



Doing Family Right

“Naked Pictures”

*Helping Children Face the Inevitable and
Premature Exposure to Sexual Nudity Online*

By Dr. Dave Currie

I am concerned about our little ones. I'm talking about our 4-7 year old children getting online exposure to explicit sexual images they were never designed to see. *Covenant Eyes*, the Christian leader in Internet protection software, shows in its research that the average age of a little boy coming in contact with pornography is 9½ years old. Take that in for a minute - - - **9½ years old** – that's 4th grade. If that's the AVERAGE...then, many kids are seeing nudity much earlier. And that's what's scaring me.

The truth is, I can understand how it's happening.

In our work helping parents prepare their kids for online battle with Doing Family Right, we have already had two parents report to us that they had found their boys – both age 7½ - watching pornography. One little guy was getting up in the middle of the night to watch the nudity when his parents were asleep. True. Shocking. Heartbreaking.

I know what you are thinking... “*Where are the PARENTS?!?!? How could they let this happen?*” Parents will defend their child's high use of digital technology, saying “Oh, they are just playing a game” or “they are just entertaining themselves for a minute.” Fair enough but I am going to try to explain how I think the likelihood of children running into “**Naked Pictures**” is not only possible, but I fear, going to be a more common occurrence in the future. And I want to help ALL parents. Stay with me.

As a family educator, it's a personal hobby of mine to watch parents and their kids interact about mobile devices. You see it too, I'm sure. Even little ones, as young as age 3-5, are playing on their parent's iPhones, smart phones, notebooks or iPads fully absorbed in the digital distraction. I watch kids with their parent's devices in malls, at church, at restaurants, in grocery stores and more. I have witnessed fights, coaxing, squabbles, ultimatums, tantrums, crying, arguments, bribing, fits, threats, hitting and a lot of other interesting parent-child interchanges all in the name of keeping the kids busy – *entertaining themselves* – so their parents can get their stuff done.

INCREASED CHILDHOOD EXPOSURE TO ONLINE PORN AHEAD

I really don't want to be seen as a fatalist – if you know me, I'm the opposite. But the truth is, I don't usually hesitate to get in people's faces when needed. By now, I am confident that my straight talk is essential. I have seen enough of this online device battle up close and in person (15 years now) to make a pretty solid analysis of what's currently happening and where it will likely lead us in the future with our families. Consider these statements about our digital culture within the family. They make sense to me. Follow my progression of thought:

- More frequent use of electronic devices by the child at younger ages (2-4 years).

- Children soon master the navigation of the device often better than most parents.
- Children experience minimal supervision by parents who want free time for other tasks.
- Increased use by the child creates a growing entitlement for greater digital access.
- Consistent daily use by the child creates deepening roots toward technological addiction.
- Huge and exhausting battles ensue over any attempt by the parent to limit the child's use.
- Under stress, parents cave in more to a child's demand for increased device access and time.
- Kids will get even greater digital device time at younger ages without the necessary scrutiny.
- When alone, kids are kids and will explore going beyond what they are "allowed" to see.
- Parents are unaware that porn producers seek access to kids in devious ways to trap them.
- The child makes an accidental discovery of "Naked Pictures" – seriously, an innocent click.
- Or the child may be shown "nudity" by an older sibling, neighbour kid or schoolmate.
- Their innate curiosity to sexual content kicks in and they are provocatively mesmerized.
- They don't talk about it because they sense this isn't something parents would approve.
- Yet, the premature sexual exposure has already robbed them of innocence.
- Unchecked, children remember how they got to the '*naked pictures*' and search again.
- Parents don't even know it's going on. Everything is good in their family.
- Unaddressed, the age of exposure to "naked pictures" will get younger and younger.

Let me extend my case further. Within my work as a therapist and the director of the Doing Family Right Care Centre, I have counseled 45-50 sexual addicts in the last 2 years. Nearly 100% of them had their initial exposure and draw into porn before 13, usually ages 10-12. Most of them I am working with now as they battle a porn compulsion got addicted in the pre-teen years WITHOUT access to the Internet. You hear that? No Internet available and they were regular users by ages 10-12. What are the implications now with complete access to the Internet everywhere?

So, with the universal push of sexually explicit material online and off, the unlimited access to hundreds of thousands of porn websites and the absence of Internet boundaries or content control – to me it's inevitable - the age of exposure and possible addiction to porn will in all likelihood continue to drop.

FAIR ASSUMPTIONS I SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE

Before I step into a really good solution for addressing the problem of children running into "*naked pictures*" online, I need to declare two critical assumptions I am making:

1. I am going to assume that as a caring parent or grandparent you have installed protection software on all the digital devices in your home already preventing your little ones from getting to sexually explicit material accidentally. You do, right? (If not look for more help on our website).

2. I am also going to assume that as a caring parent or grandparent you have a consistent way of monitoring what your children see online, tracking the number of hours of daily screen time and limiting their internet and device access when they are not under your supervision. You do, right? (If not look for more help on our website).

TRY THIS “NAKED PICTURE” STRATEGY IN YOUR HOME

It is my desire to guide you as you help your little ones (ages 4-7) better face the inevitable and premature exposure to sexual nudity online. The goal is to prepare them for the eventual first experience with ‘*naked pictures*’ before it occurs. Further, in so doing, it is hoped that you, as parents, will be the first to hear about this incident. We want them to tell you right away and not hold it a secret and possibly get drawn to porn more at a young age.

Here’s the Detailed Strategy of What Your Should Explain to Young Children:

1. Explain in your words, “Our values and rules as a family may be different than other families. This it is quite normal and okay. God wants us as your parents to guide you through life and to what He says is right and good.”
2. Review briefly any earlier coaching you have given them about sexual topics like where babies come from (God puts them in mommy’s tummy) or the important talk about ‘good touch’ and ‘bad touch’ of private parts (Only mom and dad should touch you or wash you). Share that this is another important discussion like these others.
3. Point out in your words, “As people get older, we keep our private parts covered. We cover ourselves with clothes. You are doing that already. That’s the way God wants us to respect the special beauty of the differences between boys and girls.”
4. Always put a positive spin on sexuality that “Nakedness isn’t wrong but is a special gift from God for mommies and daddies only.” Don’t shroud your discussion around shame or dirtiness but that “the privateness of our bodies is a beautiful gift from God to be protected”. Never imply that nakedness is bad or wrong but very special – so special (avoid any negative tone).
5. Explain Your New Family Game Plan. In your language and age-appropriate to the child grasp, “We need your help. I want you to start paying attention when you are on the computer or one of our phones or notebooks – any device. You see, bad people out there are sometimes trying to trick us into seeing people with no clothes on - you know, sneaking “naked pictures” on our devices. We are going to fool them and not let them do this to our family.

Note: Use the term “naked pictures” referring to online pornography since they will understand ‘naked’ from both bath times and bedtime interaction.

6. Make it serious and like a battle. “All of us as a family are against these bad guys who are determined to put ‘naked pictures’ on our computer, phone, ipad, notebook, xbox, etc... We are going to catch them together. If you ever see any naked pictures of any kind – you

need to tell mom or dad right away. Don't look at them and don't turn it off or try to get off that site. It will help us find how they sneaked these pictures on our devices.

7. You won't be in trouble whether you run into it by accident or you didn't do anything and there it was. Sometimes the bad stuff seems to come looking for you. We know that. That's why you are not in any trouble. What's most important is that together we STOP these guys! We'll be proud of you – like you are a HERO – when you come and tell us.

Note: It can happen through fun images they can 'click' from kids games, pop-ups, YouTube suggestions and so many more ways).

8. Parent Decision: For younger kids for sure (ages 4-6), you can reward them for reporting the "naked pictures" with a treat or a surprise later. One caution: as the child gets older (ages 6-8), you may want to use positive affirmation versus an actual reward. You don't actually want to have them go looking for Porn to get the reward – but then again, it would also show you the holes in your family's electronic defense. Might be best to celebrate together as a family than giving individual rewards.

Note: Change to the wording from '*naked pictures*' to pornography as part of the sex talk the same sex parent will give when the child gets to age 9 (See full details of how to do the sex talk on our website).

It is my prayer that God will guide you as parents into a solid total family defense against the unwanted sexual influence that the Internet brings every hour of every day to every home in North America. Share with me what's been working for you by sending me your comments at drdave@doingfamilyright.com. I would love to use your ideas to help others.