



SEX EDUCATION:

*Teen sexual development is a normal part of growing up and the best approach is to ensure that young people have all the information and education about sex and contraception they need.**

We must **EMPOWER** young Black women to make informed, healthy decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives. This starts with comprehensive, medically accurate sex education.

In Our Own Voice: National Black Women’s Reproductive Justice Agenda believes that sexuality education is a lifelong process that encompasses sexual development, sexual and reproductive health, interpersonal relationships, affection, intimacy, body image, and gender roles.

- **In 1997**, the federal government began investing public funds into abstinence-only-until-marriage programs that prohibited discussion about the benefits of contraceptives.
- **In 2010**, President Obama removed this funding stream and created funding for programs that were proven effective in reducing teen pregnancy, delaying sexual activity, or increasing contraceptive use.

Unintended pregnancy continues to disproportionately affect youth of color with rates for Black women, ages 15-19, more than double the rate for young white women. Rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are also highest among Black and Hispanic youth.

The Real Education for Healthy Youth Act (H.R. 1706), introduced by Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA), promotes education about sexual health, healthy relationships, the reduction of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, and the prevention of dating violence.

In Our Own Voice believes that we must provide young Black women with honest, age appropriate, comprehensive sexual health education to help them take personal responsibility for their health and wellbeing.

*African-American Attitudes on Abortion, Contraception, and Teen Sexual Health (2013). Belden-Russonello Strategists LLC., Washington DC. February 2013. <http://www.blackjrj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/media-memo.pdf>

