

DEFINITION OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIAL

171.1 (5) Definition of sexually explicit material

(5) In subsection (1), sexually explicit material means material that is not child pornography, as defined in sub-section 163.1(1), and that is

- (a) a photographic, film, video or other visual representation, whether or not it was made by electronic or mechanical means,
- (i) that shows a person who is engaged in or is depicted as engaged in explicit sexual activity, or
- (ii) the dominant characteristic of which is the depiction, for a sexual purpose, of a person's genital organs or anal region or, if the person is female, her breasts;
- (b) written material whose dominant characteristic is the description, for a sexual purpose, of explicit sexual activity with a person; or
- (c) an audio recording whose dominant characteristic is the description, presentation or representation, for a sexual purpose, of explicit sexual activity with a person

How does viewing pornography affect children?

What does the research tell us?

In the past, people thought that because children didn't understand sexually graphic information, they weren't affected by it. Today, we know that while children do not have the emotional maturity, experience or knowledge to understand sexual content, they may unconsciously store the experience in their brains and try to make sense of what they have seen. It can be quite stressful and children may find ways to act it out to try to make sense of it. Impact can vary depending on the child, the age of the child, the content viewed and the circumstances around how it was viewed.

Exposure to sexually explicit material may:

- Prematurely sexualize a child.
- Incite a child to experiment with sexually explicit behaviour to make sense of it.
- Lead a child to normalize and become desensitized to high risk behaviour.
- Shape a child's expectations in relationships.
- Shape a child's expectations of physical appearances and certain sexual acts.
- Blur boundaries and increase a child's risk of victimization.
- Increase a child's health risks (i.e. sexually transmitted infections, sexual exploitation, etc.).
- Increase a child's risk of problematic sexual behaviour against other children in an effort to experiment.
- Interfere with a child's healthy sexual development.

Reference:

<https://www.protectchildren.ca/en/laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-46/>