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Parents Reject Explicit Sex Education, Poll Shows

WASHINGTON, DC – The Coalition for Adolescent Sexual Health on Feb. 13 released the results of a Zogby International poll showing that parents overwhelmingly reject explicit sex education but support abstinence education. For the first time, such a survey was taken using actual quotes from sex education curricula developed and endorsed by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), Planned Parenthood, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Parents were asked whether they approved, strongly approved, disapproved, or strongly disapproved of 29 different concepts and messages being taught in some K-12 sex education classes in U.S. public schools.

Four questions quoted teaching materials from the CDC's "Programs that Work." Question 25 asked parents to state their level of approval for children ages 9 to 15 to be taught the following: "There are many ways to be close. The list may include body massage, bathing together, masturbation, sensuous feeding, fantasizing, watching erotic movies, reading erotic books and magazines." Seventy-nine percent of the parents surveyed objected to this teaching.

Eighty-eight percent of parents objected to Question 26, which asked them to state their level of approval "for a child in high school (ages 14 to 18)" to be taught the following: "Grape jelly, maple syrup, and honey could be used as a lubricant on condoms." The same percentage objected to Question 28, which asked parents to state their level of approval for a child in middle school or high school

(See Survey, page 4)

A 'Ridge' of High Pressure

Nosy Surveys seek schools and funding

SOUTH DEERFIELD, MA – The Channing Bete company announced on Feb. 11 that Michele Ridge, wife of former Pennsylvania Governor and current Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge, will become a national spokesperson for Communities that Care (CTC). Claiming to foster "better, healthier communities," CTC features an intrusive 169-question youth survey that asks children about their sexual activity, drug and alcohol use, whether or not they have considered suicide, and other personal matters.

In a press release issued by Channing Bete, Mrs. Ridge stated that "CTC is a perfect platform for allowing communities to come together in an objective, scientific way, without finger pointing. It is truly a bipartisan, apolitical process that results in better, healthier communities that help children grow up with more hope, more opportunity, and better outcomes."

But who decides what is "healthy"? Many parents consider it *unhealthy* for schools to probe their children for personal and family information that they consider none of the community's business. In New Jersey, two lawsuits are pending against the Ridgewood School District for intrusive questionnaires given in 1999 and 2001. (See *Education Reporter*, Feb. 2003 and Jan. and Feb.



Former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge and wife Michele at his swearing-in ceremony as Homeland Security Chief at the White House in January. Mrs. Ridge is promoting the "Communities That Care" youth survey.

2002.) These surveys were given without parental consent, and the 1999 survey was administered using federal funds in violation of the federal Protection of Pupil Rights Act (PPRA). One of the surveys (the 156-question Search Institute survey) was given at the behest of the community for the purpose of developing programs to change students' behavior.

The CTC survey is being given to children in grades 6-12 in about 400 communities nationwide to measure "a comprehensive set of risk and protective factors that affect a community's adolescent population . . ." It created controversy recently in Fairfax, Virginia, when it was proposed for the area's 10th and 12th graders. Some parents and at least one member of the County Board of Supervisors objected especially to nine questions about teen sexual activity, including "Have you ever had oral sex?" and "The last time you had sexual intercourse, what one method did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy?" Fairfax County Supervisor Stuart Mendelsohn suggested that the survey be postponed until next year so that adjustments to the survey could be made, but his motion was defeated.

(See Ridge, page 2)

Returning Religious Freedom to the Classroom

U.S. Education Department issues guidelines on school prayer

WASHINGTON, DC – By the 15th of this month, local education agencies (LEAs) must certify in writing to their state education agencies (SEAs) that they are in compliance with the federal No Child Left Behind law in allowing constitutionally protected prayer in public elementary and secondary schools. Failure to do so could jeopardize schools' eligibility to receive federal funds. After March 15, 2003, each LEA must provide this certification to the SEA by October 1 of each subsequent year that the LEA participates in a federal Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) program.

The U.S. Department of Education issued "guidance" on this issue on Feb. 7. In a cover letter introducing the document, Education Secretary Rod Paige stated that "Public schools should not be hostile to the religious rights of their students and their families. At the same time, school officials may not compel students to participate in prayer or other activities."

Paige's letter noted that "students may read their Bibles or other scriptures, say grace before meals, and pray or study religious materials with fellow students during recess, the lunch hour, or other noninstructional time to the same extent that may engage in nonreligious activities."

(See Religious Freedom, page 2)

More Communities Dare to Drop DARE

After 20 years and hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer funds and private donations, the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program is grinding to a halt in a growing number of communities. DARE officials in Illinois are predicting that half the schools in the state currently offering the program will drop it by the end of this year. California communities including Long Beach and Huntington Beach have cut the program for the spring semester due to budget constraints.

Pivotal in the decision by many communities to resist DARE are studies over the past decade that consistently demonstrate DARE's ineffectiveness in deter-

ring drug use among young people. Recently, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) added to the list by announcing that it had reviewed "six long-term evaluations of the DARE elementary school curriculum." The GAO report states that "no significant differences in illicit drug use between students who received DARE in the 5th or 6th grade (the intervention group) and students who did not (the control group)" were found.

A standing criticism of DARE is that the program takes police officers off the streets and places them in the classroom, with dubious results. The *Chicago Tribune* reported (1-26-03) that the city of



Chicago Ridge "dropped DARE last year after 13 years, because there was no corresponding decrease in drug arrests in the community." Police Chief Tim Balderman told the *Tribune* that the city had in fact had "an increase in arrests, all DARE graduates."

"I can't tell you how many kids told me DARE introduced them to drugs," Balderman explained. "The problem with DARE, other than that it's a multimillion dollar conglomerate in the business of selling T-shirts, is that it takes the burden off parents to raise their kids."

But DARE is not likely to disappear altogether any time soon. The DARE organization began a partnership with the Uni-

versity of Akron, Ohio in 2001 to re-evaluate the program, and a new version of the program will be introduced in six cities next fall. The new DARE will be shortened from 17 weeks to 10, and will target older children instead of 5th- and 6th- graders.

David Nott, president of the Los Angeles-based think tank, the Reason Foundation, editorialized last month in the *Orange County Register* that DARE's "in-house assessment won't be complete until 2006 – meaning millions more in taxpayer money will flow into the program in the interim. Furthermore, while select students in six cities may get a new lesson from DARE, the vast majority of kids continue to receive the same old tired message – a message that has proven to be completely useless." 

EDUCATION BRIEFS

Studies show block scheduling lowers student achievement. Recent studies by Iowa State University and ACT (American College Test) found that students at schools using the 4 x 4 semester plans (four classes per semester) had markedly lower ACT scores in the first few years following implementation. Students at schools using the eight-block alternating day plans (eight classes throughout the year, with four classes on one day and four more classes on the following day) experienced slight declines. Schools using the traditional eight-period day showed little change in student achievement. The block scheduling fad typically divides the school day into 80-90 minute blocks of time.

Educational computer software sales have plummeted in recent years, while video game sales have skyrocketed. Sales of educational software, which rang up a half-billion dollars a year during the late 1980s, dipped to \$325 million in 2001. Video game sales shot up 43% to a record \$9.4 billion in 2001, although former educational software companies who have diversified raked in some of the loot. Industry observers estimate that only 350 educational titles will debut in 2003. Last year, over 1,200 video games for personal computers and televisions were produced, despite ongoing concerns about the violent and sexual content of many popular video games.

The school board in rural Polk County, Florida is drafting a new Zero Tolerance policy. Some board members are concerned that too many children are receiving one-year expulsions for carrying pocket knives to school, a traditionally common practice in an area where hunting, fishing and citrus farming are the rule. School board attorney Wes Bridges told the *Tampa Tribune* that too many children are being expelled, including kindergartners and 1st-graders "who never intended to harm anyone with the pocket knives they brought to class." The new policy is expected to give principals the flexibility to discipline students on a case-by-case basis.

(More Briefs on page 4)

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Religious Freedom (Continued from page 1)

The document points out that "this guidance has been jointly approved by the office of the General Counsel in the Department of Education and the Office of Legal Counsel in the Department of Justice as reflecting the current state of the law." The Education Department will make the guidelines available on its website (www.ed.gov).

Highlights of the document include:

- ◆ The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution both prevents the government from establishing religion and protects privately initiated religious expression and activities from government

Students may pray when not engaged in school activities or instruction . . .

interference and discrimination. The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that the First Amendment requires public school officials to be neutral in their treatment of religion, showing neither favoritism toward nor hostility against religious expression such as prayer.

- ◆ Students may pray when not engaged in school activities or instruction, subject to the same rules designed to prevent material disruption of the educational program that are applied to other privately initiated expressive activities.

- ◆ Students may organize prayer groups, religious clubs, and "see you at the pole" gatherings before school to the same extent that students are permitted to organize other non-curricular student activities groups.

- ◆ Students may express their beliefs about religion in homework, artwork, and

other written and oral assignments free from discrimination based on the religious content of their submissions. This work should be judged by ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance.

- ◆ Prayer or religious expression at graduation that is not attributable to the school may not be restricted because of its religious (or anti-religious) content.

The new guidelines will undoubtedly be welcomed by many parents and pro-family groups who have argued for years that schools unconstitutionally bar children from writing about religious figures, choosing Bible stories for reading projects, or mentioning God in graduation addresses.

Mat Staver, president and general counsel of the non-profit legal organization Liberty Counsel, predicts that the new guidelines "will be a blessing to students and teachers. The message is simple — school officials must stop discriminating against students and teachers who choose to pray or engage in religious expression."

In July 1995, the U.S. Education Department issued a "statement" on religious freedom in public schools containing similar language to that of the new guidelines. (See *Education Reporter*, December 1995.) This time, however, local and state education agencies are required to certify their compliance with the directive or face the loss of federal funds. ☛

Ridge (Continued from page 1)

Despite objections, the CTC survey will be given to Fairfax teens in April, although children who answer no to the first of the sex questions — "Have you ever had sexual intercourse?" — will now be instructed to skip the eight subsequent sex questions.

According to the *Washington Times* (2-18-03), the CTC survey "is part of a national grant-harvesting program" to obtain federal and foundation funds for state and local programs that address the problems uncovered by the survey. Many students, however, admit to falsifying answers to survey questions, making the findings doubtful at best. Phyllis Schlafly, president of Eagle



Many parents are reluctant to empower the nanny state.

Forum and a researcher of nosy questionnaires for 20 years, calls the surveys "a fraud." She told the *Washington Times* that "a lot of the kids think it's a big joke and give phony answers."

The Channing Bete website credits CTC survey results with impacting "positive youth development" and "promoting prevention" of risky behavior. It encourages communities to "build consensus" and "put aside personal and professional differences to address objectively identified community challenges." But does "putting aside personal differences" mean,

for example, that parents and citizens who believe in moral absolutes will be ostracized and overruled if they prefer abstinence education to more condom giveaways for students? Does it mean that parents who assert their right to direct the upbringing of their own children will face coercion from the "village"? Does it mean that the "village," i.e., government bureaucrats, pop psychologists, educators, and law enforcement officials, will be deemed more competent than parents to determine the social values our children are to live by?

Channing Bete states that the company's mission is "to strengthen individuals, families, and communities by reinforcing healthy behaviors and commitment to positive social values." Mrs. Ridge, who as Pennsylvania's First Lady oversaw the expansion of CTC to 128 sites in 58 counties in the state, opines that "What is so important about CTC is getting people to work together . . . It becomes imperative for states and local governments to have programming that is science-based and produces results."

But many taxpayers are reluctant to empower the nanny state by pouring still more tax dollars into community "prevention" programs that do not work, and parents question whether intrusive surveys are the appropriate tool for generating data to justify those programs. ☛

Book of the Month



Class Warfare: Besieged Schools, Bewildered Parents, Betrayed Kids and the Attack on Excellence by J. Martin Rochester, Encounter Books, 2002, \$26.95

University of Missouri Political Science Professor Martin Rochester writes with clarity and engaging personal insight about the many fronts in the education battle, including the reading wars, the math wars, and the struggle that underlies them all: the war between education progressives and traditionalists.

Rochester admits spending much of his adult life as a liberal, even into the 1990s and the Clinton presidency. "All the while, however," he writes, "I sensed that, as I was aging, I was becoming more alienated from the left."

The "progressive pedagogy" of the education establishment played a significant role in Rochester's eventual alienation, as well as his experience as a self-described "battle-scarred parent." He describes many a battle against the mediocrity, dumbed-down academics, and downright silliness in the schools his children attended, which are considered among the best in metropolitan St. Louis area where Rochester and his family live.

Class Warfare is replete with fascinating personal glimpses into the professor's life and experiences in the education system, both as a teacher and a parent. He describes, for example, how he once became part of a group of parents calling themselves "Parents Against Average Schools (PAAS)." Later, when several African-American parents began a support group using the same acronym, Rochester's group was labeled "racially insensitive."

In Chapter 4, Rochester takes on the flawed theory of "multiple intelligences," explaining how it "feeds nicely into the modern educationist's belief in 'mass excellence' and the modern parent's hope that his or her child is gifted or is at least a cut above the neighbor's kid." In the same chapter, he describes the "Play-Doh" episode in his son's 8th-grade class at Wydown Middle School. The children's progressive teacher urged them to "express their feelings" about a topic, using "any communication medium they wanted." Rochester's son, Sean, chose Play-Doh.

Class Warfare provides enough eyewitness testimony to keep the reader engaged, yet the book has a scholarly tone befitting a career academic. Overall, Rochester provides an unusual and discomfiting view of America's education crisis.

Visit Encounter Books website at [www. encounterbooks.com](http://www.encounterbooks.com).

FOCUS: Do Pre-K Center Care Programs Work?

Authors: Verne R. Bacharach, Ph.D., Appalachian State University; **Alfred A. Baumeister, Ph.D.,** Vanderbilt University; **Jaimily A. Stoecker, M.A., C.A.S.,** Caldwell County NC Public School District

There are various types of non-parental care arrangements for pre-kindergarten children. In the most popular type, center care, children are sent to a location where they are cared for in a group by a paid staff (Bacharach & Baumeister, 2003). We are going to refer to this type of care arrangement as pre-K center care. Psychologists and educators have argued that high quality pre-K center care can have a positive effect on the intellectual and behavioral development of children. These effects are thought to contribute to school readiness and subsequent academic success. We are going to examine the research literature to see if there is any compelling evidence based on science to support these claims.

A number of states have initiated, or are in the process of initiating, free pre-K center care programs for children from low-income families. For example, North Carolina has a program called Smart Start; Alabama is in the process of starting a program called Kid Stuff; and Georgia is currently operating a fully-funded statewide pre-K center care program for all four-year-olds. In the case of Smart Start (Dombro, 2002) and Kid Stuff (The Governor's Early Learning Commission Report, 2001), the states estimate that when fully implemented, these programs will cost in excess of \$300 million per year.

There are various ways to scientifically investigate the effects of pre-K center care on child development. One method involves the random assignment of children to groups. This type of research procedure is referred to as a randomized trial and is widely believed to be the most effective way to establish a causal link between center care and child development. Using this procedure, one group of children, the center care group, is selected for the center care program. The other group is a control group: a group that is not enrolled in the program.

The purpose of random assignment is to assure that the groups, on average, do not differ from one another before the research begins. If children in the center care group differ from children in the control group before the study begins, then subsequent differences that might be found cannot be attributed to the effects

of the intervention program. Random assignment does not always work as a procedure for equating groups, so it is important to examine the data from these studies to identify instances of randomization failure.

During the past 40 years there have been five relatively large-scale randomized trials conducted to investigate the relationship between pre-K center care and subsequent developmental outcomes in school-aged children. In each case, the pre-K center care was of the highest quality. We will examine each of these studies to see if they provide support for the claim that high quality pre-K center care contributes to the intellectual, academic, and behavioral development of children.

Abecedarian Project

The Abecedarian Project (Ramey & Campbell, 1984) investigated the effects of pre-K center care on the behavioral and intellectual development of low-income children. Approximately 100 children, most of whom were black, participated in this study. Children were enrolled in the pre-K center care program shortly after birth and remained in the program until kindergarten.

With respect to behavioral outcomes, the results showed that the center care children were more likely than control children to have behavior problems in primary school. In addition, the researchers followed the participants in the study through adolescence into early adulthood, and after examining a wide variety of crime measures, the authors of the Abecedarian study concluded that the rate of crime did not differ between the groups (Clarke & Campbell, 1998).

The authors of the Abecedarian Project report that center care improved the intellectual functioning of the center care children. This conclusion is questionable for several reasons. First, all children were given intelligence tests at six months of age before the children had extensive experience in the program. At six months, the center care children had significantly higher levels of functioning than the control-group children (Abecedarian and CARE Archive, 2002), a difference that cannot be attributed to the effects of the daycare program. This finding is important because it suggests that randomization failed and that the center care children had higher levels of intellectual functioning than the control children before the study started. Subsequent differences between the groups may simply be related to this initial difference, and not to participation in the daycare program.

Second, although the data suggest that center care children had higher levels of



Professor Bacharach

intelligence than the control-group children when the children were young, this difference disappeared by the time the participants reached 15 years of age. The extent of difference at 15 years was the same as the extent of the difference that existed at six months of age. (See Abecedarian and CARE Archive 2002 and Campbell, Pungello, Miller-Johnson et al., 2001.) Furthermore, whatever the effect of pre-K center care on the children's intellectual functioning might have been, the size of the effect was of no practical significance. By 21 years of age, the average IQ for both groups was in the mid-to upper-80s (Campbell et al., 2001). The average IQ for adults is 100.

Third, the published results of the Abecedarian Project are difficult to interpret because during the course of the study participants dropped out of the study; some were lost permanently while others returned (surfaced) for later assessment. The dropout rates (attrition

In Project CARE there was no evidence of a link between participation in the daycare program and children's intellectual development.

rates) and surfacing rates were not the same for both groups (Campbell, et al., 2001) and the authors of the published articles do not report data based solely on those participants who completed the entire battery of tests. Without data from the children who completed the entire battery of tests, it is impossible to tell what effect the loss of data from dropouts had on the results. Losing even a few participants from this study could have had important consequences for the study outcomes.

Published data from the Abecedarian Project also indicate that the center care children had more success in school than children in the control group. The center care children had higher scores on various measures of academic achievement and were less likely than control children to drop out of school (Campbell et al., 2001). However, it is unclear if the academic advantage associated with pre-K care was the result of the daycare program or was related to the fact that the center care children were on average, at birth, smarter than the control children.

The effectiveness of the Abecedarian model of center care on the intellectual development of children was further compromised by the results of subsequent studies. Project CARE, a sister study to the Abecedarian Project, and the Infant Health and Development Project, failed to find intervention effects on children's development. The daycare programs in both of these projects were modeled on the Abecedarian daycare program. Project

CARE and the Infant Health and Development Project

Project CARE (Wasik, Ramey, Bryant, & Sparling, 1990) is of special interest because it was, in most ways, a direct replication of the Abecedarian Project. The study was done at the same research center by the same researchers using the same population of children and the same daycare program. The findings of the two studies, however, were not the same. In Project CARE there was no evidence of a link between participation in the daycare program and children's intellectual development. One obvious difference between the studies probably accounted for this discrepancy. At six months of age, the control and center care children in Project CARE had the same levels of intellectual functioning. At six months of age, the center care children in the Abecedarian Project had higher IQs than the control children. In other words, children's level of intellectual functioning in kindergarten can be predicted from their level of intellectual functioning before any of them experience daycare.

The Infant Health and Development Project was a state-of-the-art, very large-scale (approximately 900 participants) study of the effects of center care on the intellectual development of low birth weight babies. The children in this study were enrolled in an Abecedarian type pre-kindergarten program for two years. The center care program had no long-term effect on the children's intellectual development or on their academic achievement in primary school. The authors of the Infant Health and Development Project (McCarton, Brooks-Gunn, et al., 1997) stated: "Although it was hypothesized that the effects of early intervention would be most evident [italics added] in the prevention of school failure, no differences were found in the percentage of children who repeated a grade or who were placed in special education."

Houston Preschool Project and the Perry Preschool Project

The two other randomized trial studies that have been reported are seriously flawed. In the Houston Preschool Project, the attrition rate was so severe that no scientifically valid conclusions are warranted (Johnson & Walker, 1987). The Perry Preschool Project (Berrueta-Clement, Schweinhart et al., 1984) is probably the most widely cited and best-known study investigating pre-K center care effects on child development. However, the scientific validity of the study has never been established because the results of the research have never been published in a peer-reviewed forum.

Peer review is an important component of any scientific endeavor. The review process gives independent scientists an opportunity to objectively evaluate the scientific merit of a study. For example, a peer-review would probably have identified one of the most obvious weaknesses (See Pre-K, page 4)

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of the study: The children in the Perry Preschool study were not assigned at random to the groups in the study (Spitz, 1993). Although there were other important methodological problems, the fact that the children were not assigned at random to the study groups compromises meaningful interpretation of the results.

Despite severe methodological problems, the results of the Perry Project have been widely cited as evidence for long-term positive effects of pre-K center care on the intellectual development of children. These "long-term" effects, however, did not last very long. By the time the children in the study were in the 2nd grade, the pre-K children's IQ advantage had vanished. By 14 years of age, the mean IQs for both groups were in the lower 80s (Lazar, Darlington, *et al.*, 1982), an outcome that is reminiscent of the results of the Abecedarian Project.

The authors of the Perry Project report dramatic effects of their program on the adult behavior of the study participants. Although there was no evidence that the pre-K program had an effect on the children's behavior in school, as adults, the intervention children were less likely than the control children to commit crimes (Schweinhart, Barnes, *et al.*, 1993). These results, however, are at odds with the results of the Abecedarian Project, in which there was no effect of pre-K center care on adult criminal behavior (Campbell *et al.*, 2001). Which set of results is to be believed? Despite problems with the Abecedarian Project, it was clearly — from a methodological perspective — the better study, in part because participants in the Abecedarian Project were assigned at random to both the center care and control groups.

Regardless of which set of results is more believable, it is obviously foolish, at best, for states to develop expensive pre-K programs in anticipation of some type of payoff 15 to 20 years down the road when there is no consistent scientific evidence for the efficacy of these programs.

Conclusion

Do pre-kindergarten center care programs work? Science tells us that pre-K center care, even the highest quality care, seems to have little or no effect on children's intellectual development or school performance, and that they might have negative behavioral consequences for young children. There is no convincing evidence to support the notion that they improve, or in any way influence, school readiness.

These programs do have a purpose: they are a source of free babysitting for low-income families. However, these programs are very expensive. State estimates

of the cost of fully implemented state operated pre-K programs run into the hundreds of millions of dollars per year. If states want to fund daycare for children from low-income families, the most cost-effective and family-friendly method would be to create voucher programs for this purpose.

Do No Harm: An Editorial Comment

Do pre-K center care programs hurt children? Consider this: There are limited funds for programs that help young children. If the funds are squandered on ineffective programs, they will not be available for programs that work. Pre-kindergarten care probably does not hurt children who are in the care programs, but the programs are a drain on state funds that could be used to support child development and education programs that do help children. States that fund these programs are acting irresponsibly. They are diverting funds from programs that can improve the lives of children to programs that seem to have as their primary purpose, the service of special interests groups.

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Briefs (Continued from page 2)

An honors English class at Red Mountain High School in Mesa, AZ, agreed to make an offensive novel optional. *Grendel*, by John Gardner, is a modern version of the 7th century English poem, "Beowulf." Student Hilaree Bowers found that it "uses the F-word several times and provides graphic detail about body parts."

Miss Bowers said reading the book made her "feel violated." She and several like-minded classmates had their parents write letters to school administrators and contact the honors English teachers about the book. Hilaree reports that "fortunately, the teachers heeded the negative responses they received and decided to make *Grendel* optional for their future classes."

Survey (Continued from page 1)

(ages 12-15) to be taught: "Use condoms as a method of foreplay. Use different colors and types and textures. Think up a sexual fantasy using condoms. Tell your partner how using a condom can make a man last longer. Hide a condom on your body and ask your partner to find it. Plan a special day when you can experiment."

According to the survey, more than 75% of parents overall disapprove of condom-based sex education, while more than 61% disapprove of comprehensive sex education in general.

Conversely, more than 76% of parents approve or strongly approve of character-based abstinence education. Sizeable majorities strongly approve of the following message for teens: "When adolescents abstain from premarital sex, they don't need to worry about sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs), pregnancy, having a baby, or getting an abortion." Sixty-nine percent of parents approve of children ages 9-12 being taught the following: "Sexual or physical intimacy should occur between two people involved in a lifelong, mutually faithful, marriage commitment."

Other survey findings show that 46% of parents either disapprove or strongly disapprove of the idea that teens could obtain contraception without permission from a parent, compared to 39% who approve or strongly approve of the concept. However, when that question is personalized, the figure rises to 70% of parents who either strongly disapprove or disapprove of their own children being able to obtain contraception without their knowledge or consent.

By a more than four-to-one margin, parents also disapprove of teaching 9-12-year olds that "Homosexual love relationships can be as satisfying as heterosexual relationships" (from the SIECUS Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education).

Regarding younger children, 73% of those surveyed approve or strongly approve of teaching 5-8 year-olds that "desires and urges can be controlled by the mind." But parents are much less likely to approve of teaching that "every child should understand the dignity of his or her sexuality," with 49% supporting this

statement.

After the survey results were released, the Coalition for Adolescent Sexual Health sent a letter to members of Congress, urging them to take parents' wishes into consideration during deliberations over current welfare reform legislation that includes funding for abstinence education. "The President has stated that federal funding should support an unambiguous message to teens that sex is best reserved for marriage," the Coalition wrote. "This message is contained in character-based abstinence education programs which have been recommended for \$135 million in federal funding in the president's budget requests for Fiscal Years 2003 and 2004."



The Coalition for Adolescent Health is a partnership of pro-family groups including Focus on the Family, Eagle Forum, Christian Coalition of America, the Traditional Values Coalition, and the National Abstinence Clearinghouse. The group's letter warned that, "a number of organizations are seeking to eliminate federal support for character-based abstinence education." While these organizations cite "opinion polls that use carefully crafted questions to demonstrate public support for condom promotion," the Zogby data "strongly suggest that parents want their children to receive a strong message on abstinence."

Perhaps in anticipation of attacks due to the survey's subject matter and results, Zogby International President and CEO, John Zogby, noted in a letter to the Coalition for Adolescent Sexual Health that the survey questions "reflect to some degree what is going on in some sex education classes and point to a need to bring parents into the conversation, course planning, and family discussion."

"In short," he wrote, "we feel the questions were fair. The Coalition has handled the results honestly and we at Zogby International are certainly prepared to publicly defend the entire process."

Zogby surveyed 1,245 parents of children in grades K-12, during January 2003. The parents were chosen at random, and the margin of error is plus or minus 2.8%. Complete survey results can be found at www.whatparentsthink.com.

