with an Improving Understanding
of MCH grant, Family Voices
IMPACT works to develop ways to
improve health and wellness for all
children and families, and to
encourage partnerships between
families and professionals for
children's good health.

www.familyvoices.org and
www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org.

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PROMOTING
HEALTHY
SEXUALITY

February 2012

Sexuality in the Media

Sexual content in television programming
is on the rise. A 2005 study by the Kaiser
Family Foundation showed that the
number of programs with sexual content
increased from 50% in 1997/98 to 70%
in 2005. (To read about the study, go to:
www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia110905nr.
cfm)

Add to this the easy access to direct and
often graphic references to sex on the
Internet. This explosion of sexual content
on television and the Internet makes a
parent's job in promoting healthy sexual
development more of a challenge—and
much more important.

The Canadian Peel Public Health website
has tips for helping parents protect their
children from the negative impact of the
media's portrayal of sexuality, including:

• Keep TVs, DVD players, video games,
and computers where you can be
involved in their use. Don't put them
in your child's bedroom.

• Make media a family activity. Watch TV
together. Keep an eye on your child's
Internet surfing. Ask and answer
questions, and let your children know
what you consider inappropriate
portrayal of sex on TV.

• Use content ratings and parental
advisories to alert you of potential
violence, sex, language, and other adult
material. Help your child choose age-
appropriate shows and games.

• Use Internet-blocking programs to
prevent your child from (intentionally
or unintentionally) accessing adult-
themed websites.

• Help your child be safe on the
Internet. Children should never give
out their names, addresses, phone
numbers, school names, information
about parents or siblings, or even
favorite products.

• Watch music videos with your
children—once with the sound and
once without. Ask them about the
stories the videos and songs tell, and
how they make them feel.

• For more suggestions, go to: www.
peelregion.ca/health/sexuality/parents/
parents-media.htm#protect

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