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## News Flash



## Latest Research Shows the Affects of TV and Early Sexual Activity Among Teens

### Children who view adult-targeted TV may become sexually active earlier in life

According to a new study released by Children's Hospital Boston, early onset of sexual activity among teens may relate to the amount of adult content children were exposed to during their childhood. Based on a longitudinal study tracking children from age six to eighteen, researchers found that the younger children are exposed to content intended for adults in television and movies, the earlier they become sexually active during adolescence.

"Television and movies are among the leading sources of information about sex and relationships for adolescents," says Hernan Delgado, MD, fellow in the Division of Adolescent/Young Adult Medicine at Children's Hospital Boston and lead author of the study. "Our research shows that their sexual attitudes and expectations are influenced much earlier in life."

"Adult entertainment often deals with issues and challenges that adults face, including the complexities of sexual relationships. Children have neither the life experience nor the brain development to fully differentiate between a reality they are moving toward and a fiction meant solely to entertain," adds David Bickman, PhD, staff scientist in the Center on Media and Child Health and co-author of the study. "*Children learn from media, and when they watch media with sexual references and innuendos, our research suggests they are more likely to engage in sexual activity earlier in life.*"

Read the complete study at <http://www.childrenshospital.org/newsroom/Site1339/mainpageS1339P1sublevel528.html>

## Ways to help your children develop positive viewing habits:

The researchers encourage parents to follow current American Academy of Pediatrics viewing guidelines

- ◆ Set limits—limit your children's use of TV, movies, video and computer games to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day. Do not let your children watch TV while doing homework. Do not put a TV in your children's bedrooms.
- ◆ Plan what to watch—instead of flipping through channels, use a program guide and the TV rating to help you and your children choose which shows to watch. Turn the TV on to watch the program and turn it off when it is over.
- ◆ Watch TV with your children—whenever possible, watch TV with your children and talk about what they see. Be especially careful of "reality-based" programs, most of these shows are not appropriate for children.
- ◆ Find the right message—some TV programs show people as stereotypes. If you see this, talk with your children about the real-life roles of women, the elderly and people of other races.
- ◆ Help your children resist commercials. When your children ask for things they see on TV, explain that the purpose of commercials is to make people want things they may not need.
- ◆ Look for quality children's videos and DVDs. There are many quality videos and DVDs available for children. Check reviews before buying or renting programs or movies.
- ◆ Give other options—watching TV can become a habit for your children. Help them find other things to do like playing, reading, learning a hobby, a sport, an instrument, art, or spending time with family, friends or neighbors.
- ◆ Set a good example. As a role model, limiting your own TV viewing and choosing programs carefully will help your children do the same.
- ◆ Express your views. When you like or do not like something you see on TV, make yourself heard.
- ◆ Get more information—the following resources can provide you with more information about the proper role of TV in your children's lives.

[http://www.aap.org/publiced/BR\\_TV.htm](http://www.aap.org/publiced/BR_TV.htm)

For more information call: 816-836-8336 - To unsubscribe, please email [kfike@guardyourself.org](mailto:kfike@guardyourself.org)

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