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PARENT PLUS

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Listen up: Explicit music lyrics can promote risky behavior

The pervasiveness of music as well as provocative lyrics can deliver a one-two punch to youths.

Music lyrics have become more explicit in promoting violence, sexual promiscuity and drugs, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). In addition, online MP3 music downloads, the prevalence of iPods and music-playing cell phones appear to encourage children to alienate themselves from the world with headphones.

It's important for parents to be aware of what their children are listening to. Research shows possible correlations between a teenager's preference for certain musical genres and risky behaviors.

The AAP offers the following suggestions to help parents tune into their kids' listening habits:

- Look up music lyrics online by typing "music lyrics" into a search engine and using one or more of the Web sites that appear.
- Monitor and regulate television viewing to ensure music videos are appropriate based on your child's age and maturity.
- Look for the music industry's parental advisory warning of explicit content. The label is a black-and-white logo on the front of CDs and DVDs.
- Analyze media and teach your kids what is and isn't appropriate.

— *David Ma*

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