NEWS RELEASE

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ANSWER RELEASES TIPS FOR DISCUSSING TEEN PREGNANCY
AFTER REPUBLICAN VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE’S
ANNOUNCEMENT OF DAUGHTER’S PREGNANCY

Answer, a national organization dedicated to providing and promoting comprehensive sexuality education, has released suggestions for educators when discussing sexuality and teen pregnancy issues with adolescents and teens.

The tips come on the heels of the announcement made by Republican Vice Presidential nominee, Sarah Palin, that her 17-year-old daughter is pregnant, and the response her daughter has received from conservatives and evangelical leaders.

“Answer believes that it is healthiest for young people to wait to be sexual with another person until they are older,” says Answer director Dr. Elizabeth Schroeder. “The reality is, however, that while many young people do choose to wait, many do not – and many others are never even given the choice. For this reason, young people must have access to accurate, honest, age-appropriate information about sexuality that includes the skills and support needed for maintaining a decision to remain abstinent.”

Dr. Schroeder encourages educators and parents to use Palin’s announcement as an opportunity to talk about sexuality with young people – especially, talking about the decision to wait to have sex, and about what one can do if one does not wait.

To support educators in talking about sexuality, Answer has produced a set of suggestions in response to questions that, based on the organization’s extensive experience working with teens, young people are likely to ask. Among the guidelines offered to educators is sample language for answering, “If a girl gets pregnant as a teen, and she and her baby’s father decide to get married anyway – isn’t it okay then?” and “When IS the right age to start having sex?”

“Adults have a duty to ensure that young people receive life-enhancing, often life-saving, information about sexual health,” Dr. Schroeder says. “Answer is proud to be able to help educators play such an important role in the lives of young people by providing these talking points and other resources that teach young people about sexuality comfortably, accurately, and effectively.”

The tips for discussing teen pregnancy, along with resources for educators and parents, can be accessed, free of charge, on the Answer Web site at http://answer.rutgers.edu.

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Answer, part of the Center for Applied Psychology at Rutgers University, is a national organization dedicated to providing and promoting comprehensive sexuality education to young people and the adults who teach them. Its ongoing initiatives include the national Teen-to-Teen Sexuality Education Project, which provides sexual health resources written by teens, for teens, through the Sex, Etc. national magazine and Web site, Sexetc.org; and the Sexuality Education Training Initiative, which provides training, resources and technical assistance to more than 2,700 educators and other professionals per year. To learn more about Answer, log on to http://answer.rutgers.edu.