

Key Facts

Capturing Children's Minds

From Focus on the Family's Issue Analyst Team

What better way to capture a child's imagination than with a heart-warming story about cute, fuzzy little animals?

That's the latest tactic homosexual-advocacy groups are using in their efforts to reach the youngest minds in our public school system.

Whether it's stories about penguins, guinea pigs or even elephants, they've figured out how to use fun anecdotes about animals to familiarize children as young as preschool with the idea of homosexuality and gay "marriage."

After all, they know if they can capture the hearts and minds of the young, they can permanently change the culture.

Take, for instance, what's happening to parents in Alameda, Calif. Despite the fact that the state's highest court upheld Prop. 8 — a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman — the school board brazenly mandated a pro-gay curriculum for elementary kids. It told parents they cannot opt their kids out of this teaching — even if it contradicts their most deeply held religious convictions. Or even if they happen to think their kids are too young to psychologically handle sexual topics.

The curriculum defines family as "a group of people living together and functioning as a single household." First-graders are introduced to this concept through a storybook called "Who's in a Family?" featuring images of same-sex couples interspersed with pictures of animals, including an all-male elephant herd depicted as another type of family. In the second grade, the kids will listen to "And Tango Makes Three," a story about two male penguins who supposedly fall in love and hatch a baby chick.

But let's think carefully about this. Can we really afford to teach the next generation that there is nothing distinctive or particularly beneficial about having a mother and a father? That a family is nothing more than a group of individuals — no more unique than a herd of elephants in the jungle?

Haven't we already reaped enough of the consequences of cheapening the value of the traditional family and of man-woman marriage in this society?

But the latest news is that we've moved beyond penguins to guinea pigs: There's a new book cropping up in elementary classrooms called "Uncle Bobby's Wedding." For kids as young as 4, the book shows two male guinea pigs wearing bow ties, celebrating their "wedding."

And if you assume this is just a problem in California, think again. The nation's largest homosexual-advocacy group, the Human Rights Campaign, is piloting a pro-gay curriculum, "Welcoming Schools," in several elementary classrooms across the land. It radically redefines the meaning of marriage and family.

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The Obama administration has just appointed one of the nation's most radical gay activists — [Kevin Jennings](#), founder of GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network — to a senior staff position in the U.S. Department of Education. So expect this sort of thing to be coming soon to a school near you.

So what can we do about it? It's much easier to be proactive and protect your local schools than it is to get something out once it's inside the system. So the first thing we can do is learn lessons from recent events in Alameda and elsewhere in the nation about what red flags to look for:

Lesson 1: Watch out for school programs with innocent-sounding titles like “family diversity,” “safe schools” or “tolerance.” Many of these programs contain homosexuality components. By categorizing pro-gay teaching within a subject like “family diversity” or “social justice,” school officials often try to skirt parental control. They argue that since this teaching is categorized as a social issue — and not labeled as sex education — they no longer have to give parents prior notice and/or the ability to exempt their children from the class. You have the right to ask to see lesson plans. And if you find there's a problem, don't be afraid to mobilize other parents to take action.

Lesson 2: Beware of so-called anti-discrimination or anti-bullying laws that spell out special categories like “sexual orientation” or “gender identity.” In Alameda, the school board used such provisions to justify an end-run around the state's marriage laws. Despite what gay activists claim, your school doesn't have to add these sexualized categories. It's possible to implement a strong anti-bullying policy that prohibits any harassment against any child for any reason, without adding special categories that politicize and sexualize the school environment.

Lesson 3: Make your voice heard! As a parent and/or taxpaying community citizen, you have more of a vested interest in what happens in your local public schools than special-interest groups do. Don't be afraid to speak up. Focus on the Family has made it easy for you to do so through this Web site.

It's filled with information from national legal experts, examples of pro-gay lesson plans that cross the line and fact-based counterpoints to the one-sided messages gay-advocacy groups frequently give public school officials. Much of this is compiled into a professional packet that you can e-mail to your school officials from the [“Take Action”](#) section of this site.

An estimated 90 percent of school-age children are in public schools. If we care about the future of this country, we can't afford to turn a blind eye to what's happening in those schools. So let's speak up — while there's still time to do something about it.