



**POSITION STATEMENT:**

**EZZO CURRICULUM**

Received from  
Focus on the Family  
August 20, 1999

---

*In response to your inquiry and others like it our staff has conducted an extensive evaluation of Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo's materials on parenting. What follows is a brief summary of their findings and recommendations.*

We are aware that many parents have implemented the Ezzos' materials in their homes with great success. We have heard positive testimony from a number of sources, including members of our own staff, about the many ways in which God has used Growing Families International (GFI) to help young families achieve greater harmony and stability. Dr. Dobson has no reason to doubt that this is true; he is, in fact, pleased to know that so many families have found the Ezzos' materials helpful.

On the other hand, we do have some concerns and reservations about the Ezzos' work, including the updated editions of Preparation for Parenting and Growing Kids God's Way. First, it seems to us that their philosophy of childrearing is far too rigid. The very title of the program, Growing Kids God's Way, has an unnecessarily exclusivistic sound about it, as if there were only one "correct" and godly way to raise children and that all other methods were "unbiblical." In contrast to this, Dr. Dobson believes that there are many different approaches to raising children which are both healthy and consistent with the teaching of Scripture.

Speaking of Scripture, the Ezzo's use of biblical texts is, in our view, a second cause for serious concern. They have, for example, cited Matthew 27:46 — ". . . My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" -- in support of their teaching that mothers should refuse to attend to crying infants who have already been fed, changed, and had their basic needs met. "Praise God," writes Mr. Gary Ezzo in Preparation for Parenting, "that the Father did not intervene when His son cried out on the cross." We see no way to make such an application of this verse without completely disregarding its original context and purpose.

Also, we are aware that the authors' proposals regarding controlled feeding schedules for infants are highly controversial. Some critics have suggested that they might possibly result in child abuse if applied legalistically, inflexibly, and without regard for circumstance and the special needs of individual children. In fact, our ministry has received numerous letters from parents, pastors, midwives, physicians, and lactation professionals regarding cases of failure-to-thrive in infants subjected to the Ezzos' program. We don't believe their experience should be ignored.

For these reasons we have chosen not to recommend the Ezzos' material to Focus on the Family's constituents. In the final analysis, we would suggest that, if a parent decides to use the GFI curriculum, its principles should be implemented only in conjunction with generous measures of common sense, intuition, and natural parental affection.