C. Kinsey, Clyde E. Martin, Wardell B. Pomeroy, Paul M. Gebhard, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female, p. 15.

has stated:

My experiences have led me to draw these conclusions:
 (1) Children won't seek out a teacher for information. She has to make it available to the group so that the individual doesn't become a marked man. (2) Once a child has found an adult source of information he will use it intelligently. (3) Good sex instruction is detailed, light, and happy, following the lead of the children themselves. (4) Incidental instruction is most often very incidental. If the subject is going to be a force for good in the lives of the children it will have to be handled in an organized fashion. (5) School, not home, is the place for physiological sex instruction to be given because of the freedom from emotional bloc. (6) The public is ready for teachers to take over, but teachers lag behind. (7) In as many as one-half the cases the ninth grade is too late to form attitudes. In the ninth grade sex education is largely re-education because by that time contemporary magazines and misinformation have done their work.¹

The question as to whether sex education is a subject in the curriculum, or an objective of the curriculum has been brought up for consideration. Cuber and Hay answer this question by quoting from Science in General Education: "The Progressive Education Association seems to support the idea that sex education should start in early childhood and run through the entire school sequence." The same authors stated:

If this is not done--and in the majority of instances it is not--sex education at the high school level is forced to become reeducation, reeducation, that is, of the "alley pedagogy" and the library of writing on the back fence. Re-education is always difficult, doubly so when it involves the emotional factor as much as sex education does.

Rather it appears to us that sex education is a proper field of public school education simply because sex is an aspect of normal life--and not merely of adult life, incidentally--and therefore people need some instruction and guidance in order to function effectively as enlightened people. In short, the purpose back of sex education should

¹Ione E. Wilshin, "Sex Education, Whose Job Is It?" The Journal of National Education Association. December, 1945, p. 202.

be the mental aspects of the personality and the best possible integration between the individual and the groups in which he must function.¹

Ernest Osborne of Teachers College, Columbia University, is a member of the National Council on Religion in Higher Education and is past president of the National Council on Family Relations. He stated:

I should like to make one point clear. Supporting sex education in the schools does not, as some people assume, mean opposing sex education at home. Sex education in the schools is never intended as a substitute for sex education at home. It is simply an extension of it. . . .

Edward Lyman, chairman of the Coordinating Committee of Catholic Lay Organizations of New York City, said in a speech on this subject last year, "Let us agree--while insisting on the primary right and duty of parents--that the teacher and the social worker have a very definite part to play, not only in sex instruction but in the broader field of what you happily call education for family living."

Although most parents are eager for their children to receive good sex education, many of them still shy away from the job. Many admit frankly that their own backgrounds have not equipped them to handle the subject without embarrassment. Should the children of the unprepared parents grow up, then, with no sex education?

A scientific, wholesome classroom study of the sexual side of life is certainly preferable to the confused and distorted information most children are likely to pick up on the street.²

In regard to parents' providing this instruction, John

Newton Baker stated:

¹John F. Cuber and Mark Hay, "Reflection on Sex Education in the High School." Journal of the National Council on Family Relations. Vol. 8, Winter 1946, pp. 14, 15.

²Ernest Osborne, "Do You Favor Sex Education In Our Schools?" Kansas Teacher, March 1952, pp. 11, 46.

It seems, at first thought, that there could be no better source for early sex education. However, parents are often inadequately prepared so that evasion is their keynote. Coming from a generation that had even less attention given to sex education than we have today, they may be ignorant both as to subject matter and teaching technique. Moreover, parents find it difficult to be impersonal with their own children and hence are not qualified to present the subject in the most effective way. . .

If sex instruction were provided in the home, the school's task would be merely continuation of a process already begun. But the fact is that children come to high school with an appalling abundance of inaccurate information. Hope for sound treatment of this deplorable condition rests squarely upon the shoulders of secondary education.¹

Dr. Edgar Schmiedeler, of the National Catholic Conference on Family Life presents a Catholic view thus:

There is crying need for a satisfactory sex education today. To this end, the home must lead the way and the parent must bear the burden of giving the instruction. However in the wider field of what is generally called sex education or sex training, the Church and the school also have highly important contributions to make. All these institutions must play their part if a really effective and balanced sex training is to result.²

Thomas Parren, Surgeon General of the U. S. Public Health Service, has expressed himself thus:

That sex is a basic force, both personal and social in its implications, is so obvious a truth that only the failure to carry this realization into our education justifies repeating it once more. There has been a persistent feeling that blundering humans should not discuss sex lest they corrupt and spoil it. Because discussion has been avoided, many people see sex dimly through a mist--dangerous, but mysteriously attractive. The effect of the taboo against discussion heightens the curiosity of many young people and imagination is often substituted for sober facts.

¹John Newton Baker, Sex Education in the High School. pp. 20.

²Edgar Schmiedeler, "Sex Education, A Catholic View," National Conference on Family Relations. Vol. 8, Winter 1946. No. 1, p. 11.

Young people obtain information about sex, of course--often erroneous and crude--but it is often mere chance whether, by a proper balance of emotion and physical expression, the energy of the impulse is usefully sublimated or pathologically diverted. Modern psychology and medicine have shown the dangers of misdirected sex impulses to physical and mental well-being. They have shown over and over again the need for replacing taboos and ignorance by frank discussion and knowledge so that young people can attain healthy adulthood, free from needless fears and misgivings.¹

In regard to the need for sex education, Landis and Landis have said:

The realistic viewpoint is to recognize that the question is not whether children should or should not learn about sex. The choice is between their having misinformation from unwholesome sources or receiving scientific sex information from their parents or other qualified adults. Of course, some parents have themselves been so conditioned that it would be impossible for them to talk to their children about sex. Their teaching could do more harm than good. Some of these parents may try to give their children the right answers but may convey the wrong impressions by the things unsaid, or by their embarrassment, avoidance, or apparently emotional reaction to the questions. . . .

Just as society has provision for training young people to make a living, so it should offer a well-organized program to help the child to understand his sexual-emotional nature and to train him for successful family living. We would not think we were fulfilling our obligations satisfactorily if we took time out to give children one lecture on honesty and let them shift for themselves after that. The teaching of honesty starts in the earliest years of the child's life in the home and is continued as long as the home functions. The child also learns precepts of honesty in the school and church. A similar program is needed as aid to sexual and emotional adjustment. We must accept the development of normal sexual attitudes as a part of a well-rounded educational program.²

¹Benjamin C. Gruenberg, with the assistance of J. L. Kaukonen, Foreword by Dr. Parran. "High Schools and Sex Education." Educational Publication No. 7, U. S. Public Health Service, p. iii.

²Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis, Building a Successful Marriage, p. 465.

Elizabeth Force, who has been teaching a course in family living in Toms River, New Jersey, for the past eleven years, has said:

Many parents comment to us on the positive changes that have come over their youngsters after taking the course. The youngsters themselves are the first to admit that they are able to think straighter about their problems.

A survey made of our married couples a few years ago indicated pretty clearly that the divorce rate for graduates of our course is only a fraction of the high national divorce rate.¹

Oregon was the first among the 48 states to have a mandatory course of sex education in their schools. This was the result of a far seeing doctor deciding that the only hope for curing venereal diseases was the education of all children. In 1939 he left \$500,000 to the University of Oregon which was used to form an "E. C. Brown Trust" for the promotion of sex education.

Since 1945 the course has been required for all grades from one through 12 and is termed "Health and Physical Education" and provides for the gradual unfolding of sex education. Whitman gave an example of how a representative city presents the program:

The first three grades deal with the matter of where babies come from; the fourth, fifth and sixth grades take up cleanliness of the body. . .grades seven through eleven deal with bodily functions including reproduction, with the physical changes in puberty, with menstruation and seminal emissions, and finally, a twelfth-grade course in mental health integrates all this knowledge into a wholesome mosaic.²

In a book, written primarily for use as a high school text,

¹Elizabeth A. Force, "What Teen Ageders Want to Know About Sex and Marriage," American Magazine. Jan. 1953, p. 106.

²Howard Whitman, Let's Tell the Truth About Sex. p. 161.

Landis and Landis stated:

Since sex functioning is a normal and valuable part of personality makeup, it is important that people know not only the facts of reproduction, but also that they learn to understand and cope with their sex drives during the years when they are not ready for marriage. Well-adjusted people learn to control or direct their emotional drives while maintaining a wholesome attitude toward the place of sex in life. People thus prepared have an advantage when the time comes for building good relationships in marriage.¹

In the Journal of Educational Psychology in December, 1952, are the results to some follow-up studies of earlier research. The E. C. Brown Trust recently undertook a study of the sex knowledge and attitudes of some 700 Oregon high school pupils. Pertinent to the study was the fact that the major sources of information about birth and reproduction were found to be:

Parents	53 per cent
Teachers	44 per cent
Companions	41 per cent
Reading Material	39 per cent
Film, Human Growth	24 per cent

A comparison of attitude scale scores for the four grades showed a significant 'break' at the eleventh grade level. The juniors were more liberal toward sex instruction programs than were either freshmen or sophomores. Seniors did not differ significantly from juniors in their attitude toward sex education.

Figures on sex differences in attitudes lend support to the theory that social-sexual attitudes are becoming crystallized by the time youngsters reach adolescence. Within this group of high school people the girls already were more liberal toward sex instruction than were boys. Linked with more biased attitudes for boys was evidence that three-fourths of them felt that parents had not contributed to their sex information. The total picture appeared to be one of neglect for the sex education of boys as compared with that of girls.

¹Judson T. Landis and Mary G. Landis, Personal Adjustment, Marriage and Family Living, p. 341.

Intensified educational efforts by parents, teachers and other responsible adults appear to be needed for boys before they reach high school age and/or puberty. This plea was voiced by several educational authorities--familiar with adolescents and their needs--during a nationwide survey of social hygiene films conducted recently by the E. C. Brown Trust. Too commonly it was stated, sex education of the comprehensive type preparing a person for marriage and family life is given to girls but not to boys.¹

PROCEDURE

In order to obtain the data for this study, the writer constructed a questionnaire which was sent to the parents of pupils in Winfield High School. The questionnaire was designed (1) to explore the parents' attitudes toward the inclusion of sex information in a course in family life education in the school, and (2) to obtain related information regarding parents' interests and preferences concerning the presentation and content of such a unit.

The questionnaire was first presented to the school administrator for approval. It was then mailed to the parents with instructions that it be returned to the high school office in an enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope. A letter supporting the study and requesting parent cooperation was written by the school principal and enclosed with the questionnaire.

The subjects of the study were 150 parents equally divided for each of three grade groups as well as for sex of the child. There were 25 parents of boys and 25 parents of girls from each of the seventh, the ninth, and the 11th grades. Every third

¹Margie Robinson Lee, "Background Factors Related to Sex Information and Attitudes," Journal of Educational Psychology, December, 1952, p. 467.

name, in alphabetical order of the three class rolls, were selected in order that 70 questionnaires would be sent out for each grade group to 35 parents of boys and 35 parents of girls. The first completed 50 questionnaires returned equally divided as to sex of child for each grade group provided the data for the study.

In order to ascertain the return in the categories selected, they were coded by the position in which the staples were placed to hold the two pages of the questionnaire together. Horizontal staples were inserted in the questionnaires sent to the parents of the 7th grade pupils, oblique staples represented the ninth grade category, and vertical staple insertions were representative of the parents of the 11th grade pupils.

Since it seemed also desirable to know which were returns from parents of girls or boys, another unnoticeable code was used on the letter head of the first page of the questionnaire. These codes were both inconspicuous and therefore without meaning to the recipients.

After three weeks had elapsed, the return of the questionnaires had apparently ceased with an insufficient number of replies to complete the investigation as planned. Since there had been no closing date set for the return of the questionnaires, government postcards were typed and mailed to an unselected one hundred of the parents who had previously received the questionnaire indicating that the questionnaire should be returned by a given date had they not already returned them.

At the end of this period the return was still inadequate to

proceed according to plans so another group of 50 names was taken from the six categories previously designated and a second mailing of questionnaires was sent out. At this time, a note was attached to the bottom of the letter indicating a date before which the responses were to be returned.

The acceptance of this study in the community was evidenced by the following excerpts from some of the letters received with the return of the questionnaires:

We are very much in favor of courses in high school which will help boys and girls to make adjustments to marriage and family life later on.

I much approve this course of study as a help to youthful marriage and I also feel that a more thorough knowledge of these matters might cause some youths to wait awhile before entering into a situation meant for adults.

The right person, whether man or woman, could do much to help the parents as well as children bridge this time in their life as well as prepare them for the time they wish to start their own home.

This is a very good idea, as too many do not understand the responsibilities of sex and parenthood.

We are very pleased to learn our school is very much interested in the sexual life of our youth.

We definitely feel that our young people of today need an opportunity of securing this information in the right way and at a time when they need it. We sincerely hope this will be worked out so it will be available to our students.

Several paragraphs from the following letter emphasized the sincere thought that was given to this problem by the parents:

The more I thought about it, the less I felt qualified to answer some of the questions. I finally decided to talk it over with our family doctor and with friends, to determine their reactions.

Dr. Dunbar assures me there is a definite need along this line - that parents are not giving their children the information they need to know. I had felt that, perhaps, information given at too young an age plus too much freedom to come and go as they pleased, and lax supervision by parents accounted for much of the kids' problems. Apparently, I have been mistaken, at least partially.

As for my friends' reactions, they were so varied they didn't help a great deal. Those who received adequate information at home were conservative, while those who had learned 'catch-as-catch-can' were more inclined toward teaching the whole reproduction process early.

So, while I feel that this is a family-home problem and not the school's responsibility, I'm convinced the school would do a great deal of good by teaching subjects along this line.

The total numbers of returns were tabulated thus:

Parents of 7th grade girls	25
Parents of 7th grade boys	26
Parents of 9th grade girls	26
Parents of 9th grade boys	26
Parents of 11th grade girls	27
Parents of 11th grade boys	27

One questionnaire was returned unanswered by parents of an 11th grade boy indicating that they had moved from this locality and therefore felt that their response would not be pertinent to the study.

The data were then analyzed according to responses from 25 parents from each of the three grade groups, according to sex of the child, total responses from parents of the 75 girls and total responses from parents of the 75 boys and total group responses for each of the questions.

DATA AND DISCUSSION

Tabulation of the responses of the 150 families participating in this study shows the following data regarding family composition. As will be seen in Table 1, the largest group of respondents, numbering 48, had two children per family; the next largest group, numbering 37 had only one child per family. Families having three children each totaled 34. Twenty-one families had four children each. A noticeable drop occurred, thereafter, in that only seven families had five children each, two families had six children, and only one family had eight children.

Table 1. Family composition of respondents.

No. of families	: No. of children per family	:11 yrs. :of age :and :under	: Number of boys : by school grade :			: Number of girls : by school grade :			:17 yrs. :of age :and :over
			: 7th	:9th	:11th	: 7th	:9th	:11th	
37	1	--	7	7	6	3	7	7	-
48	2	17	7	12	15	14	15	10	6
34	3	30	15	8	8	13	8	10	12
21	4	30	5	7	4	7	5	11	15
7	5	17	5	3	1	1	3	1	4
2	6	9	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
1	8	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	7

From the questionnaires it was determined that the children in the 7th grade were 12 and 13 years old; in the 9th grade, they were 14 and 15 years old; and in the 11th grade they were 16 and 17 years old.

Whereas the questionnaires were sent to the parents of children by sex and school grade classification, it was found from the above data that 33 of the respondents had children of both sexes

in two or more of the school grades which were sampled in the study as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents having two or more children of both sexes in the school grades sampled.

Number of respondents	Number of boys by school grade			Number of girls by school grade		
	7th	9th	11th	7th	9th	11th
	8	6		3	7	3
8		7	1	7	1	
6	7			6		
6	4	3			6	
5			5	5		

It was interesting to note, Table 3, that 86 of the questionnaires were answered jointly by the parents, 58 were answered by the mother, whereas, only four were answered by the father

Table 3. Respondents answering the questionnaire.

Respondents:	Boys by school grade			Girls by school grade			Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	7th	9th	11th	
Father	2	-	-	1	-	1	4
Mother	10	10	11	8	8	11	58
Jointly	12	15	13	16	17	13	86
Guardian	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
No reply	-	-	1	-	-	-	1

The first six questions of the questionnaire were designed to ascertain the parents' attitudes regarding the inclusion of sex education as a part of a family life course in the high school.

The first question was:

Do you feel that the school should take an active part in helping youth accept responsibility when dating, particularly in regard to kissing and petting?

As shown in Table 4, of the one hundred and fifty respondents, 82 per cent answered, "Yes," 14 per cent answered, "No," and 4 per cent were returned unanswered. Of the 14 per cent of negative answers, almost 11 per cent were from parents of boys, whereas more than four per cent were from parents of seventh grade boys. To illustrate the attitude of some of those opposed, one stated,

Personally, I feel most high school children are too young to be kissing and petting. The responsibility should somehow be forced on the parents.

Another stated,

We think the matter of dating and how to act on dates should be handled by the church.

Table 4. Responses to question number one.*

Re- sponse	: From parents of boys				: From parents of girls				: Group Total
	: by school grade				: by school grade				
	: 7th	: 9th	: 11th	: Total	: 7th	: 9th	: 11th	: Total	
	: %	: %	: %	: %	: %	: %	: %	: %	: %
Yes	68	96	84	82	80	76	88	81.3	82
No	28	4	16	13	8	20	8	12	14
No reply	4	-	-	1.3	12	4	4	6.7	4

Question number two was specific in asking the respondents:

Would you approve of a high school's offering a well

*The raw data from which each of the tables is taken will be found in the appendix.

conducted course in courtship and preparation for marriage?

Number 2a was:

If you answered "Yes" to the above question would you prefer that the course be taught by a qualified man teacher? A qualified woman teacher? (Circle man or woman.)

In Table 5 it is interesting to note that over 19 per cent of the respondents were not biased in their opinion, having written "either as long as they are well qualified," whereas, more than 17 per cent of the respondents specifically indicated that they would prefer that a man teach the boys and a woman teach the girls. Two of the respondents indicated that they preferred it not to be a member of the faculty, preferring a doctor and minister or priest.

Table 5. Responses to question 2 and 2a.

Responses No. 2	: From parents of				: From parents of				:Group Total
	: boys by school grade				: girls by school grade				
	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	
	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :
Yes	80	92	96	89.4	92	80	92	88	88.7
No	20	4	4	9.3	4	16	8	9.3	9.3
No reply	-	4	-	1.3	4	4	-	2.7	2
<u>No. 2a</u>									
Man	24	24	36	28	8	12	4	8	18
Woman	16	8	12	12	24	32	36	30.7	21.4
"No" above	20	4	14	9.3	4	16	8	9.3	9.3
No reply	8	24	8	13.4	20	4	16	13.4	13.3
<u>Written in</u>									
Man--boys)	8	20	32	20	16	20	8	14.7	17.4
Woman--girls)									
Either	20	20	8	16	24	16	28	22.6	19.3
Other	4	-	-	1.3	4	-	-	1.3	1.3

Question number three was,

If the school were to offer a course in courtship and preparation for marriage, do you think that certain parts of such a course should be taught to boys and girls in separate classes?

If you answered "Yes" to the above question, indicate if you prefer to

- (a) Have a man teach the boys and a woman teach the girls?
- (b) Have a man teach each group separately?
- (c) Have a woman teach each group separately?
- (d) The sex of the teacher would make no difference.

The answers were overwhelmingly in favor of segregating the students as will be noted in Table 6. Over 91 per cent of the respondents favored segregation, whereas only eight per cent answered "No." Table 6 also indicates by whom those favoring the segregation of the sexes for this course would prefer to have it taught. Again, it was interesting to note the large majority of parents who preferred to have a man teach the boys and a woman teach the girls. Only 13 per cent of the respondents indicated that the sex of the teacher would make no difference. Table 6 is on the following page.

It was felt that the cooperation of the parents with the school in an undertaking such as was considered here would be quite important because students need much more than the variety of information which specialized subject-matter teachers would conceivably be able to impart. They would need interpretation, guidance, and integration of ideas, impulses, and experiences which would relate to the home as much or even more than to the class room.

In accord with this thought, question number four was:

If the school offered a course as referred to above,

Table 6. Responses to question number three.

Responses	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	92	96	88	92	96	84	92	90.6	91.3
No	8	4	12	8	4	12	8	8	8
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	1.4	.7
If "Yes" prefer									
a) Man--boys	72	88	80	80	88	84	68	80	80
Woman--girls									
b) Man each group	-	4	4	2.7	-	-	-	-	1.3
c) Woman each group	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	1.3	.7
d) No preference	24	8	8	13.3	8	8	24	13.4	13.3
e) No reply	4	-	8	4	-	8	4	4	4
Written in:									
Doctor teach each group	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	1.5	.7

would you be willing to plan with the teacher the content of such a course?

Table 7 shows that 82 per cent of those answering the questionnaire indicated that they would be willing to plan with the teacher the content of such a course. Almost 11 per cent answered "No," and over 7 per cent failed to reply to the question. One respondent added a note to the effect that if the teacher were qualified, he would know what subject content to present to a given age group without assistance from parents.

Table 7. Responses to question number four.

Responses	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	76	88	80	81.4	88	76	84	82.7	82
No	16	4	8	9.3	8	12	16	12	10.7
No reply	8	8	12	9.3	4	12	-	5.3	7.3

As Duvall has stated:

There are so many superstitions and folk tales mixed up with the facts of life that it is an unusual young person who knows what is and what is not true about reproduction. It has long been a taboed subject. Adults have been reluctant to talk about it even among themselves. Parents were often not given the true facts as they grew up, and so they find it hard to talk about it with their children. The confusion has continued from one generation to the next.¹

Because of this vagueness and inconsistency in teaching about pregnancy the writer felt that it was pertinent to the problem to ascertain the attitudes of parents toward the

¹Evelyn Millis Duvall, Facts of Life and Love, 1953. p. 45.

introduction of such subject matter in the school.

Question number five was:

Do you think that the high school should offer a course for girls in the preparation for parenthood which would include information regarding pregnancy and infant care?

Among those who opposed it the following was stated:

Doctors and ministers are giving training along this line now.

However, Table 8 shows that of the 150 respondents, over 83 per cent of the total were definitely in favor of such a course being taught.

Table 8. Responses to question number five.

Responses	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	68	92	92	84	88	72	88	82.6	83.4
No	28	4	8	13.3	8	24	12	14.7	14
No reply	4	4	-	2.7	4	4	-	2.7	2.6

It was interesting to note in comparing Table 8 and Table 9 that over three per cent of the respondents who answered "No" to girls receiving instruction for parenthood answered "Yes" to question number six which was:

Do you feel that the high school should offer a course for boys to help them better understand their responsibilities as a parent?

Table 9. Responses to question number six.

Responses	: From parents of				: From parents of				: Group : Total
	: boys by school grade				: girls by school grade				
	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	
	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	
Yes	72	96	88	35.3	88	94	92	88	86.7
No	28	4	8	13.4	8	12	4	8	10.7
No reply	-	-	4	1.3	4	4	4	4	2.6

Corner and Landis have said:

Most parents will not, and probably should not, sit down with their children and give them in formal talks the facts sketched here. Many parents will find it easier and more effective to present the fundamentals by placing a suitable booklet in the hands of the children. Actually, the best contribution the average parent can make to the sex education of his child is to see that the boys and girls are properly taught the elements of biology and hygiene, preferably in school. The wise parents will inform themselves on matters of sex education so that they will be ready to answer questions, help solve problems, and above all, to give a constant example of a well-instructed, decent, sensible attitude toward all the problems of life, which never seem more vital than they do at the age of adolescence.¹

In this light, question number seven asked:

Would you attend an adult education class if it were given at a convenient time for you?

Table 10 shows that over 75 per cent of the answers were "Yes," four per cent were unanswered. Negative answers included replies such as,

There are too many demands on my time now and I do not feel the need for such a course.

¹George W. Corner and Carney Landis, Sex Education for the Adolescent. Pamphlet, American Medical Association. p. 16. Reprinted from Hygeia, July, 1941.

If I were a younger parent, Yes.

I have taken this course three times.

There is no need for this course as far as our family is concerned.

Table 10. Responses to question seven.

Responses	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				:Group :Total :
	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	68	84	88	80	76	72	64	70.7	75.3
No	32	16	8	18.7	20	20	28	22.6	20.7
No reply	-	-	4	1.3	4	8	8	6.7	4

Landis has written:

When is a child old enough to be told facts about sex? Authorities are agreed that a child is old enough to be told about sex when he is old enough to ask questions. We do not ask when a child is old enough to have an answer to his questions about why grass is green. One of the greatest errors in approaching the subject of sex is that it has been considered as a separate compartment of life. Scientists point out that the human being reacts as a total organism. Children ask questions about sex along with other questions and all their questions are a normal part of development.¹

Strain has stated:

You keep on answering as long as questions keep coming. If your child is old enough for the question, he is old enough for the answer to be made simple and understandable.²

Consequently, the investigator wondered just what would be the parents' attitude toward the teacher's answering such

¹Judson T. Landis and Mary F. Landis, Building a Successful Marriage, 1948. p. 465.

²Frances Bruce Strain, New Patterns in Sex Teaching, 1942. p. 98.

questions. To obtain this information, a check list for question number eight was designed in the following manner:

If a student asks a teacher a question about human reproduction, do you feel that the teacher should: (Check as many as apply.)

- a) Avoid any discussion of any aspect of sex?
- b) Give a tactful but truthful answer at the time?
- c) Plan to see the pupil later to discuss the question privately?
- d) Suggest that the student ask his or her parent?
- e) Inform the parent of the question?
- f) If other, please indicate.

Apparently the parents' attitude concerning the answering of sex questions compares very favorably with Landis and Strain, inasmuch as 80 per cent of the 150 respondents indicated that the teacher should give a tactful but truthful answer concerning sex at the time the question is asked.

Since the respondents were to "check as many as apply" the answers to this question, as will be noted in Table 11, totaled more than 100 per cent.

Table 11. Responses to question eight.

Responses	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
a) Yes	3	-	-	2.7	-	-	-	-	1.3
No	32	28	44	34.7	20	20	20	20	27.3
b) Yes	88	80	84	84.	68	80	80	76	80
No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
c) Yes	32	24	28	28	32	52	40	41.3	34.6
No	4	12	4	6.7	4	8	4	5.3	6
d) Yes	40	28	48	42.7	32	40	36	36	39.3
No	8	12	12	10.6	-	12	8	6.7	8.6
e) Yes	20	44	36	33.3	24	32	28	28	30.6
No	4	4	8	5.3	-	4	8	4	4.6
f)	4	-	8	4	4	-	8	4	4

Among the six suggestions by respondents under item (f) were:

The teacher could make use of some good literature.

Answer the question and then suggest that he talk about it with his parents for more information.

Answer the student's question and then inform the parents so that they will be aware of their child's awakening interest in this subject.

Bring it into the open. Let the class understand the question and its answer.

Question number nine was:

Do you believe that an explanation of menstruation should be included in a course for junior high school girls?

As shown in Table 12, almost 90 per cent of the respondents answered in the affirmative, whereas, only slightly more than seven per cent were opposed. Of those answering negatively, more than five per cent were from parents of boys. One of the parents of the girls who answered "No" stated the belief that this information should be given as early as the fourth or fifth grades.

Table 12. Responses to question nine.

Responses	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	72	92	96	86.7	96	88	92	92	89.4
No	24	4	4	10.6	-	8	4	4	7.3
No reply	4	4	-	2.7	-	4	4	2.7	2.6
Written in: By a doctor	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	1.3	.7

Question 10 was of special interest because it opened another avenue of approach, that of explanation of menstruation to boys. The question was:

Do you believe that an explanation of menstruation should be included in a course for boys in order to help them understand why girls should at times limit swimming and other strenuous activities?

- a) If you answered "Yes" to the above question, please circle the earliest grade level at which you think it should be taught.

7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

Almost 81 per cent of the responses were in the affirmative, one respondent preferred that it be explained by a doctor. Of the 16 per cent of negative answers, over nine per cent were from parents of boys, whereas less than seven per cent were from parents of girls. It is interesting that no parent of seventh grade girls thought that menstruation should not be explained to boys. Also of interest was the fact that more than 36 per cent of the respondents thought that this explanation should be given in the 7th grade, over 14 per cent thought it should be in the 8th grade; however, almost 19 per cent indicated the 9th grade. As indicated in Table 13, less than 12 per cent of the 150 respondents indicated that it should not be discussed before senior high school.

Table 13. Responses to question 10 and 10a.

Responses	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	72	88	80	80	92	76	76	81.3	80.7
No	28	8	20	18.7	-	24	16	13.4	16
No reply	-	4	-	1.3	4	-	8	4	2.6
Written in:									
By a doctor	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	1.3	.7
a) If "Yes" earliest grade level									
7th	28	32	40	33.3	56	36	28	40	36.7
8th	12	32	12	18.7	12	8	12	10.6	14.7
9th	12	12	24	16	24	24	16	21.3	18.7
10th	12	8	4	8	4	8	8	6.7	7.3
11th	-	4	8	4	-	-	8	2.7	3.3
12th	4	4	-	2.7	-	-	-	-	1.3
No reply	32	8	12	17.3	4	24	28	18.7	18

To ascertain the attitude of parents as to whether the school should give information regarding boys' sexual development question number 11 was:

Do you believe that the school should give information to help junior high school boys better understand their growth changes in relation to sexual development?

As will be noted in Table 14, over 12 per cent of the respondents answered this question negatively. Of the 12 per cent, over seven per cent were parents of boys. Of this seven per cent almost five per cent were parents of 7th grade boys.

Table 14. Responses to question number 11.

Responses	From parents of				From parents of				Group Total
	boys by school grade				girls by school grade				
	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	72	92	88	84	84	80	80	81.3	82.7
No	28	8	8	14.7	-	20	12	10.7	12.6
No reply	-	-	4	1.3	12	-	8	6.7	4
Written in:									
By a doctor	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	1.3	.7

To give information to girls to help them better understand the growth changes of boys during adolescence was another approach as brought out in question number 12 as follows:

Do you feel that the school should give information to girls to help them better understand the growth changes of boys during adolescence?

- a) If you answered "Yes" to the above question, please circle the earliest grade level at which you think it should be taught.

7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

As seen in Table 15, of the 150 respondents only 15 per cent answered "No" and of this 15 per cent, over half were the parents of boys.

The second part of Table 15 indicates that of those answering in the affirmative, over 30 per cent thought this information should be given in the 7th grade, almost 21 per cent indicated the 9th grade, whereas, over 13 per cent stated the 8th grade. Only 16 per cent thought that a discussion of this kind should not be given until senior high school.

Table 15. Responses to questions 12 and 12a.

Responses to 12.	: From parents of boys by school grade :				: From parents of girls by school grade :				:Group Total :
	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	
	% :	% :	% :	% :	% :	% :	% :	% :	
Yes	72	92	80	81.3	84	68	80	77.4	79.3
No	28	8	20	18.7	-	24	12	12	15.3
No reply	-	-	-	-	12	8	8	9.3	4.7
Written in: By a doctor	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	1.3	.7
Response to 12a.									
7th	24	16	32	24	60	24	28	37.3	30.7
8th	12	32	16	20	4	16	-	6.7	13.3
9th	16	28	16	20	28	12	24	21.3	20.7
10th	12	8	8	9.3	-	12	8	6.7	8
11th	-	4	4	2.7	-	-	12	4	3.3
12th	-	4	-	1.3	-	-	-	-	.7
No reply because of "No" above	28	8	20	18.7	8	32	20	20	19.3
No reply	8	-	4	4	-	4	8	4	4

It seemed significant, as will be seen in Table 16, that in the discussion of venereal diseases in the school, only eight per cent of the 150 respondents thought that it should not be discussed. Negative answers numbered seven and five, from the 75 parents of boys and the 75 parents of girls respectively. Question 13 was as follows:

Do you feel that the school should include in the subject some information about venereal diseases?

Apparently, the parents have the same attitude toward venereal diseases as did the staff of the Child Study Association of America when they wrote:

Young people need to know about venereal diseases, just

as they do about tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. They need such knowledge for their own protection. They should be told about them whenever the subject comes naturally to their attention, or as they get on into adolescence.¹

Table 16. Responses to question 13.

Responses	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	%
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	84	92	92	89.4	96	88	92	92	90.6
No	12	8	8	9.3	-	12	8	6.7	8
No reply	4	-	-	1.3	-	-	-	-	.7
Written in:									
By a doctor	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	1.3	.7

Question 14 was designed to ascertain the amount of rapport between parents and their children concerning the discussion of body differences between boys and girls and the freedom of asking questions concerning reproduction. Question number 14 was:

Do your children talk with you freely about:

- a) Body differences between boys and girls?
- b) Questions concerning reproduction?

Concerning the freedom with which they talked about body differences between the sexes, 53 per cent of the respondents answered "Yes," whereas over 33 per cent responded "No" with almost nine per cent not answering as shown in Table 17. This table also shows that in regard to questions about reproduction

¹Child Study Association of America. When Children Ask About Sex. Pamphlet by the Child Study Association of America, Inc. 1950. p. 13.

less than 67 per cent answered in the affirmative, whereas almost 27 per cent said they did not talk freely. More than six per cent did not answer this question.

Table 17. Responses to question 14.

Responses to a.	: From parents of : boys by school grade				: From parents of : girls by school grade				:Group :Total :
	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	48	44	80	57.4	68	56	52	58.7	58
No	40	40	20	33.3	28	40	32	33.3	33.3
No reply	12	16	-	9.3	4	4	16	8	8.7
Responses to b.									
Yes	76	56	68	66.7	76	52	72	66.7	66.7
No	16	32	24	24	20	44	24	29.3	26.7
No reply	8	12	8	9.3	4	4	4	4	6.6

In regard to the showing of films which present information about the reproductive process, question number 15 was:

Would you approve of students' seeing education films which present information about the reproductive process?

At junior high school level (grades 7, 8, and 9)?

At senior high school level (grades 10, 11, and 12)?

It has been found that the students themselves feel that this is very essential. Elizabeth Force, who has been teaching a course in family living in Toms River, New Jersey, for the past eleven years, has said that they use films designed for much younger children because a 17 year old will never admit his lack of knowledge in this field to an adult. She explained to the students that these films would help them to be better able to explain the facts of biology to their own children later on.

After seeing these films, Human Beginnings and Human Reproduction, the teen-agers invariably and emphatically stated that they should have seen them years ago.¹

From the present study, 36 per cent of the 75 parents of boys and the same per cent of the 75 parents of girls indicated that they approved of the students' seeing these types of films in the junior high school; however, four of these respondents thought that they should not be shown before the ninth grade. Almost half of the parents of girls preferred that the films not be shown before senior high school, whereas less than 43 per cent of the parents of the boys indicated the same. As shown in Table 18, over nine per cent of the parents did not feel that these films should be shown at all.

Table 18. Responses to question 15.

Responses	From parents of				From parents of				:Group	
	: boys by school grade				: girls by school grade					:Total
	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:		
: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :	: % :		
<u>Jr. H. S.</u>										
Yes	32	36	40	36	48	24	36	36	36	
No	4	-	-	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	.7
<u>Sr. H. S.</u>										
Yes	48	36	44	42.6	40	52	56	49.4	46	
No	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	4	2	
Not at all	12	16	12	13.4	4	4	8	5.3	9.3	
No reply	4	12	4	6.7	8	8	-	5.3	6	

¹Elizabeth A. Force, "What Teen Agers Want to Know About Sex and Marriage." American Magazine. Vol. 155, No. 1. Jan., 1953, p. 106.

The final question asked of the parents was:

Would you be willing to preview such films as referred to in question number 15?

As shown in Table 19, over 85 per cent of the respondents indicated their willingness to do so, whereas over six per cent of the parents of boys and four per cent of the parents of girls signified their unwillingness to preview such films.

Table 19. Responses to question 16.

Responses	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				:Group :Total :
	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Yes	84	80	84	82.7	92	76	96	88	85.3
No	16	12	12	13.3	4	20	-	8	10.7
No reply	-	8	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

It would seem from the responses of the parents that they realized the necessity of teaching sex education in the home, but also were aware of the inadequacies of many parents in the teaching of this subject to their children. From the analyses of the data of this study, from 80 to 91 per cent of the parents, depending on the question asked, indicated that properly directed sex education in the school would act as a re-enforcing agent for good sex education wherever found.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was threefold: (1) to investigate areas of family life education which parents wish to have included in the curriculum of the high school; (2) to investigate parental

attitudes regarding sound sex education as a part of family life education in the public school; and (3) to gain information regarding parents' preferences and desires in the teaching methods of family life courses.

In order to obtain the data for this study, the writer constructed a questionnaire which was sent to the parents of pupils in Winfield High School. The questionnaire was first presented to the school administrator for approval. It was then mailed to the parents to be answered and returned to the high school office in an enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope. A letter supporting the study and requesting parent cooperation was written by the principal and enclosed with the questionnaire.

The subjects of the study were 150 parents equally divided for each of three grade groups as well as for sex of the child. There were 25 parents of boys and 25 parents of girls from each of the seventh, the ninth, and the 11th grades. Every third name, in alphabetical order of the three class rolls was selected. The first-answered 50 questionnaires returned equally divided as to sex of child for each grade group provided the data for the study.

Tabulation was based on responses from 25 parents of girls in the 7th, the 9th, and the 11th grades and from total responses from the 75 parents of girls; from parents of 25 boys in the 7th, the 9th, and the 11th grades and from total responses from the 75 parents of boys; and from total group responses numbering 150.

When the data were analysed, several conclusions became evident:

That the majority of these parents were of the opinion that

the school has a certain responsibility in the teaching of sound sex education as a part of family life education. Eighty-two per cent of the respondents indicated that the school should take an active part in helping youth accept responsibility when dating. Eighty-nine per cent would approve of the school's offering a course in courtship and preparation for marriage. However, over 91 per cent preferred that the classes in such a course be segregated, 81 per cent preferred that the teacher be of the same sex as the group.

As to whether the school should offer courses in human reproduction and in preparation for parenthood, more than 83 per cent of the parents approved of such a course for girls, whereas 87 per cent approved of such a course for boys. Eighty-two per cent of those responding indicated that they would be willing to help plan such a course. If a student should ask a teacher a question about human reproduction, 80 per cent of the respondents stated that the teacher should give a tactful but truthful answer at the time the question is asked.

In regard to learning about the development and body changes in adolescents, 90 per cent thought that a study of menstruation should be included in the curriculum for girls and 81 per cent felt that it should also be included in a course for boys. Seventy per cent indicated that boys should know about this in the junior high school. As to whether the schools should give information to help boys understand their growth changes in relation to sexual development, 83 per cent answered in the affirmative. Eighty per cent thought that the girls should also be taught about these growth

changes in boys. Sixty-five per cent of these parents said that the girls should have some knowledge of this as early as junior high school.

More than 91 per cent of the parents approved of the school's including in its program some information about venereal diseases.

Concerning the freedom with which parents and their children discuss body differences of male and female and reproduction, only 58 per cent of the parents answered that their children talked with them freely about body differences. Less than 67 per cent of the parents of each sex responded that their children talked freely with them concerning reproduction.

Eighty-two per cent of these parents approved of showing educational films which present information about human reproduction. Forty-six per cent said they approved of them only in senior high school, whereas 36 per cent would approve the showing of these films in junior high school.

Eighty-five per cent of the respondents said that they would be willing to plan with the teacher the content of a course in courtship and preparation for marriage. Over 83 per cent would be willing to preview films on human reproduction and of the parents answering the questionnaire, 76 per cent would be interested in attending an adult class in family life education.

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WINFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

ARTHUR R. PARTRIDGE, PRINCIPAL

WINFIELD, KANSAS

Please indicate the age and sex of children in your family?

Boys - Age

Girls - Age

This questionnaire was answered by: Mother _____ Father _____ Jointly _____

Please circle either "yes" or "no" to each of the following questions:

- 1. Do you feel that the school should take an active part in helping youth accept responsibility when dating, particularly in regard to kissing and petting?
Yes No
- 2. Would you approve of a high school offering a well conducted course in courtship and preparation for marriage?
Yes No
 - a) If you answered "Yes" to the above question would you prefer that the course be taught by a qualified man teacher? A qualified woman teacher? (Circle man or woman)
- 3. If the school were to offer a course in courtship and preparation for marriage do you think that certain parts of such a course should be taught to boys and girls in separate classes?
Yes No

If you answered "Yes" to the above question, indicate if you would prefer to

- a) Have a man teach the boys and a woman teach the girls? _____
- b) Have a man teach each group separately? _____
- c) Have a woman teach each group separately? _____
- d) The sex of the teacher would make no difference. _____
- 4. If the school offered a course as referred to above, would you be willing to plan with the teacher the content of such a course? Yes No
- 5. Do you think that the high school should offer a course for girls in the preparation for parenthood which would include information regarding pregnancy and infant care? Yes No
- 6. Do you feel that the high school should offer a course for boys to help them better understand their responsibilities as a parent? Yes No
- 7. Would you attend an adult education class on family life education if it were given at a convenient time for you? Yes No

Information Sheet (Cont'd.)

8. If a student asks a teacher a question about human reproduction, do you feel that the teacher should: (Check as many as apply.)
- | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|
| a) Avoid any discussion of any aspect of sex? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| b) Give a tactful but truthful answer at the time? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| c) Plan to see the pupil later to discuss the question privately? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| d) Suggest that the student ask his or her parent? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| e) Inform the parent of the question? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| f) If other, please indicate _____ | | |
9. Do you believe that an explanation of menstruation should be included in a course for junior high school girls? Yes _____ No _____
10. Do you believe that an explanation of menstruation should be included in a course for boys in order to help them understand why girls should at times limit swimming and other strenuous activities? Yes _____ No _____
- a) If you answered "Yes" to the above question please circle the earliest grade level at which you think it should be taught.
- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| 7th | 8th | 9th | 10th | 11th | 12th |
|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|
11. Do you believe that the school should give information to help junior high school boys better understand their growth changes in relation to sexual development? Yes _____ No _____
12. Do you feel that the school should give information to girls to help them better understand the growth changes of boys during adolescence? Yes _____ No _____
- a) If you answered "Yes" to the above question please circle the earliest grade level at which you think it should be taught.
- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| 7th | 8th | 9th | 10th | 11th | 12th |
|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|
13. Do you feel that the school should include in the subject some information about venereal diseases? Yes _____ No _____
14. Do your children talk with you freely about:
- | | | |
|---|-----------|----------|
| a) Body differences between boys and girls? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| b) Questions concerning reproduction? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
15. Would you approve of students seeing educational films which present information about the reproductive process?
- | | | |
|--|-----------|----------|
| At junior high school level (grades 7, 8, and 9)? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| At senior high school level (grades 10, 11, and 12)? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
16. Would you be willing to pre-view such films as referred to in question number 15? Yes _____ No _____

Letter sent by principal of
Winfield High School
to parents participating in study

It is becoming increasingly apparent that adequate adjustment to marriage and to family situations demands some sort of preparation in the form of education. This present increasing incidence of early adolescent marriages brings this very dramatically to our attention, and raises the question, what is the school's responsibility?

As part of the requirement for her master's degree, Mrs. Lois Bear of our home economics department has designed a survey of parental opinion, in an effort to determine what parents of adolescents think their children should learn at school in this broad area of marriage and family living, especially as related to certain aspects of the problem.

In order to get a cross-section of parental opinion, she has selected a random sample of the parents of all children now enrolled in this school and your name has been included in this list. We hope that you will be able to cooperate with her in this project, for we too, are vitally interested in this whole problem. The results of this survey will have tremendous significance for our school in the future planning of courses in this area.

Please answer the questions on the enclosed form and return it in the self-addressed envelope which requires no postage.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this undertaking.

Sincerely,

Arthur R. Partridge
Principal

Copy of postcard sent to
100 parents of the first mailing list

In regard to the educational survey which has recently been made, we are sending this reminder. If you are among those who have not returned the completed questionnaire, will you please do so before April 1. These may be returned unsigned.

If you have returned yours, please disregard this card.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Raw Data from Responses
to Questionnaire

Table 20. Number of responses to question one.

Response	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				:Group :Total
	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	
Yes	17	24	21	62	20	19	22	61	123
No	7	1	4	12	2	5	2	9	21
No reply	1	-	-	1	3	1	1	5	6

Table 21. Number of responses to question 2 and 2a.

Response	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				:Group :Total
	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	
No. 2									
Yes	20	23	24	67	23	20	23	66	133
No	5	1	1	7	1	4	2	7	14
No reply	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	2	3
No. 2a									
Man	6	6	9	21	2	3	1	6	27
Woman	4	2	3	9	6	8	9	23	32
"No" above	5	1	1	7	1	4	2	7	14
No reply	2	6	2	10	3	1	4	10	20
Written in:									
Man for boys)	2	5	8	15	4	5	2	11	26
Woman " girls)									
Either	5	5	2	12	6	4	7	17	29
Other	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	2

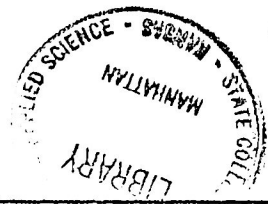


Table 22. Number of responses to question 3.

Response	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	
Yes	23	24	22	69	24	21	23	68	137
No	2	1	3	6	1	3	2	6	12
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
If "Yes" prefer									
a) Man--boys) Woman--girls)	18	22	20	60	22	21	17	60	120
b) Man teach each group	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	2
c) Woman teach each group	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
d) No preference	6	2	2	10	2	2	6	10	20
e) No reply	1	-	2	3	-	2	1	3	6
Written in:									
Doctor teach each group	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1

Table 23. Number of responses to question 4.

Response	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	
Yes	19	22	20	61	22	19	21	62	123
No	4	1	2	7	2	3	4	9	16
No reply	2	2	3	7	1	3	-	4	11

Table 24. Number of responses to question 5.

Response	: From parents of				: From parents of				:Group	
	: boys by school grade				: girls by school grade					:Total
	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:		
Yes	17	23	23	63	22	18	22	62	125	
No	7	1	2	10	2	6	3	11	21	
No reply	1	1	-	2	1	1	-	2	4	

Table 25. Number of responses to question 6.

Response	: From parents of				: From parents of				:Group	
	: boys by school grade				: girls by school grade					:Total
	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:		
Yes	18	24	22	64	22	21	23	66	130	
No	7	1	2	10	2	3	1	6	16	
No reply	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	3	4	

Table 26. Number of responses to question 7.

Response	: From parents of				: From parents of				:Group	
	: boys by school grade				: girls by school grade					:Total
	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:		
Yes	17	21	22	60	19	18	16	53	113	
No	8	4	2	14	5	5	7	17	31	
No reply	-	-	1	1	1	2	2	5	6	

Table 27. Number of responses to question 8.

Response	: From parents of				: From parents of				:Group	
	: boys by school grade				: girls by school grade					:Total
	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:		
a)Yes	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	
No	8	7	11	26	5	5	5	15	41	
b)Yes	22	20	21	63	17	20	20	57	120	
No	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
c)Yes	8	6	7	21	8	13	10	31	52	
No	1	3	1	5	1	2	1	4	9	
d)Yes	10	7	12	32	8	10	9	27	59	
No	2	3	3	8	-	3	2	5	13	
e)Yes	5	11	9	25	6	8	7	21	46	
No	1	1	2	4	-	1	2	3	7	
f)	1	-	2	3	1	-	2	3	6	

Table 28. Number of responses to question 9.

Response	: From parents of				: From parents of				:Group	
	: boys by school grade				: girls by school grade					:Total
	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:	: 7th:	: 9th:	: 11th:	: Total:		
Yes	18	23	24	85	24	22	23	69	134	
No	6	1	1	8	-	2	1	3	11	
No reply	1	1	-	2	-	1	1	2	4	
Written in:										
By a doctor	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	

Table 29. Number of responses to question 10 and 10a.

Response	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	
Yes	18	22	20	60	23	19	19	61	121
No	7	2	5	14	-	6	4	10	24
No reply	-	1	-	1	1	-	2	3	4
Written in:									
By a doctor	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
a) If "Yes" earliest grade level									
7th	7	3	10	25	14	9	7	30	55
8th	3	8	3	14	3	2	3	8	22
9th	3	3	6	12	6	6	4	16	23
10th	3	2	1	6	1	2	2	5	11
11th	-	1	2	3	-	-	2	2	5
12th	1	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
No reply	8	2	3	13	1	6	7	14	27

Table 30. Number of responses to question 11.

Response	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	
Yes	18	23	22	63	21	20	20	61	124
No	7	2	2	11	-	5	3	8	19
No reply	-	-	1	1	3	-	2	5	6
Written in:									
By a doctor	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1

Table 31. Number of responses to question 12 and 12a.

Response to 12	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	
Yes	18	23	20	61	21	17	20	59	119
No	7	2	5	14	-	6	3	9	23
No reply	-	-	-	-	3	2	2	7	7
Written in: By a doctor	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
Response to 12a									
7th	6	4	8	18	15	6	7	28	46
8th	3	8	4	15	1	4	-	5	20
9th	4	7	4	15	7	3	6	16	31
10th	3	2	2	7	-	3	2	5	12
11th	-	1	1	2	-	-	3	3	5
12th	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
No reply because of "No" above	2	-	1	3	-	1	2	3	6
	7	2	5	14	2	8	5	15	29

Table 32. Number of responses to question 13.

Response	From parents of boys by school grade				From parents of girls by school grade				Group Total
	7th	9th	11th	Total	7th	9th	11th	Total	
Yes	21	23	23	67	24	22	23	69	136
No	3	2	2	7	-	3	2	5	12
No reply	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Written in: By a doctor	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1

Table 33. Number of responses to question 14.

Response	From parents of				From parents of				Group
	boys by school grade				girls by school grade				
to a.	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	
Yes	12	11	20	43	17	14	13	44	87
No	10	10	5	25	7	10	8	25	50
No reply	3	4	-	7	1	1	4	6	13
Responses to b.									
Yes	19	14	17	50	19	13	18	50	100
No	4	8	6	18	5	11	6	22	40
No reply	2	3	2	7	1	1	1	3	10

Table 34. Number of responses to question 15.

Response	From parents of				From parents of				Group
	boys by school grade				girls by school grade				
	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	
Jr. H. S.									
Yes	8	9	10	27	12	6	9	27	54
No	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Sr. H. S.									
Yes	12	9	11	32	10	13	14	37	69
No	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	3
Not at all	3	4	3	10	1	1	2	4	14
No reply	1	3	1	5	2	2	-	4	9

Table 35. Number of responses to question 16.

Response	From parents of				From parents of				Group
	boys by school grade				girls by school grade				
	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	7th:	9th:	11th:	Total:	
Yes	21	20	21	62	23	19	24	66	128
No	4	3	3	10	1	5	-	6	16
No reply	-	2	1	3	1	1	1	3	6

ATTITUDES OF PARENTS
TOWARD CERTAIN ASPECTS OF FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION
IN A KANSAS HIGH SCHOOL

by

LOIS OSKINS BEAR

B. S., Indiana State Teachers College, 1929

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family and Child Development

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1955

The purposes of this study were to: (1) investigate areas of family life education which parents wished to have included in the high school curriculum; (2) investigate parental attitudes regarding sound sex education as a part of family life education in the public school; and (3) gain information regarding parents' preferences and desires in the teaching methods of family life courses.

A questionnaire, designed by the writer, was mailed to the parents to be answered and returned to the high school in an enclosed envelope. A letter supporting the study and requesting parent cooperation was written by the school principal and enclosed with the questionnaire.

The subjects of the study were 150 parents equally divided for each of three grade groups, as well as for sex of the child. There were 25 parents of boys and 25 parents of girls from each of the 7th, 9th, and 11th grades.

The data were then summarized for each question according to responses from 25 parents from each of the three grade groups, according to sex of the child; total responses from parents of the 75 girls; total responses from parents of the 75 boys; and total group responses.

From the data it became evident that most of the parents believed the school has a responsibility in the teaching of sound sex education as a part of family life education. Eighty-two per cent of the respondents indicated the school should take an active part in helping youth accept responsibility when dating; 89

cent approved of the school's offering a course in courtship and preparation for marriage. However, over 91 per cent preferred that the classes in such a course be segregated, 81 per cent preferring that the teacher be of the same sex as the group.

Over 83 per cent of the respondents approved of a course in human reproduction and preparation for parenthood for girls, whereas 87 per cent approved of such a course for boys.

In regard to learning about the development and body changes in adolescents, 90 per cent of the parents indicated that a study of menstruation should be included in the curriculum for girls and 81 per cent thought it should also be included for boys. Concerning sexual development of boys, 83 per cent indicated it should be taught to boys, whereas 80 per cent thought it should be explained to girls, also.

More than 91 per cent of the parents approved of the school's including some information about venereal diseases.

Eighty-two per cent of these parents approved of showing educational films which present information about human reproduction. Forty-six per cent approved of them only in high school, whereas 36 per cent approved the showing of these films in junior high school. Eighty-five per cent of the respondents would be willing to preview such films and 76 per cent would be interested in attending an adult class in family life education.

