

## Poll Shows Majority of Americans Say Abstinence Effective, Want Parents Involved

by Steven Ertelt

*LifeNews.com Editor*

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**Washington, DC (LifeNews.com)** -- A new Rasmussen poll shows a majority of Americans believe abstinence education programs are effective and a commanding majority would rather have parents than schools teaching sex education. The survey follows on [a new study](#) showing abstinence more effective than sex education.

According to the Rasmussen poll, released yesterday, 50 percent of American adults believe abstinence-only education programs are at least somewhat effective in preventing teen pregnancy. Some 15 percent say they are very effective.

Just 42% of Americans disagree and a smaller 13 percent take the strongest position saying they are not at all effective.

Overall, 68% of adults nationwide approve of health education classes teaching children about sex or abstinence while only 21 percent of Americans disapprove of teaching kids abstinence and 11 percent remain undecided.

"Adults with children are slightly less supportive than those without children of sex education classes in school. Most adults with children at home see abstinence education as effective, while those without children are evenly divided on the issue," the polling firm pointed out.

Fifty-one percent of men see abstinence-only programs as being effective in preventing pregnancy in teens, compared to 48% of women -- making them about evenly divided.

Black Americans are much more likely than white Americans to support abstinence education, the polling firm said.

The poll also found 80% of Americans say it is the responsibility of parents to teach their children about sex. Only 11% say schools should explain sex to children. Rasmussen noted the results are identical to those found last year and in October 2007.

Rasmussen also found that the "vast majority of American adults (76%) believe elements of pop culture such as movies and television shows encourage sexual activity among young people. Only 12% disagree with that assessment, and another 12% are not sure."

The landmark study released last week found that middle school students who attended abstinence-only classes were less likely to engage in sexual behavior than those who attended classes that combined teaching abstinence and contraception methods.

Students participating in an eight-hour abstinence program showed a one-third decrease in their rates of sexual activity compared to non-participants. Of particular note, students were significantly less likely to initiate sex with the abstinence-centered approach than any other sex education strategy.

Conservative writer Robert Rector also commented on the new report at National Review.

While abstinence helped students, he wrote: "By contrast, safe sex (promoting only contraceptive use) and comprehensive sex ed (teaching both abstinence and contraceptive use) programs didn't affect youth behavior at all. Students in these programs showed no reduction in sexual activity and no increase in contraceptive use, in either the short or long term."