

FACTS *for* FAMILIES

No. 40

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THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC AND MUSIC VIDEOS

Singing and music have always played an important role in learning and the communication of culture. Children learn from the role models what they see and hear. For many years, some children's television has very effectively used the combination of words, music and fast-paced animation to achieve learning.

Most parents are concerned about what their young children see and hear, but as children grow older, parents pay less attention to the music and videos that hold their children's interest.

The sharing of musical tastes between generations in a family can be a pleasurable experience. Music also is often a major part of a teenager's separate world. It is quite common for teenagers to get pleasure from keeping adults out and causing adults some distress.

A concern to many interested in the development and growth of teenagers is the negative and destructive themes of some kinds of music (rock, rap, hip-hop, etc.), including best-selling albums promoted by major recording companies. The following troublesome themes are prominent:

- Advocating and glamorizing abuse of drugs and alcohol
- Pictures and explicit lyrics presenting suicide as an "alternative" or "solution"
- Graphic violence
- Sex which focuses on control, sadism, masochism, incest, children devaluing women, and violence toward women

Parents can help their teenagers by paying attention to their teenager's purchasing, downloading, listening and viewing patterns, and by helping them identify music that may be destructive. An open discussion without criticism may be helpful.

Music is not usually a danger for a teenager whose life is balanced and healthy. But if a teenager is persistently preoccupied with music that has seriously destructive themes, and there are changes in behavior such as isolation, depression, alcohol or other drug abuse, evaluation by a qualified mental health professional should be considered.

The Influence of Rock and Music Videos, “Facts for Families,” No. 40 (9/08)

For additional information see *Facts for Families*:

#3 Teens: Alcohol and Other Drugs,

#10 Teen Suicide,

#13 Children and TV Violence,

#55 Understanding Violent Behavior in Children, and

65 Children’s Threats: When Are They Serious.

See also: *Your Child* (1998 Harper Collins)/*Your Adolescent* (1999 Harper Collins).

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