



Doing Family Right

Indecent Exposure: Winning the Sexual Battle for the Minds and Hearts of the Next Generation

By Dr. Dave Currie

Tears poured down her face, as we embraced. My wife, Donalyn, whispered to me through her pain, "It is so wrong, and so easy. What if our grandbabies ever saw that?"

Saw what?

Two things led to her reaction. First, we had just watched **SEXT UP KIDS**, a CBC Documentary on Doc Zone on Feb. 23, 2012 (we highly recommend that all parents and grandparents watch this 45 minute show online - <http://www.cbc.ca/doczone/episode/sext-up-kids.html>). It graphically and urgently calls parents to be aware of what our sex-saturated culture is doing to the sexual worldview of our children.

Secondly, earlier that same week, I had shared how a father had approached me with the tragic story of how well-meaning grandparents had given an iPad to a much-loved grandchild. This 11-year-old, with her curiosity and a push from her peers, had googled the word "sex". She was traumatized. Thankfully, she came to her parents about her extreme confusion to talk and pray through the defiling impact these sexual images had had on her.

So, my wife (and yes, better her than me) decided, after watching the documentary, to simply Google the word "sex" and click on the first link that appeared to see what inquisitive and unsupervised kids might find. Thus the shock and the flowing tears. Donalyn found a 1-page collage of pornographic photos of every explicit sexual act imaginable with exploitive captions under each. Unconscionable! Appalling! And only three letters and two clicks away...

It's a new world out there. Parents beware! Your Children can be so personally exploited and sexually manipulated with the explicit, harmful, content that is available free and anonymous and can be accessed anywhere, anytime.

Don't say it can't happen to your family. It did ours.

When my youngest daughter was at a sleepover for a friend's 13th birthday party, the girls, in daring and unsupervised group fashion, managed to get on an adults only dating website. They thought they would have fun creating a fictitious profile but used their pictures. It went from innocent though stupid to dangerous when one girl went back later and put real contact information for our daughter – "OUR

PHONE NUMBER". I am so glad God protected us as I was the one who received the call from an older man wanting to speak to her. He back-peddled hard when he found out she was just 13 and I was her Dad! If tragedy came that close to us and we are people who spend our lives helping others with marriage and family issues, why not you?

The pornographic influence on the culture is everywhere. The sexualization of our children is pervasive. The premature draw toward sex and being sexual is so powerful (watch the documentary). And how big a draw? The combined porn industry alone takes in more revenue annually than all the major sports industries – yes, bigger than football, baseball, basketball and hockey combined. Then this is the retail sales world where marketers, driven by intense greed for profit, use the KAGOY strategy – Kids Are Getting Older Younger. While advertising restrictions are in place for TV, they do not exist for the Internet. Marketers can bypass parents like never before.

You add to this strong cultural sexual push the natural and sometimes rebellious drive toward autonomy for all tweeners (10-14 year-olds) and any family could be poised for trouble. As kids seek to copy Hollywood icons in looks and attitudes and add to the explicit content they have seen online, the thrill of getting noticed, the dare of sexual exposure and the universality of uploading ease, creates such sad and devastating possibilities. If 24-7 access to porn – hardcore and highly explicit images - were not enough, kids can be tempted to produce and upload self-created and self-exposing sexually explicit pictures or videos. They can Skype live sexual exposure that feels harmless and safe because they are not really there. New and careful boundaries need to be in place. So, for the love of your kids, let's do that.

Here are my tips on how parents can be wise and intentional about protecting their children from unhealthy sexual contamination.

1. **Wake up to the dangers.** The potential influence of a sex-saturated culture on your children is scandalous. Seek online knowledge. Avoid regrets later. Choose to do all you can to protect your children from sensuously influential and sexually explicit online content.
2. **Get safeguards in place.** Utilize built-in or install protective software on every electronic device within your family that has online access: home computer or laptop, mobile phone, android or iPhone, notebook or iPad, and Xbox, Play Station or Wii. Just so you know, a Play Station can become a Porn Station. Check out parental controls available within each device or buy appropriate software to protect children. Have your home wireless access password protected and set online access via your wireless router with both time and content limits. And if you are like me, ask a computer whiz in your world for help in doing this.

3. **Have preteen “Sex Talks” earlier.** For years, I have been advocating parental value-based sex education by age 11. Push that down to age 9 and reinforce these talks each year with more details. We can't be ashamed to talk about what God wasn't ashamed to create. Go to www.doingfamilyright.com for great help on “sex talks”.
4. **Delay giving the latest electronic gadgets.** Back in the day, you wouldn't give a 12 year old a Playboy stapled shut to carry around each day. Why give them a tool before they are ready that is potentially 100 times more powerfully destructive? Research shows that the earlier your children gain online access the sooner they are going to stumble on and gain curiosity about unhealthy sexual material. Any device with Internet access needs to be postponed as long as possible and then once available, carefully monitored. And frankly, you won't be popular as a parent.
5. **Implement new online boundaries.** Here are a few. Give the phone a curfew if needed. Use phone, notebook or laptop availability can be a reward for responsible living. Push that its use is a gift not a right. All gadgets are off at night and in a common place. Limit how long they are online. Passwords for all devices must be shared with parents and not private. Adopt a user pay approach to cell phone use and make them contribute to it use. Be friends with your kids on Facebook with those actually old enough. Don't allow kids to upload any photos, videos or personal information without your permission until a time that you fully trust them.
6. **Be vigilant as a parent.** Know where your kids are, what they are doing and who's house they are at? Be confident in the values and the supervision standards of those places. Also, know and monitor their online community of friends and contacts like you would their school friends.
7. **Get on your knees more.** Humbly ask God for wisdom in parenting. Lift up each child daily in prayer for protection, purity and perspective on all life's issues. This cultural challenge to win the sexual battle for the minds and hearts of the next generation puts a whole meaning to the verse, *“Train us a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he'll not depart from it”* (Proverbs 22:6).

Tell us your story, share an opinion or ask a question at www.DoingFamilyRight.com. We'd love to hear from you in your journey of doing family right.