

**Book Group Discussion Questions for:**

***So Sexy So Soon: The New Sexualized Childhood  
and What Parents Can Do to Protect Their Kids***

by Diane E. Levin, Ph.D. and Jean Kilbourne, Ed.D.

1. What issues in *So Sexy So Soon* were most interesting to you? Most relevant? Most disturbing? Most helpful?
2. What is the difference between sexuality and sexualization? Why is this distinction important?
3. What are some examples of the sexualization of children that you noticed before you read the book and since? Why is it a problem?
4. How has the new sexualized childhood affected you and your children? What have you done to try to deal with it? How did it work?
5. How is the world children are growing up in today different from the world you grew up in? If you have grown children, has it changed since you were raising them?
6. What do you think about little girls having makeovers at spas and salons? How does this relate to issues raised in *So Sexy So Soon*?
7. What did you learn about how the sexualization of boys and girls affects their short and long-term sexual behavior, relationships and self-image?
8. How might the sexualization of children contribute to child sexual abuse?

9. What are some specific ways that the sexualization of childhood affects girls? What are some examples from your life and/or your children's lives? What did you do or can you do to deal with them?
10. What are some ways that the sexualization of childhood affects boys? What are examples from your life and/or your children's lives? What did you do or can you do to deal with them?
11. The authors stress the importance of counteracting narrow gender stereotypes. What do you think about this issue? How can you work on expanding gender roles with boys and girls?
12. What would you say and do if you were the mother in *So Sexy So Soon* whose 8-year-old child came home from school and asked, "What's a blow job?" What are some appropriate responses? Would your response differ depending on the gender of the child?
13. The authors suggest new ways for children to play with toys, such as sending their dolls on a backyard archeological adventure. What are other ways to help children expand their imagination?
14. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no screen time at all (no television, no computers, no videogames, etc.) for children under the age of two. Why do you think they make this recommendation? Do you agree? Does it seem impossible to you? What do you think parents should do?
15. The authors say that the sexual images in the popular culture are not designed to sell our children on sex --they are designed to sell them on shopping. What are your reactions to this idea? Have you seen it apply to the children you know? In what other ways do you see the commercial culture affect children? Have you found effective ways to deal with it?
16. What do the authors mean by "problem-solving deficit disorder," "age compression," and "compassion deficit disorder"? How have you seen any of these problems affect the children you know? What are some ways to counteract them?

17. Why do the authors feel that "just say no" is not an adequate response to the sexualization of childhood? Do you agree?
  
18. What do the authors suggest parents can do to shield their children from the commercial culture? What can and should the wider society do to help parents with this job?
  
19. The authors say that staying connected with your children is one of the most important ways to help your children through the sexualized minefields and counteract the harm being caused. Can you think of examples where you have succeeded at this -- or failed? What ideas do you have about what else you might do?
  
20. The authors recommend accurate, honest, age-appropriate sex education. What do they mean? What kind of sex education did your children have? How do you feel about it? What kind of sex education would you consider appropriate for a first-grader? A 7th-grader? A high school student?
  
21. What do the authors mean by "media literacy"?
  
22. The authors recommend many ways to "turn the world around," to make it a place that better supports the healthy development of children. The last one is "Find meaningful ways to make a difference, ways that work for you and your family." What ideas do you have about how to do this?
  
23. What are some ways we could work together to create a safer environment for all children?