

How To Talk To Your Child About Explicit Material And Pornography AGE FOCUS: MIDDLE SCHOOL

OVERVIEW

Children are being bombarded with images and situations that they are not equipped to handle. Often a child is exposed to explicit material or pornography unwillingly. This can cause shame and confusion in a developing child. The best communication plan starts with setting aside time on a regular basis to have a calm and open dialogue regarding any potential exposure, discussing healthy boundaries for media and technology and creating an active plan for their protection.

At this age a child can become very self-conscious and insecure about their body while at the same time very curious regarding human sexuality. As a parent, you want to be the person they come to with questions or concerns. Be intentional in creating open and honest dialog regularly.

GOAL

- To age appropriately teach your child the definition of explicit material and pornography
- To help them recognize it as destructive
- To develop an approach on how it can be avoided
- To create a plan of communication if your child is exposed to explicit material or pornography

AGE APPROPRIATE DEFINITION

Explicit material and pornography are any pictures, moving images or videos of people with little to no clothes on and can often include explicit sexual content and violence.

THESE IMAGES ARE DANGEROUS BECAUSE:

- They don't show or portray real love, caring or intimacy
- They make violence look okay
- They exploit or hurt men, women and children
- Over time they can be addictive
- They can affect a child's development as well as their perception of themselves and others around them

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- Help your child understand they are normal if they are curious about their bodies.
- Help your child understand what it means to have respect for their body as well as others. Reinforce that this means we treat others, and should be treated, in an appropriate way.
- Verbalize a plan in case of exposure. (See tips below). Keep in mind that most exposure at this age is accidental initially.
- Remember not to overreact or deflect shame upon your child if they have been exposed to explicit material or pornography. Most often they are feeling conflicted, uncomfortable or confused about what they have seen.
- Decide together to put filters on all electronic devices connected to the Internet and keep the dialogue open. (Download our **Parents Guide To Kids And Media** @ www.thenovusproject.org).
- Regularly remind your child to be careful when they are with others who have access to electronic devices connected to the Internet.
- Explain that it is a healthy choice to avoid viewing media in isolated places or alone.

TIPS FOR KIDS

If you see something that makes you feel confused, uncomfortable or you know it's not good for you see:

- Walk away
- Immediately tell a parent or trusted adult
- Talk about how you are feeling
- Remember that it does not represent the real world, real love or respect
- Make a plan to avoid future exposure (Download our **Parents Guide To Kids And Media** @ www.thenovusproject.org).

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