

About the Sexualization of Childhood

Only a generation or two ago, childhood in the United States was understood to be a unique and vulnerable stage of development; a time for play and protection from adult preoccupations and responsibilities. In recent decades however, we appear to have jettisoned these norms, and the lines that separate the lifestyles of even very young children from adults are blurring. These days, children begin formal education in preschool, dress like adults, listen to the same music, play the same video games, explore the same Internet sites, and watch explicit depictions of sex and violence on TV and in movies.

The *Sexualization of Childhood* explores the impact of immersing children in a sexualized world. It describes the nature of healthy sexual development, the ways in which children are being sexualized, and the physical and psychological consequences. It explains why girls are experiencing puberty at increasingly younger ages. Finally, it examines what we can do legally, politically, and as caregivers to protect children from developmentally inappropriate sexual experiences.