

May 3, 2007

## **Zogby International Poll: Parental Support for Abstinence Education**

### **NAEA Executive Summary of Key Findings**

#### **Summary:**

This poll, commissioned by NAEA, was conducted through a telephone survey of parents of children age 10-16 by Zogby International. The purpose of the poll was to determine the level of support for abstinence education among parents. The target sample was 1,002 interviews with parents from across the United States, representing a variety of demographics. Samples were randomly drawn from telephone CDs of national listed sample. Zogby International surveys employ sampling strategies in which selection probabilities are proportional to population size within area codes and exchanges within those area codes. The margin of error is +/- 3.2 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

- **The overwhelming majority of parents want their teens to be abstinent until they are married.**
  - 9 out of 10 parents agree that being sexually abstinent is best for their child's health and future, with 8 in 10 strongly agreeing.
  - 8 out of 10 parents think it's important for their child to wait until they're married to have sex, with 6 in 10 strongly agreeing.
- **Parents prefer abstinence education over comprehensive sex education by a 2 to 1 margin.**
  - Once they understand what abstinence education actually teaches, 6 out of 10 parents would rather their child receive abstinence education vs. comprehensive sex education. Only 3 out of 10 prefer comprehensive.
- **At least 8 in 10 parents support the overall approach of abstinence education.**
  - 8 out of 10 parents think sex education in public schools should place more emphasis on promoting abstinence vs. contraceptive use.
  - 9 out of 10 of parents think that given the high number of STDs among teens, it is important for schools to emphasize abstaining from sex.
- **At least 8 in 10 parents support the core teaching components of abstinence education:**
  - Developing healthy relationships to improve their chances for a healthy future marriage.
  - The benefits of renewed abstinence to sexually experienced students.
  - Increasing self-worth and self-control as methods for reducing premarital sexual activity.
  - How an unplanned pregnancy and/or STD can negatively affect a teen's future physically, financially, and emotionally.

- **Most parents reject comprehensive sex education, which focuses on promoting and demonstrating contraceptive use.**
  - 2 out of 3 parents think that the importance of the “wait to have sex” message ends up being lost when programs demonstrate and encourage the use of contraception.
  - Over half of parents think that promoting and demonstrating condom usage encourages sexual activity.
  - 8 out of 10 parents think teens will not use a condom every single time.
  - 2 out of 3 parents believe that promoting alternatives to intercourse (such as showering together and mutual masturbation, which are presented in some comprehensive programs) encourages sexual activity.
- **9 out of 10 parents want teens to be taught about contraception in a manner that is consistent with the approach of abstinence education.**
  - 9 out of 10 parents think teens should be taught how often condoms fail to prevent pregnancy based upon typical use.
  - Over 9 out of 10 parents think that teens should be taught the limitations of condoms in preventing specific STDs.
- **Parents want more funding given to abstinence education than to comprehensive sex education by a 3 to 1 margin.**
  - 6 out of 10 parents think more government funding should be given to abstinence education vs. comprehensive sex education. Only 2 out of 10 want more funding for comprehensive sex education.