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Studies from all sectors of society are pointing to facts which many have known for a long time, that the family is the strength and stabilizing factor of our culture; therefore, the family must be strengthened, reinforced, and its value to society promoted.

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Foreword

In a recent article, Richard John Neuhaus of the Rockford Institute really caught my eye with this assertion: "a neo-conservative is a liberal who has a daughter in high school."

Though delivered somewhat tongue-in-cheek, Neuhaus' point (which makes indirect reference to the growing problems of teen sexual activity and pregnancy) has a lot of validity.

After all, it is not parents leading the charge for school-based health clinics, the latest proposed remedy for teen pregnancy. Instead, these clinics are being pushed by Planned Parenthood and other self-appointed guardians of teen "sexual freedom" who have consistently resisted efforts to require parental consent or notification for adolescent abortions and birth control counseling.

This is disheartening. Aside from the fact that previous contraceptive distribution programs have not worked, the imposition of these programs has raised serious questions about who is ultimately responsible for the rearing of children? Is it parents? Planned Parenthood? The school system? The federal government?

Barrett Mosbacker's excellent analysis, *Teen Pregnancy and School-Based Health Clinics,* exposes many of the dangers of allowing various social institutions to undermine the role of parents in raising children. It correctly suggests that our collective strategy for combatting teen pregnancy and premarital sexual behavior should be to help parents talk with their teens about sex and to support parents by developing programs for teenagers that reinforce the virtues of refraining from premature sexual activity.

As syndicated columnist William Raspberry noted recently:

> *Those charged with the education and development of our children have a responsibility not to abdicate fundamental values, even when they are widely ignored. That "everybody is doing it" is in the first place, not true and, in the second, no justification for abandoning our duty to say to the young people under our charge: "You shouldn't."*

I am pleased that there are now several alternative sex education curricula (such as those developed by Teen Aid in Spokane, Washington and Sex Respect in Golf, Illinois) which emphasize the value of adolescent abstinence. I just wish there were more programs in this area.

Accordingly, I hope that this report spurs an interest in developing more positive alternatives to current contraception distribution programs — alternatives that reassert parents' preeminent responsibility for helping their children learn about sex.

Gerald P. Regier
President
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