



Quick Start Guide

# How to Talk to Kids about Pornography

# Learn some basics

## 5 facts every adult should know about pornography

1. **Parents underestimate exposure to porn by at least 50%.** In a [recent UK study](#), 25% of parents expected that their children had seen porn, but 53%--over twice as many of their children--reported exposure.
2. **97% of 4th-6th graders reported exposure to porn in [one study](#).** In [another study](#), more than half of 11-13 year olds had seen porn. 62% of 11-13 year olds who had seen pornography reported that they stumbled across it *unintentionally*. (Note: It's difficult to establish an "average age of exposure" because questioning very young children about porn is problematic for researchers. However, we hear regular stories of kids as young as 5 being exposed to porn.)
3. **Video games lead to porn sites:** In a [recent PornHub report](#), Playstation and Xbox were the most popular portals to porn with a combined 86.2% of game console traffic.
4. **Porn addiction leads to brain shrinkage** as confirmed by [MRI studies](#) done in Germany.
5. **57% of teens have looked for porn at least once a month.** 79% of teens who want to quit using pornography have no one helping them. Barna Group, [The Porn Phenomenon](#).



## Why even good kids are vulnerable to porn

**Fact 1:** Most kids are biological humans. (If you have a robot kid, consult your operator's manual.) Which means they're biologically wired to be interested and affected by nudity and depictions of sex.

**Fact 2:** When a young child sees pornography, their brain can release large amounts of dopamine--a neuro chemical that drives people to *want, seek* and *search for more*. Even young children who are years away from puberty can be prematurely sexualized by pornography.

**Fact 3:** Unfortunately, kids are even more vulnerable because they don't have fully developed "brakes" in their brains to help them resist their own dopamine-driven curiosity.



**Fact 4:** That's why it's crucial for kids to learn to reject pornography from a *young* age.

Read more great advice from a sex addiction expert [here](#).

## What's the right age?

The right age to begin warning a child about pornography is when they have *any access to the internet*, including video games, apps, e-readers and anything else connected to the internet. *No kid deserves to face the porn industry alone.*



## 3 basic defenses every child needs

The good news that even 3-year-olds can learn three basic defenses to keep them safe from pornography. (All of these are taught in both *Good Pictures Bad Pictures* books!)

1. **A definition**, so they'll *recognize* what they're seeing.
2. **A warning**, so they'll have reasons to *reject* it.
3. **A plan**, so they'll be *ready to respond* and not get caught off guard.

Let's explore each one.





# Teach Your Child

## An age appropriate definition of pornography

**For children 7 and younger** (or before the sex talks begin):

Here's the simple definition in the best-selling *Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr.: A Simple Plan to Protect Young Minds*, written by our founder, Kristen A. Jenson:

**“Bad pictures show the private parts of the body we keep covered with a swimsuit. These parts are meant to be kept private.”**

Teach young kids that pornography can be pictures, videos, or even cartoons.

**Note:** The simplest way to define pornography for a young child is by describing nudity that focuses on the private parts of the body. *Not all nudity is pornographic, but any time your child sees nudity, especially on a screen, they should know to tell you.* If you're concerned about teaching the difference between art and porn, read [“Art vs. Porn: How to Explain the Difference to a Child”](https://defendyoungminds.com/blog/art-vs-porn-how-to-explain-the-difference-to-a-child) on our popular blog at [defendyoungminds.com/blog](https://defendyoungminds.com/blog).

**For children after they have learned about sex:**

We like this definition from therapist Jill Manning, PhD, in her book *What's the Big Deal About Pornography: A Guide for the Internet Generation*:

**“Pornography is material specifically designed to arouse sexual feelings in people by depicting nudity, sexual behavior, or any type of sexual information in any media.”**



“Any media” includes videos, still photos, characters in video games, erotic lit, anime cartoons, manga books and song lyrics.

**Porn is tricky and kids need to know that.**

*Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids* is a great read-aloud resource to explain how porn can cause kids to feel two very different feelings--at the same time!



# Teach Your Child

## A warning that pornography is unhealthy and dangerous

Kids deserve the truth about pornography. Study after study finds that [children are harmed in the following 5 ways](#):

1. **Porn influences pop culture** and drives kids to objectify themselves in sexual ways.
2. **Porn disrupts normal childhood development.** Kids who are drawn into pornography often fail to spend enough time channeling their energy into important non-sexual skills and learning. **Addiction** is a real threat to a child's developing brain.
3. **Porn teaches toxic attitudes about sex.** Instead of love, trust and intimacy, kids learn that sex is degrading, violent and focused on performance.
4. **Porn increases sexual violence in users** and predicts earlier sexual activity among teens.
5. **Porn use can lead to increased risk of child-on-child harmful sexual behavior.** Children are imitative by nature. It should not surprise anyone that they imitate sexual acts seen in porn on younger more vulnerable children, often siblings.

At the very least, kids should be taught that pornography use can:

- Become a serious addiction
- Lead people to objectify others and treat them badly
- Develop into harmful and even illegal behaviors

For help teaching the harms of pornography in a matter-of-fact way, turn to these trusted resources:

### For kids ages 3-6:

- Start defending them with [Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr.: A Simple Plan to Protect Young Minds](#).
- *Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr. Play Guide*--developed by play therapists as a companion to the book!



### For kids ages 7-11:

- Arm your child with [Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids](#)
- Let us help you teach digital wellness with our [Brain Defense: Digital Safety](#) curriculum



# Teach Your Child

## A plan so your child is not caught off guard

Every child needs a plan for a rapid response to porn exposure. This plan should include specific steps to:

- Deal with the initial exposure to porn, and
- Minimize the shocking memories that keep popping back up in a child's mind.

Some families come up with their own plan--that can be a great way to engage kids to reject pornography!

Or use our research-based options in these #1 best-selling books:

- **“Turn, Run and Tell”** plan in [\*Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr.: A Simple Plan to Protect Young Minds\*](#)
- **“CAN DO Plan”** in [\*Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids\*](#)

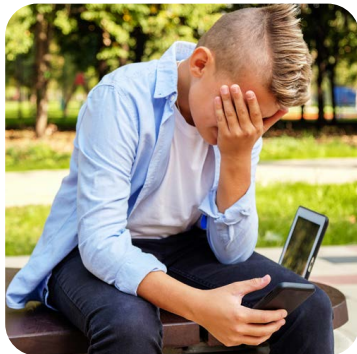
**Note:** No matter which plan you choose, make sure you review it often with your kids. They deserve to be prepared!

## Success Story: “I knew exactly what to do!”

One mom shared her experience with teaching her 9-year-old son the CAN DO Plan™ from *Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids*. Three days later he came home from school and told her that another student had shown him pornography.

He said, “I knew exactly what to do. I was scared, but I knew what to do!”

Instead of facing this troubling exposure *alone*, this young boy knew his parents were there to help him. He recognized what he saw and already knew several good reasons why he should not look at it. He had no fear about talking with his mom about his exposure because *she had talked with him first*.



Together they could help him “forget” or minimize the memories of pornography. (For a step-by-step process for minimizing the memories of porn, check out the parent advice sections in either of the [\*Good Pictures Bad Pictures\*](#) books.)



# Make it comfortable

## 5 tips for talking with kids about pornography

1. **Focus on the why:** Why do you want to warn your child about pornography? Remind yourself how rejecting pornography leads to better mental health and the ability to form healthy, intimate relationships. Imagine how happy your child can be growing up free from addiction.
2. **Remind yourself that the more you do something the easier it gets:** It may take a big dose of courage the first time you talk to your kids about pornography. You might be nervous, but it will get easier.
3. **Try a role-play rehearsal:** Practice role-playing with your spouse, a close friend or family member. The more you hear yourself say the words out loud, the more comfortable you become using them. If you use [Good Pictures Bad Pictures](#), read it out loud to yourself and then set up a time to include your child!
4. **Ask your friends:** They may have some great ideas. And if they haven't begun talking with their own kids, you can give each other courage to get started! Parents tell us how relieved they are to finally get this dark topic out into the light—like a burden has been lifted from their shoulders.
5. **Name it when you see it:** Our environment is littered with overtly sexualized and pornographic images, lyrics and words. So use them as natural conversation-starters! When you see or hear something, point it out and ask your kids what they think or how they feel.



## 5 easy teaching moments to defend your child's young mind

Talking with kids about pornography isn't a one-and-done event. It's a series of talks - some big, some small, some formal, and some casual. Here are 5 teaching opportunities every parent can use to arm their child against pornography's pull:

1. Storytime--our [read-aloud books](#) are a comfortable way to begin and continue the conversation
2. Entertainment--talk about your media choices
3. New technology--teach kids to use tech responsibly. Check out [Brain Defense: Digital Safety](#) for an easy open & go digital citizenship course.





4. Talks about sex--porn is the opposite of healthy sex and kids need to know the difference
5. Advertising--companies use sex to manipulate consumers! Don't buy into those tactics!



Find out more details on how to use each scenario by reading [Are You Missing These 5 Easy Teaching Moments to Protect Your Kids from Pornography?](#)

**BONUS:** When talks about **racial issues** arise, teach your kids that another important reason to reject pornography is that it promotes racism. Get the facts [here](#).

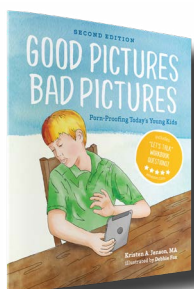
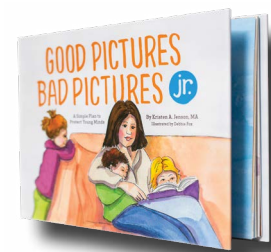
## Use trusted tools *We make tough talks easy!*

### Discover our #1 best-selling read-aloud books

#### [Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr.: A Simple Plan to Protect Young Minds](#)

Even young children have access to the internet, and they deserve to be armed early against its dangers. *Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr.* makes it easy for parents to begin teaching young children ages 3-6 with the *Turn, Run & Tell* plan!

*"It's never too early to start teaching kids healthy media habits! Reading Good Pictures Bad Pictures Jr. to your young children is a beautiful way to empower them to make safe internet choices."*  
**- Sean Covey**, international bestselling author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* and *The 7 Habits of Happy Kids*



#### [Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids](#)

Want a natural and comfortable way to talk to your kids about pornography? This newly revised edition of the original bestseller makes that daunting discussion easy! *Good Pictures Bad Pictures* is a read-aloud story about a mom and dad who explain what pornography is, why it's dangerous, and how to reject it.

*"I wholeheartedly recommend Good Pictures Bad Pictures to parents, grandparents, teachers and pediatricians alike. In a tech-savvy age, with even preschoolers at risk of exposure to our pornified culture, the greatest gift we can give our children is an internal filter."* - **Michelle A. Cretella**, MD, FCP, President American College of Pediatricians





# Use our open & go curriculum for kids 7-11

## Brain Defense: Digital Safety

Teach kids refusal skills for online dangers and good digital citizenship practices with this groundbreaking and fun curriculum. Video-based with pdf teaching guides, student workbooks and discussion prompts. Great for families and schools.

*"The Brain Defense curriculum was easy to use and the short videos were very engaging! I felt very comfortable teaching my students about the dangers of pornography."* Sonya Carrillo, teacher

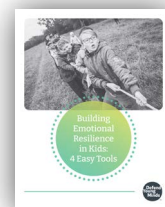
*"I love-love-LOVE that you are bravely bringing this information to students."* Parent of 4th grader



## Powerful Guides Make Your Job Easier

### Available for Purchase

- **My Kid Saw Porn--Now What? A SMART Plan for Parents** Knowing how to respond, which questions to ask, and how to go forward with hope are essential for helping kids heal from pornography exposure. Even if you've reacted badly and gotten angry, we have steps to heal your relationship. This valuable guide lays out a positive response plan for a difficult parenting dilemma. Go from fearful to fortified with our most trusted advice!
- **Fun Activities to Build Emotional Resilience in Kids** Emotionally resilient kids are better equipped to reject pornography! This game changing guide provides you with activities you can do *with* your kids to build their resilience and your relationship at the same time.



- ***The Body Safety Toolkit: How to Protect Kids from Sexual Abuse***

Help your kids make a list of safe adults they can go to for help in a red flag situation. Use our 5 role-play situations to practice what kids can do, think, and say to defend themselves.

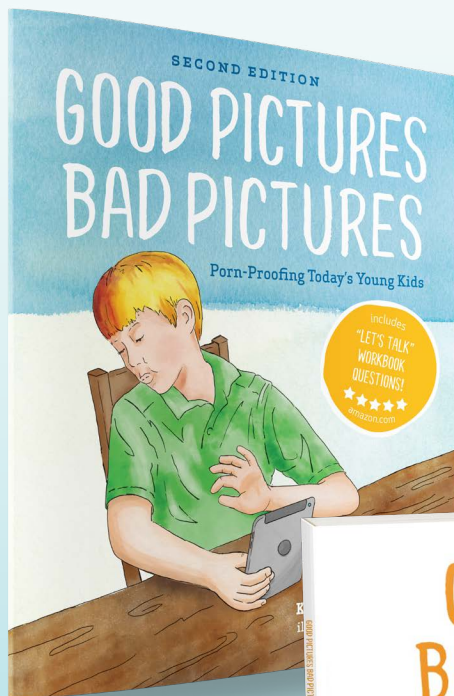
#### Free to Download

- ***Is My Child Ready for a Smartphone?*** It's a big decision! Our 10 questions will help you think through important questions to consider before saying yes.
- ***5 Things Teens Wish Their Parents Knew About Porn*** Find out what your teens are really up against!

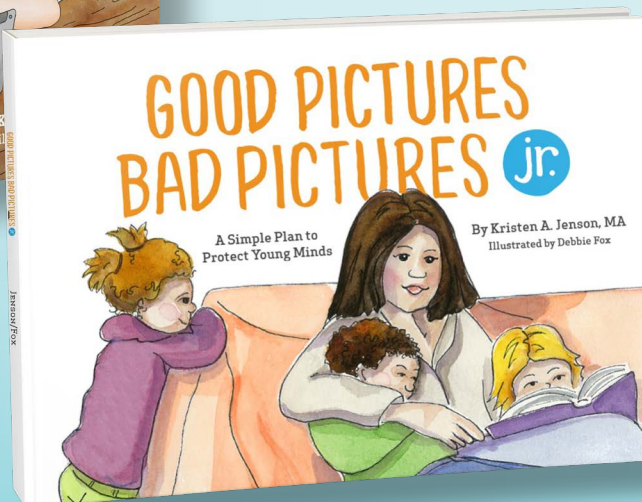


# protecting our most vulnerable

## POWERFUL TOOLS TO RAISE PORN-PROOF KIDS



#1  
**BEST  
SELLERS**



As a psychologist and a mother of four, I can't recommend this book highly enough.

Pornography is a fast-track to depression, anxiety, and unhealthy relationships between males and females. Parents need to understand that their kids are being exposed to porn at a younger age than they realize... your kids will rarely tell you what they saw. We need to GET AHEAD OF THE CURVE by reading this book to them and discussing what they need to do if they stumble across porn.

MARY, AMAZON REVIEW  
OF GOOD PICTURES BAD  
PICTURES: PORN-PROOFING  
TODAY'S YOUNG KIDS

Find out more at  
[defendyoungminds.com/books](https://defendyoungminds.com/books)  
or on Amazon







**brain defense®**  
DIGITAL SAFETY



# Teach kids refusal skills for digital dangers.

Arm your children with an engaging, video-based course to keep them safe from cyber-bullying, pornography and internet addiction. Brain Defense teaches kids, ages 7-11, healthy technology habits to protect their growing minds. Available for families, schools and community groups.



Learn more at [BrainDefense.org](https://BrainDefense.org)

## BRAIN DEFENSE TEACHES KIDS:

- Screen time management skills
- The importance of choosing good media
- How to form positive tech habits
- Refusal skills for rejecting pornography
- Strategies for dealing with cyber-bullying
- How to be a kind, honest digital citizen
- And much more, all taught by peer role models called the Brain Gang!

“I love-love-LOVE that you are bravely bringing this information to students.”  
*Parent of 4th grader*

“Both students and parents thanked me for presenting such helpful internet use guidelines.”  
*Elizabeth Fresse, teacher*

