

To the Editor:

In his article “All in the Family” (Oct. 3), John Leo grossly misrepresents my findings on the sons of single mothers while ignoring a wealth of evidence that socioeconomic status is by far the greatest predictor of child welfare, not the number or gender of parents. Still, we persist in seeing single mothers as insufficient parents, and we blame them for society’s ills. That many struggle to make ends meet says nothing about their parenting skills and a great deal about our country’s economic and social policies. That many more have insufficient health care and day care says nothing about women’s ability to raise healthy children on their own and volumes about America’s priorities for our children’s welfare.

In fact, a growing body of research shows that educated women raising children without a man in the house—when they have enough income and social support—can and do nurture emotionally healthy, independent, caring children. I have never suggested that boys can raise themselves. They need caring, supportive parents who give them time and attention, and they need healthy, supportive communities, whether their parents are married or not. My research shows that boys raised by women do have an innate ability to become men. They find essential role models and mentors in their families and communities—often with their mothers’ help—and develop a strong and resilient sense of their own masculinity.

This is not conventional wisdom. These are the facts.

Peggy Drexler, Ph.D.

Author of *Raising Boys Without Men* (Rodale, 2005), assistant professor of psychology in psychiatry at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University and a former gender scholar at Stanford University.