



PORN

SEX

**PLEASURE
Vs PROFIT**

SEXUALISATION
INFORMATION PACK
FOR PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

SEXUALISATION

WHAT IS SEXUALISATION?

In 2007 the American Psychological Association (APA) carried out an extensive review of the impact of sexualisation on young girls. The APA's taskforce provides the following definition of sexualisation as occurring when:

- a person's value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behaviour, to the exclusion of other characteristics
- a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness with being sexy
- a person is sexually objectified and made into a thing for others' sexual use rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making
- sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon a person.

'Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualisation of Girls.' American Psychological Association. Zurbriggen et al. (2007)

<http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html>

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

"We know from our research that commercial pressures towards premature sexualisation and unprincipled advertising are damaging children's well-being. The evidence shows that adults feel children are more materialistic than in past generations, while children themselves feel under pressure to keep up with the latest trends."

Penny Nicholls, director of children and young people at The Children's Society.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8619329.stm>

"Though it may not be right, again it wouldn't be the first time a retailer saw a marketing opportunity and jumped... seizing an opportunity. Parents hold the buying power in their wallets."

By Lydia Dishman – <http://www.bnet.com/blog/publishing-style/abercrombies-padded-bikinis-for-tweens-prove-theres-nothing-new-under-the-retail-sun/1609>

HOW IS IT HAPPENING?

“How have sex, sexiness and sexualisation gained such favour in recent years as to be the measure by which women's and girls' worth is judged? While it is not a new phenomenon by any means, there is something different about the way it occurs today and how it impacts on younger and younger girls.”

McLellan, ‘Sexualised and Trivialized – Making Equality Impossible’. Quoted in ‘Getting Real’, Tankard Reist (2010)

Researchers looked at 15 websites of popular clothing stores, ranging from bargain to high-end sectors of the junior US market. Clothing was rated according to whether it had only child-like characteristics, revealed or emphasised an intimate body part, or had characteristics that were associated with sexiness.

- 69% of the clothing assessed in the study had only child-like characteristics
- 4% had only sexualising characteristics, while
- 25% had both sexualising and child-like characteristics
- 1% had neither sexualised nor child-like characteristics.

Goodin S et al (2011). ‘Putting On Sexiness: a content analysis of the presence of sexualizing characteristics in girls' clothing.’ Sex Roles; DOI:10.1007/s11199-011-9966-8 (c) 2011 AFP

“Boys don't have to look hard for examples of the tough guy in popular culture – he is seen all over the television dial, in advertising, and in the books based on popular TV series. He is held up as a sort of ideal (in sharp contrast to "wimpy" smart guy characters) and he teaches boys that success comes from being aggressive. Increasingly, the influence of this character can be seen in boys' clothing. As the examples below demonstrate, scary imagery, with its undertones of aggression, appears on clothing marketed to boys aged one and up.”

<http://www.achilleseffect.com/2011/01/boys-clothing-valuing-toughness-and-aggression/>

“Fashions like these dovetail perfectly with the messages delivered by film, television, books, and toy advertising, telling boys on the one hand that aggression and toughness are cool and, on the other, that rowdiness and bad behaviour are funny and even expected from boys.”

<http://www.achilleseffect.com/2011/01/boys%E2%80%99-clothing-part-2%E2%80%94the-brat/>

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?

“It is important to analyse cultural representations of gender roles, sexuality and relationships and ask what specific values are being promoted and if these are having a negative impact on child development. Key questions include the impact on children... of stereotyped images of passivity and sexual objectification... the long term impacts of early exposure to adult sexual themes and the ways in which cultural exposure impacts on parents' roles in protecting and educating children around sexuality in a developmentally appropriate way.”

Newman, ‘The Psychological and Developmental Impact of Sexualisation on Children’. Quoted in ‘Getting Real’ Tankard Reist (2010)

“When girls are dressed to resemble adult women ... adults may project adult motives as well as an adult level of responsibility and agency on girls. Images of precocious sexuality in girls may serve to normalize abusive practices such as child abuse, child prostitution, and the sexual trafficking of children... the sexualisation of girls may also contribute to a market for sex with children through the cultivation of new desires and experiences.”

American Psychological Association Taskforce on the Sexualisation of Girls reported in 2007:p 35

“When we allow our young girls' childhood to be about being sexy, we take their attention away from developing their true sense of self and how they can affect the world and we put it on what others want them to be and what the world demands of them.”

<http://www.drrobysilverman.com/body-image/tarty-toys-for-tots-a-pound-of-flesh-too-much-or-much-ado-about-nothing/>

“It can be tempting to think that girls are taking the brunt, that boys have it easier. But in some ways the messages we are sending out to boys are just as limiting and restrictive: be macho, be strong, don't show your emotions. Hyper-sexualisation of femininity cannot exist without hypermasculinisation of males. They feed off and reinforce each other.”

Dr Linda Papadopoulos, Sexualisation Review 2010

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

Parents/ carers have an important role to play with CYP. We have to be proactive in building their resilience to these messages by talking openly and building strong, open and trusting relationships with CYP, where they know we value and support them.

TALK TO YOUR KIDS.

Help CYP to understand that adverts and messages that link happiness and love with beauty are telling them a lie to sell products. Advertisers feed off insecurities and our need for acceptance by our peers to make us feel worse about ourselves so we will buy whatever products they tell us will make us happy and successful.

BE REAL.

Help CYP build strengths that will allow them to achieve their goals and develop into healthy adults. Remind your children that everyone is unique and that it's unhelpful to judge people solely by their gender, clothing and appearance.

KEEP TELLING YOUR KIDS FROM A YOUNG AGE THAT THEY ARE LOVED FOR WHO THEY ARE AND NOT HOW THEY LOOK.

Teach girls to value themselves for who they are, rather than how they look. Teach boys to value girls as friends, sisters, and girlfriends, rather than as sexual objects. Encourage both genders to develop, follow interests and get involved in a sport or other activity that emphasise talents, skills, and abilities over physical appearance.

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION.

Many parents are not that comfortable talking about sex and sexuality but it's important. It should be started when they are very young. Always tell them that you are pleased they ask questions but take time to find the answers if you need to. Tell them that you think sex is OK as part of a healthy, intimate, mature relationship and that the media, peers, and our culture has a big part to play in our sexual behaviors and decisions, how to make safe choices, and what makes healthy relationships.

TUNE IN.

Minimise their exposure to commercial media and be aware of the content of all they watch, including computer games. Watch TV and movies with your children. Read their magazines. Look at their web sites. Ask questions. "Why do you think there is so much pressure on girls to look a certain way?" "What do you like most about the girls you want to spend time with?" "Do these qualities matter more than how they look?" "What do you think of the different roles that are usually given to boys and girls?" "Do you think women and men are portrayed fairly?" Really listen to what your kids tell you.

SPEAK UP.

If you don't like a TV show, CD, a music video, pair of jeans, or doll, say why. A conversation and explanation with children about the issue will be more effective than simply saying, "No, you can't buy it or watch it."

TRY TO SEE IT THEIR WAY.

Remember that young people can be under a lot of pressure to conform and fit in with their peers. They can have less space to make individual choices and find alternatives. Keep in mind that clothes are an important social code for young people and their group identity. You need to work alongside them to find compromises and reassure them that looks are not everything.

QUESTION CHOICES.

Girls who are focused on their appearance can find it difficult to concentrate on anything else. If your daughter wants to wear something you consider too sexy, ask what she likes about the outfit. Ask if there's anything she doesn't like about it. Find out why she wants to look a certain way. Rather than making judgments yourself, ask her to think about the way clothes can sexualise a person. Remember that looking different and reacting against adults may all be part of her growing up but you need to draw boundaries and talk these over with her.



ROLE MODELS.

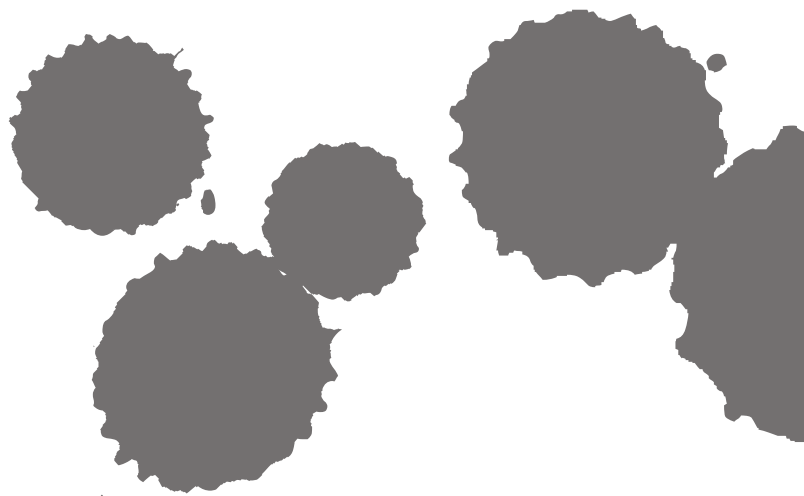
Fathers are important in the development of their daughter's self image, and their son's attitudes towards women. The way men treat and talk about women in the family and women in general is a powerful model for their children. You need to consider this and how it may impact on your kids. Talk about whom you admire and hold in high regard, not just because they are rich, thin or appear as a celebrity in magazines. This helps your child understand how people demonstrate real worth in the world.

SPENDING POWER.

Parents should not buy products that promote sexualisation. Think about the clothes you buy for your kids. Avoid anything that is "mini-adult" such as skimpy underwear or bras for pre teens.

GET INVOLVED.

However, even if you make a stand against this, there could still be pester power because "everyone else has one." If we all stand up and boycott the shops that continue to sell sexualised clothing for children, things could change. You could join lobbying and influence the government to stop the sale of such products in the UK. Support campaigns, companies, and products that promote positive images of girls. Complain to manufacturers, advertisers, television and movie producers, and retail stores when products sexualise girls.



READING, LINKS AND RESOURCES

SEXUALISATION / PORNIFICATION SUGGESTED READING

Getting Real: Challenging the Sexualisation of Girls

Melinda Tankard Reist (ed.)

<http://www.spinifexpress.com.au/Bookstore/author/id=36/>

Some Body to Love: A Guide to Loving the Body You Have

Chicago: Newman, Leslea. Third Side Press, 1991.

The Commercialisation of Childhood: The Debate about Advertising and Marketing to Children

Juliet B. Schor for the Yale Law School Legal Theory Workshop, March 21, 2005

2010 UK Home Office Report on the Sexualisation of Young People

Dr Linda Papadoplous

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100418065544/homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/sexualisation-young-people.html>

Research on sexualised goods aimed at children

Report for the Equal Opportunities Committee 2010

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/equal/reports-10/eor10-02.htm>

The Impact of the Commercial World on Children's Wellbeing: Assessment 2009

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00669-2009>

Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture

Ariel Levy 2007

Spice Briefing: Sexualised Imagery and Children

Equal Opportunities Committee, 30th September 2008

Teen Mags to Lads Mags: What They Show Girls, What They Show Boys

Object: Women Not Sex Objects – 2005

www.object.co.uk

Living Dolls: The Return of Sexism

Natasha Walter

SEXUALISATION / PORNIFICATION FURTHER READING

The American Psychological Association (APA) report on the sexualisation of girls 2007

<http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html>

Sexualised Goods Aimed at Children

Prof. David Buckingham, Dr. Rebekah Willett; Dr. Sara Bragg; Dr. Rachel Russell (Glasgow Caledonian University)

Research conducted for the Scottish Parliament 2009

What's Happening to Our Girls?

Maggie Hamilton

Research on Sex in the Media: what do we know about effects on children and adolescents?

Malamuth N, Impett E. 2001

In 'Handbook of Children and the Media', Singer D, Singer J (eds). Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA; 269–287

Corporate Paedophilia: sexualisation of children in Australia, The Australia Institute: ACT

Rush, Emma & La Nauze, Andrea (2006)

(TAI Discussion Paper 90, October 2006)

<http://www.tai.org.au/>

Letting Children be Children: stopping the sexualisation of children in Australia

Rush, Emma & La Nauze, Andrea (2006)

The Australia Institute: ACT (TAI Discussion Paper 93, December 2006)

Understanding the Role of Entertainment Media in the Sexual Socialization of American Youth: a review of empirical research

Ward L. 2003

Developmental Review 23: 347–388. DOI: 10.1016/S0273-2297(03) 00013-3

SEXUALISATION / PORNIFICATION USEFUL RESOURCES / SITES

Collective Shout

A new grassroots campaigns movement mobilising and equipping individuals and groups to target corporations, advertisers, marketers and media that objectify women and sexualise girls to sell products and services.

<http://collectiveshout.org>

<http://enlightenededucation.com.au/>

Kids Free 2B Kids

A group of Australians concerned about the increasing sexualisation of kids in the media, advertising, and clothing industries.

<http://www.kf2bk.com/about.htm>

Generation Next

Understanding the unique health and wellbeing challenges facing our young people and how they can *be met*.

<http://www.generationnext.com.au/>

OBJECT

Challenging 'sex object culture' - the increased sexual objectification of women. Object today! Join the campaign at www.object.org.uk

Sexy Inc. Our Children Under Influence

This is an excellent 35-minute Canadian documentary analysing the hypersexualization of our culture and its effects on young people. Suitable for adult audience.

http://www.nfb.ca/film/sexy_inc/



www.womenssupportproject.co.uk