

What are children saying?

**I want that top
– it's cool!**

Your daughter wants to wear sexy clothing or makeup.

**Can I have a
makeover party?**

Concern about the way they look is invading childhood celebrations.

Am I "hot"?

Your daughter wants to know if she's attractive and that means "sexy".

I'm too fat!

Your daughter wants to be thin like celebrities and models she sees in the media. Your son wants muscles.

**I want MSN
[MySpace/Facebook]
and a computer
in my bedroom!**

Your children want to explore the Internet and be involved in social networking on their own.

**What does *@\$%
mean?**

Your children ask questions about things you don't think they are ready for.

Where are they getting it from?

**ADVERTISING
TELEVISION
MUSIC VIDEOS
MOVIES
MAGAZINES
BILLBOARDS
INTERNET SITES
PEER PRESSURE**

Our environment is full of sexualised images and messages from all types of media, including media produced for children and involving child models. Children can be influenced from a very young age. Adults may not realise the effects that these images are having on children.

It is important for children to learn about sex. The problem is that they are learning about it in a way that undermines the firm foundation needed for later sexual behaviour and relationships.

Why should you worry?

Self esteem

The period of middle childhood in particular is crucial for the development of a healthy sense of self and self esteem. If children see their appearance and "looking sexy" as all important at this time, many aspects of development can be seriously affected.

Eating disorders

Girls, and some boys too, may adopt restrictive diets as they try to fit the media's standards for appearance.

Messages that boys are getting about girls and themselves

Sexualised media give boys a distorted and shallow view of girls and women and of their own masculinity.

Early sexual behaviour

Children exposed to sexualised media may adopt sexual behaviours before they have the maturity to deal with the consequences.

Internet dangers

Children are in danger of finding inappropriate material, meeting predatory adults, or posting private information and photos of themselves.

Messages that adults are being given about children

The sexualisation of children in advertising may suggest to some adults that children are interested in, and ready for, sex.

