

Health Education Resources

Legislative Authority

According to Iowa Code 256.9(46), the Iowa Department of Education (Department) will develop and make available to school districts examples of age-appropriate and research-based materials and lists of resources which parents may use, as well as make available scientifically based research studies in the area of health and wellness literacy for use by school districts and nonpublic schools in educating students. In developing the materials and resource list, the department consulted with entities as included in Iowa Code 256.9(46).

Additional information regarding health education requirements may be found on the [Health Education Instruction webpage](#).

Findings

A consultative team reviewed national, state and local resources according to Iowa's health education requirements, restrictions and recommendations.

[The Primary Prevention Action Report \(2017\)](#) from The Center for Violence Prevention and the Governor's Office on Bullying Prevention at the University of Northern Iowa included recommendations for state, community, district and school-level prevention efforts. District recommendations included reviewing health and safety policies and practices, prioritizing standards-aligned health education, supporting parent and community awareness and implementing prevention and response strategies.

More recently, the Iowa Domestic Abuse Death Review Team Findings and Recommendations (2025) provided primary prevention recommendations to teach safe and healthy relationship skills to reduce risk factors for causing harm in relationships. The report also includes intervention recommendations for local community leaders as well as friends and family. [Iowa DADR Report 2019-2022](#).

District Responsibility & Resources

School districts shall offer health education and human growth and development instruction, annually notify parents about the human growth and development curriculum and provide resources available to parents related to consent, harassment prevention, internet safety, assault and abuse prevention and response resources according to Iowa Code 256.11, Iowa Code 279.50, and Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 12.

Topic Resources

The following resources are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute Department requirements, endorsements, or recommendations of any specific program or curriculum. Decisions regarding curriculum and instructional materials remain the responsibility of local school districts consistent with Iowa law.

- The [Iowa Department of Health and Human Services](#) provides high-quality programs and services that protect and improve the health and resiliency of individuals, families and communities in Iowa.
 - The [Adolescent Health](#) page includes resources for parents, providers, and young people to promote healthy adolescence.
 - [Violence Prevention](#) is a public health priority area that addresses the social, environmental, and community conditions that contribute to higher rates of violence, abuse, and other problematic behaviors that cause harm in our relationships, families, and communities.
 - [Your Life Iowa](#), the statewide go-to resource, provides support to anyone in Iowa with a wellness concern or question.

- [Safe and Sound Iowa](#) is a free, anonymous school threat-reporting tool for all public and accredited non-public schools across the state, provided by the Governor's School Safety Bureau and the Iowa Department of Public Safety. Students, school staff, parents and community members can submit school safety concerns anonymously using the Safe+Sound Iowa mobile app, website or toll-free tip line.
- [Iowa Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force](#) is centered on identifying and prosecuting those who engage in the sexual exploitation of minors through the use of the internet.
- The [Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) supports a statewide network of victim service provider agencies and connects survivors with the assistance they need.
- The [Safe Youth Collaborative](#) provides resources and tools for specific ages and topics.

Health & Wellness Literacy Resources

High-quality health education instruction is age-appropriate, research-based, aligned with the recommended skills-based health education standards and led by trained health educators.

Iowa's recommended health education standards encompass Iowa's Health Literacy Standards (21st Century Skills). Health standards are based on building the skills and knowledge that promote health behaviors.

Neither the recommended Iowa Academic Standards for Health Education nor the Health Literacy Standards determine curriculum. Decisions about how to help students meet learning goals are at the local control of districts, schools, and teachers.

The health education review tools are an optional resource located on the [Health Education Instruction webpage](#) that schools may use in making instructional choices available for grade bands five through six, seven through eight and nine through twelve.

The following peer-reviewed articles provide background on effective health education instruction.

- Birch, D. A., Goekler, S., Auld, M. E., Lohrmann, D. K., & Lyde, A. (2019). [Quality assurance in teaching K-12 health education: Paving a New Path Forward](#). *Health Promotion Practice*, 20(6), 845–857. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839919868167>
- Szucs, L. E., Andrzejewski, J. D., Robin, L., Telljohann, S., Pitt Barnes, S., & Hunt, P. (2021). [The health education teacher instructional competency framework: A conceptual guide for quality instruction in school health](#). *The Journal of School Health*, 91(10), 774–787. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.13076>