

# PORN LITERACY CURRICULUM



In 2016, in response to concern about the impact of pornography on adolescents, Jess Alder and Nicole Daley at the Boston Public Health Commission's Start Strong program partnered with a researcher, Dr. Emily Rothman, to develop a media literacy curriculum on pornography for adolescents.





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WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE CURRICULUM?

Rather than focus exclusively on telling youth what not to do, the curriculum highlights the importance of healthy, respectful dating and sexual relationships.





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Instead, the topic of pornography—which so many youth find funny, new, and interesting to talk about—is used as a vehicle for raising related topics including:

- Sexual consent
- Healthy dating and respectful relationships
- Expectations about male/female roles in sex and relationships (i.e, “gender norms”)
- The unacceptability of violence in relationships
- Unhealthy attitudes that encourage body dissatisfaction
- the potential for commercial sexual exploitation
- Work in pornography is not typically a quick or easy way to become rich or a celebrity





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This curriculum does not presume that youth have viewed pornography and no pornography is shown during the class.



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WHY DID YOU START A PORNOGRAPHY LITERACY PROGRAM?



Just as “media literacy” programs have been helping youth understand how a steady flow of advertising, entertainment and social media influences their perceptions, a “pornography literacy” curriculum might help youth interpret and make sense of the sexually explicit media to which they are exposed.

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## WHY DID YOU START A PORNOGRAPHY LITERACY PROGRAM?

Whether the use of pornography by adults, or youth, constitutes a “public health crisis” is presently being debated.

However, virtually no one believes that the primary source of information about sexuality, sex, health and relationships for youth should be internet pornography—and yet there are research studies that suggest that some youth are receiving part of their education about sex from sexually explicit internet media.





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The curriculum was created based on qualitative and quantitative research with youth about their use of pornography and dating experiences, and expertise in youth-developed and trauma-informed frameworks.