

Most Adults Support Family Life Education in Schools

The majority of men and women in India favour teaching children in school various topics that are part of family life education (FLE). These topics include sex and sexual behaviour, bodily changes during puberty, condom use to avoid sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, contraception, and moral values. FLE is key to fighting the HIV epidemic.

- Over 98 percent of women and men believe that girls and boys should be taught about moral values in school.
- More than two-thirds of adults approve of teaching school children about the physical changes in their bodies that come with puberty, although there is somewhat less approval for children learning about puberty in the opposite sex. Notably, more men than women approve of teaching these topics to children.
- Most women (63 percent) and men (81 percent) think that information about HIV/AIDS should be taught in schools to both boys and girls. Most women who say that HIV/AIDS should be taught in school think this topic should be introduced at age 16 or older, although a substantial number say that HIV/AIDS should first be taught to children at age 13-15. Men who favour HIV/AIDS education are about equally likely to say that the topic should be introduced at age 13-15 or age 16 or older. More than 40 percent of women and 60 percent of men are also in favour of teaching both boys and girls about sexual behaviour and condom use to avoid sexually transmitted diseases.
- Adults are less likely to favour teaching about contraception than about HIV/AIDS. About half of women approve of teaching girls about contraception; somewhat fewer approve of teaching boys about contraception (42 percent). In contrast, about two-thirds of men support teaching about contraception in school, although like most women, most men believe the topic should not be introduced to school children younger than 16.

For more information about family life education, please see Chapter 11 in the NFHS-3 final report.