

## ***Let's Get Growing!* Class Details**

***Let's Get Growing!*** classes are led by trained program facilitators who help guide families through the learning exercises using a variety of teaching methods, including games, videos, and discussion. This program can be provided in English and Spanish, and the Health Department has interpreter services available. Facilitators do very little "lecturing". The role of the facilitators is to present factual information about sexuality and abstinence until marriage and to provide parents with opportunities to talk to their children about beliefs and values. Parents are supplied tools to discuss the potential harmful consequences of single teenagers having sexual relationships. Parents are also educated about the societal influences on both children and adults about sexuality, including the media and peer relationships. The program is designed to be interactive; families play an integral role in the activities.

The total time commitment for a session of *Let's Get Growing!* is approximately four to six hours. Typically, the classes meet for two hours on two or three evenings. However, the specific scheduling is dependent upon the needs of the participants. The structure and content of the classes is outlined below:

**Class 1:** The first class is for parents only. This is an introductory session designed to provide parents information about the structure and content of the program as well as the teaching methods that will be used. Parents are also introduced to other topics such as how to encourage communication and how to reduce media influences on children. All of the topics help illustrate the importance of establishing open communication about sex with their children. Parents are also introduced to the 40 Developmental Assets from the Search Institute. Each parent will receive a resource folder with brochures and literature about current and future issues they should discuss with their children. Organizations sponsoring the program may choose to include the parent night or begin with class 2 below.

**Class 2:** Starting with the second class, children come with their parents. Classes from this point on are separated by gender so that the children will feel more comfortable with the material and asking questions. At the beginning of the class, each parent and child writes on their nametag something they like about each other. By sharing their answers with the group, this helps build a bond between parent and child. It opens the door for the child to start sharing their feelings. A pre-test is given to both the parents and the children. Topics for this class include physical changes in adolescence, differences between boys and girls, common problems associated with adolescent physical growth, male and

female reproductive anatomy and physiology (both genders are taught in both classes), and preventive health care for adolescents.

**Class 3:** This class begins with the facilitators answering questions placed in the question box at the end of the previous class. The question box is an anonymous channel through which children can ask questions that they might have been uncomfortable asking in front of the group. We ask the parents and children to put their long-term goals on the nametags for this class. By children putting their goals on the nametags, it starts the children thinking about their futures, and how today's actions will impact those goals (i.e. having sexual intercourse before marriage may result in an out-of-wedlock pregnancy or a sexually transmitted disease that can alter their goals of going to college) and future aspirations. The curriculum for this class includes abstinence, sexual intercourse, fertilization, pregnancy, prenatal development, labor and childbirth, and adoption. The parents and children will do several activities and games that focus on the anatomy/physiology-type material they have learned plus why abstinence is a healthy choice. The families will interact about issues such as peer pressure, self-esteem, making good choices, and goal setting. Post-test and evaluations are given.