

# The Post-Standard

Syracuse, New York

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## BETTER WAYS TO HELP CHILDREN WITH PROBLEMS

To the Editor:

I read your article about the new mental health screening that is due to take place for 5th and 9th grade students.

As your reporter pointed out, the social services clinics are overburdened already, and the whole idea of asking children this age about suicidal thoughts seems to produce more false positives than is acceptable, according to Dr. David Schaffer, head of Columbia University's TeenScreen program.

Seems like mentoring or after-school activities might do more to help kids who are having problems growing up (so what else is new?) than asking them a bunch of questions that would make them think they are not OK. Could be a lot cheaper for the community in the long run.

Jean LeFebvre  
Austin, Texas