

Family Education Trust

(Family and Youth Concern)

A Company Limited by Guarantee No. 3503533; Registered Charity No. 1070500

Jubilee House, 19-21 High Street, Whitton, Twickenham TW2 7LB

tel: 020 8894 2525 fax: 020 8894 3535

e-mail: info@familyeducation.plus.com web-site: www.famyouth.org.uk

Statutory sex education from four would seriously undermine the role of parents, says national family charity

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Calls to introduce statutory sex education lessons from the age of four are misguided and represent an attempt to seriously undermine the role of parents, according to the Family Education Trust.

The Trust's director, Norman Wells, noted:

"There is no evidence at all to suggest that starting sex education at the age of four is going to reduce sexually transmitted infection and abortion rates among teenagers. We have had 30 years of sex education in secondary schools and it has never been more easy for teenagers to get hold of contraception without their parents knowing, yet both abortion rates and sexually transmitted infection rates have continued to rise. It's quite extraordinary that the fpa and Brook should be calling on the government to impose something on every child in every school that has no proven benefit whatsoever.

"What this is really all about is the sex education establishment trying to force schools to do something many parents - and many teachers - are uncomfortable with. Schools already have to have a sex education policy, but that policy must be developed in close consultation with parents, and schools must be sensitive to the wishes of parents. But the fpa want to take parents out of the equation and remove discretion from schools."

The government has previously acknowledged its limitations in achieving a reduction in high rates of teenage pregnancy and stressed the unique and vital contribution that parents can make, but now the fpa and Brook are proposing to effectively throw parents overboard by excluding them from discussions about sex education provision in their children's schools.

Trustees: Arthur Cornell MEd F.Coll.P (Chairman); Betty, Lady Grantchester; Dr John Guly MB BS DMJ;
Eric Hester BA (Vice Chairman); Dr Joseph Lim BPharm, MRPharmS, PhD; Simon J Ling MA FCA (Hon Treasurer);
Mrs Valerie Riches (Founder President); Dr Trevor Stammers BSc FRCGP; Robert Whelan MA Director: Norman Wells FRSA

Sponsors: Professor John Bonnar MA MD FRCOG; The Viscountess Brentford OBE; Peter Dawson OBE BSc FRSA;
The Baroness Elles; Michael McKenzie CB QC; The Duke of Montrose; The Baroness O'Cathain OBE; Professor Dennis O'Keeffe

Norman Wells commented:

"Agencies such as the fpa and Brook have done a tremendous amount of damage by their failure to set sexual intimacy in a clear moral context. They are wedded to the view that children under the age of 16 are autonomous individuals who have a right to engage in sexual activity, and through their emphasis on so-called 'safe sex', they have reinforced the idea that having a series of sexual partners is the norm.

"But sexual intimacy was never meant to be just about the joining of two bodies, but the joining of two lives. In the context of a faithful, lifelong marriage, it expresses the total self-giving of a husband and wife to each other. Yet the approach favoured by fpa and Brook has no room for encouraging young people to save sex for marriage. The best it can offer is damage limitation in anticipation of a series of broken relationships and broken hearts.

"Divorcing sex from marriage has not only led to high teenage conception rates and the sexual health crisis in the UK, but it also has a major part to play in family breakdown and all the misery that flows from it. What children and young people really need is to learn about love, stability, faithfulness and permanence, and all the qualities required to build a lifelong marriage - and to learn about the benefits of keeping love, marriage and sex together, and in that order."

ENDS

Family Education Trust is an educational charity committed to promoting stable family life and the welfare of children and young people.

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