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As more women join, or rejoin, the workforce the family structure has been under a great deal of stress. The women, who used to perform the job of indoctrinating the children in the family's values and beliefs, have been taken out of the picture for large amounts of time. To fill this void, schools have taken over the job of teaching family values. In many cases, almost all education about drugs and the values of use/non-use are left up to the schools because the parents just don't have the time to connect with their children about this important topic. So I believe it is important for the high school to provide drug education to its student body.

The typical high school health class doesn't spend most of its time on drug facts or on teaching the values of staying away from drug use. The value message that many families are expecting the school's health program to teach is watered down. From a student's perspective, the schools seem to be mixing the messages about drug facts, drug effects and reasons a person might use drugs. The classes themselves are boring and repetitive with regard to the clinical affects of drugs. Schools seem, more and more, to be teaching the belief that not only will drugs be used by high school students but that the reasons for drug use are more important than the fact of the use or how to prevent use at all. The classes spend more time on teaching a student how to recognize alcohol poisoning than why teens should value not using alcohol. More time explaining the health effects of tobacco use, than on how to prevent students from getting and using the tobacco to begin with.

At a time in our lives when peer pressure becomes critical to setting patterns of use, and abuse, of all sorts of drugs in us, we as teens are being indoctrinated with the values of the school which seems to be, "What happens after I use the drug?" as opposed to, "Don't use drugs!" Turning the focus of our instruction to preventing drug use by teens seems the obvious solution. It would also be good if we could harness all that peer pressure for constructive good in reinforcing the idea that drug and alcohol use are bad as opposed to accepting that because of peer pressure new addicts will be added to the teen ranks as they are exposed by their friends to alcohol and drug use. The idea that schools perform intervention with abusers of drugs and alcohol goes back to the idea that parents have less meaningful interactions with their students than the school administration does. The schools, though, shouldn't be doing interventions. They are trained educators. That's what they specialize in. To ask them to do more detract from the important jobs they are already being asked to complete. If a school identifies an issues with a member of their student body, that should be enough. Policies should be enacted that mandate parental and professional involvement OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL. Let the student get the help that they need, but don't force more onto the plates of already burdened administrators.

The job of raising children remains the parent's responsibility. That does not change just because they spend less time with their children as a result of our social structure and economic constraints. The job of our schools is to educate us about the risks. They should give us solutions for preventing the problem not just tools for recognizing symptoms after the problem behavior are established.