



# FREE ONLINE CONFERENCE, OCTOBER 14-18

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## **Kristen Jensen**

### *Protecting Young Kids from Pornography*

Welcome to Happily Family. I'm Cecilia Hilkey And I'm Jason Hilkey and we're delighted to have Kristen Jensen with us. Kristen is a number one bestselling author of good pictures, bad pictures, read aloud books, the executive producer of the brain defense digital safety for curriculum and the founder of defendant young minds.com. Welcome Kristen. It's great to have you. Thanks for inviting me.

It's so good to be with you. I wanted to start by asking you how you got started writing books about protecting kids from pornography. And also there were even some statistics that you talked about wanting to make sure that parents out there knew. Could you tell us about how you got started in this work? Sure. Well, I can tell you that when I was in high school,

I didn't look ahead and say, I want to write a book about porn for kids. Now. I didn't think that kind of came to me. I feel almost like it's one of the reasons I think I was put on the planet, but it's all started about 10 or 11 years ago when I met a new friend who I had just moved into this area and she came to me one night.

She called me and told me about this tragic story. She was a homeschooling mom and she was trying to protect, you know, her kids from all the evils out there. But you know, the internet was in their home and their oldest son, they found out that he was sexually molesting his younger brothers and sisters. And it was a large family and,

you know, porn was involved in all of this. So she called me up and told me the sad, sad story. We talked till early in the wee hours of the morning. And after I went to bed, I got up the next morning. I just had this thought that wouldn't leave my mind that, you know, young children needed to be warned about pornography at a,

at a young age. So they weren't caught off guard. So they were prepared to reject it. And so I thought, well, there's gotta be a book and I'll just buy this. I'll get on Amazon. I'll just buy a book for her so that she can read it to her younger children. And you know, that'll be my little bit of service to her.

Well, I got on Amazon and I couldn't find anything. I could not find anything. I found books about, you know, body safety and, you know, being protected from sexual abuse and all that. But I did not see anything. So then I got this crazy idea that I would write it. I mean, I, I majored in English,

you know, I can write. So I thought, oh, I'll just write a children's book. And you know, how hard could this be? Well, three years later finally published it. And that was the beginning of good pictures, bad pictures, porn proofing, today's young kids for seven to 11 year olds. And then I had parents come to me and ask me for,

for a book for even younger children, which the first time a mom came up to me and asked me for that, I just felt like someone had like punched me in the gut, like what she goes. Yeah. For like preschoolers I'm like, I thought seven was young, but actually then I started to look around and saw that every three-year-old was on an iPad and that the dangers were there.

So that was the beginning of good pictures, bad pictures, junior, a simple plan to protect young minds. And both as you mentioned, have become best sellers on Amazon. So they're definitely meeting a need out there for parents who want to get an early start to help defend their children from the enemies that are out there. So that's how I got started kind of crazy.

And you had talked a little bit about stats earlier, before we started recording. Is this like, what out there shows us like, this is actually a problem or is it just like a one or two case kind of scenario? Oh no, it's a huge problem. And, and I could, I could give you lots of statistics on, you know,

how many, you know, one in 10, one in 10 visitors to porn sites are kids 10 and under, you know, I could give you lots of, of numbers, but I think the worst part of it is that parents don't actually realize what's going on. And we call that the naive take gap. And there are several studies, one that was recently done.

I'm just going to look at my notes by the British board of film classification research in which they ask parents, you know, how many of you think that your child has viewed pornography? And 25% said? Yeah, I think so. When in reality it was 53%. So more than double. So that's a huge naive take gap. Meaning parents are thinking it's this big of a problem when it's really this big of a problem.

You know, it's, it's, it's a much bigger problem. Parents tend to underestimate the negative experiences that their children are having online. So if I could just convince people without doing scare task scare tactics, that this is a big problem. It's everywhere. You may not see it on your social media, but it's there for kids and they're being targeted and they're sharing things.

And they're curious. And so, and good kids get pulled into porn. It's not that your kid is a bad kid or that you're a bad parent at all. You are just up against an enormous threat. So, I mean, if you

think about an army, right, you think about soldiers going into war, they underestimate their enemy. What happens,

you know, they're hurt. So first thing is we cannot underestimate the porn industry and all the ways our kids are getting into porn. So Kristen, how do we begin this conversation with kids? And especially, I could imagine some parents are listening and they're probably thinking well, but if I talk to my kids about pornography, they're going to get even more curious and seek it out.

And I definitely don't want that. So how do we start? Right. Well, I'll tell you, I would win a prize for, for being, feeling guilty about everything, right? And moms tend to do this too. You know, if we could feel guilty about it, we will. Right? So the thing is this parents have two choices.

One they can do the cross, your fingers and hope, hope, hope, hope that your kid will not see porn until the day after you decide to start talking to them about it or the week after. Right? But that just doesn't work. We can never really guess we have no idea when they're going to be confronted with pornography exposed to it.

I have so many stories of young children. Five-year-olds on school buses being exposed because you know, so many third graders have these, which is a travesty. So I think the first thing is we have to realize that because children are curious, it's better that we begin this conversation so that they come to us for the answers and not Google or their friends,

right? So we set ourselves up as the experts. Then, you know, they can come to us. If we tell them, Hey, this is out there. You know, this is what I need you to do. And they will do it. Especially these younger children. They'll, they'll do what you ask them to do. Most kids,

especially at a younger age, one little boy who was nine years old, his mom had read good pictures, bad pictures to him. And he had the plan. So part of the plan is to once you recognize it and turn away, you need to come and tell someone like your parent. And so he was at school on the playground, third grader,

you know, third grade, Hey, look at this, you know, and he recognized it as pornography. It scared him, but he knew what to do. He went home, he told his mom and he said, I was scared, but I knew what to do. I mean, I was scared, but I knew what to do, what a gift that she had given her son to,

you know, to be able to come and tell her and open that conversation too many children are carrying this burden alone. And in secret, they simply don't have the vocabulary. They are worried that they'll get in trouble. They're worried that you'll take their device from the whatever, or whoever showed it to them will get into trouble. And so they just shut up.

And, but if we've opened a conversation, they know that they can come and talk to us and we're not going to freak out, but we're going to help them through this and help them to, you know, I,

in the, in the can-do plan, in my original book, there's, you know, it, it teaches you teaches children what to do when they see it,

but also what to do when they remember it, when those memories, their shocking memories come back, how do you deal with those memories? What to do and how, and so we have a specific method that basically teaches a child to know how to like minimize those neural pathways. So I would say that we have to like the curiosity, it's true.

We're not going to make them more curious than their environment is already making Them. And how does that conversation start as a parent? You know, I heard you say, like you opened the conversation, know, begin that conversation. What does that look like? And I know it depends on the age of the child's. Maybe it gives us a couple of scenarios and then lead us into a little bit about what you talked about.

Like, you have some plans that you present in your books, so folks could understand like, okay, so that's the opening and then what, Yeah. Okay. So, you know, books are a great way to talk to a child about an uncomfortable topic. That's why we like to have books. You know how to talk to kids about sex.

You know, that kind of thing. It's not the stork or whatever, you know, it's various books that, that are out there. A book is great, cause it has a beginning. So it gets, you started has a middle and helps you explain things has an end. Cause sometimes we can go on too long. And so in good pictures,

bad pictures, and this, you know, whether you use good pictures, bad pictures or not, there are three things that kids need to know. One, they need to have a definition so they can recognize it. That's the first thing, you know, you, no matter what you tell them, I mean, they need to be able to recognize it.

And we use a very simple definition that just gives them enough information about pornography so they can recognize it, but not so much that it's, it's like pouring tar into their mind. We're not doing that second. They need to have a warning. They need to understand that pornography can be harmful to their brain, to their body. And, and to the way they look at people,

it can become an addiction. It can really harm them. And so they need to have a warning. So they have a reason reject it. And then third, they need a plan so that they're ready, you know, like a fire drill or whatever they're ready. And they know exactly what to do when they see it. So just like that little boy,

I knew what to do, you know? And isn't it wonderful. Like when you get in a situation and you don't know what to do, it's, it's freaky. It's scary. But if you know what to do, suddenly, you know, you can be calm and you can take the right approach. So those three things in starting the conversation,

they need a definition, a warning and a plan. And the way good pictures, bad pictures starts out is it's a mom and she's just talking to her son. And she is saying, there's good pictures. And she's showing a photo album or, you know, pictures on an iPad, whatever. Here are the good pictures. These remind us of,

you know, our family and our friends and all the good times we've had, but there are bad pictures too. And these bad pictures can harm you. And then she goes on and talks about pornography. And so I think the contrasting is a good way to start out. So, but I wrote good pictures, bad pictures to make it super comfortable and easy.

And if you go on Amazon and see the 2000 reviews, you can see that that is the theme that keeps coming up. Parents say it was so easy. It was not awkward. It was comfortable. And that's what took three years today, basically. Sure. I can imagine. And you know, I can, I can surely imagine how great that is for a parent to have a book about an uncomfortable subject.

I mean, that's something that they probably don't even really know where to start with and even having this conversation, it's difficult to even know, like what, how do you even talk about it? Like how do you even define it? And, and then also for kids, it gives them some something else to focus on and to see that there's this going into it.

It makes a ton of sense. You know, as preschool teachers, we saw that a lot and books made things so much more tangible and external to the person that's presenting it. And so there's a lot of value in that. I see. And, and you've got two different books and it sounds like one is geared more towards a little bit of an older group.

And the other is geared for a different group for a younger group. And are the definitions different in those of like what pornography is and what the plan is, are those, do they differ in that way or does it differ in how it's presented? So in the junior book, it's very simple, much fewer words, but accomplishes similar things, you know,

the definition, the warning and the plan, I would say the definition is similar, but in the book for over older kids, good pictures, bad pictures, porn proofing, today's young kids. That definition is, and it talks even more about how it can make you feel and how can be tricky because pornography can feel both arousing to a child. Interesting.

And it can also feel sickening and, you know, and so they have these two tricky feelings. It could be, feel like the pull of a giant magnet. We use that in the book, but the problem, but then we explain the problem. So there are a lot more words, but each chapter has let's talk questions after each. So it's like a workbook within the book that you can talk,

you can go through the questions and you can make sure that the child understands, you know, the information in each chapter. Okay, great. Thanks. Yeah. What about filters on computers? Is that enough protection? How do you feel about those? Well, I always say you have to have at

least a two-pronged a two-pronged approach. So you need the high-tech filters and accountability software,

and you need the low tech human relationship oriented talks because a filter will never convince your child not to look at pornography, right? A filter will never persuade them. A filter is just trying to keep their environment clean and so they can grow up healthy, but it will never actually convince them not to look at it. You got to do that. That's your job to persuade them over and over again.

Why pornography is, is, is bad for them really. I mean, and there's in our, on our blog and our articles on PR on defend young minds.com. We have a lot of articles about this, but then let's talk about filters. So we're kind of excited because there's a new filter out there called canopy. And we have an article about it on our,

on our website, on it, in our articles. And can it be used as artificial intelligence? So the computer learns what pornography is and do to T and then it in a millisecond takes out the image. So if you're on a website and there's inappropriate stuff, or even YouTube, it's going to take it out. So your child won't even see it.

And so that is superior technology to what is in a lot of filtering, which is basically we maintain a list of all the bad websites, right? Because what if there's a website like a travel website, right? And it has a picture of a nude beach in there. Maybe we don't want our kids seeing that, you know? And so, you know,

it'll take out that picture without like, or maybe, you know, your filter is going to take out all instances of the word breast, but you're looking for chicken breast sales on chicken breasts, guess what? You're not going to get to that website. So, you know, there's some issues with the old style filters, which is kind of like a listing,

but there are, you know, you can do a little bit better with this artificial intelligence. So we recommend canopy. There's also an accountability software where, and monitoring software programs like bark is one that will send reports to you about what your kid is doing online. Now, with all of this, there's a caveat. And that is, these can only look at websites.

If your child has a device with an app, then these filters can not follow your child into the app and see what they're looking at. Right? So that is a, at this point, nobody can get into the apps, no filter can get into the apps. So let's say you are a teenager wants to have social media, but you don't,

you really want to keep an eye on them. So you say, okay, well, because really with social media, there's so much porn on social media and there's no iron gates. They can get to it. It's easy to find. You may not have seen it on your social media, but believe me, if your kid has Snapchat, if your kid has Instagram,

tons of Twitter, tons and tons of porn. So basically have them do it through the web, through it, you know, have them view Instagram or whatever through the website, on a computer, not through an app. And that way things like filters and especially this canopy filter can really help take out the bad stuff. So they never even see it.

Great. You mentioned there was, it's a two-pronged approach and you talked about filters being one of them, an AI filter to our list based filter. What's the other prong of that, Right? So that's the low tech, that's the relationship. That is the persuasion. That's the good pictures, bad pictures. That's, you know, the defining porn,

giving them a warning, giving them a plan, all of that, because no matter how much you lock down all the devices in your house, they can go right next door. They can go to the library, at least in our state and they can see pornography. So you have to have an internal filter, I guess that's the second form, right?

An internal filter so that not, they not only know how to reject it, but they know why. And they want to reject that they have good reasons that you've persuaded them. Right? So that's the two-pronged approach tonight. I have a few other things that I have a couple more. If you want to hear them, you know, we can call it a four prong approach.

So, and, and I, I mentioned before, I have a whole presentation on this four pillar approach, but the other two are defining and teaching your kids about sex earlier than you might feel comfortable. Now you can read good pictures, bad pictures without the sex talk, but I highly recommend that you start early. And I have some really good articles about that because one of the number one reasons,

kids go to porn and hire porn. They hire porn to do a job for them. And that is, teach me about sex. My parents won't talk to me about it. I'm nine years old. I've heard things on the playground. I've even seen a few things. I, I don't know what this is and I need to know. And so kids younger and younger.

So we basically say, you know, at seven, they should have a really good idea about what, how babies are born, how babies are made. And, but also not just the mechanics of sex, but starting with, you know, the, you know, the ideal purposes of sex, right? To bond, to people that love each other,

right? Because pornography teaches the exact opposite and we don't want pornography messing around with their sexual templates. We really, you know, that's not a healthy way. And the other one is, so we've got emotional resilience. Children need to know how to deal with their negative emotions in healthy ways, because porn, I mean, it's so great because it's so instant,

it's easy to get access to. And it works. If you have just been bullied, if you're lonely, if you've messed up, if your parents are getting a divorce, whatever, and you feel Nike, these negative,

horrible feelings, pornography will take you right away, you know, from that. And especially once you start once a child learns,

they can masturbate to it. You know, that experience is very, it takes them away from their it's a short term, you know, problem-solver, I mean, it works. That's why they hire porn and we want them to be able to be emotionally resilient. So they know that porn is not the thing, the higher that will give you that will lead to more and more problems,

but relationships, you know, come talk to me. If you're feeling lonely, let's work on this. You know, being able to identify your Ava, which we have a lot, we have a whole guide about teaching kids, you know, building emotional resilience in kids. So you can look, find that on our website, on our guides page.

I so appreciate this conversation because this is a topic that we get asked about a lot. And it's definitely on a lot of parents' minds. And I hear I'm hearing more and more from parents who come to us and I'm sure they're coming to you too and say, oh my goodness, my child got exposed. So what do you do in that situation with a child that,

that has been exposed, right? Been exposed or even started looking at it. Maybe you find out that they've been viewing it. I heard a story of an eight year old girl who they told her about sex, but they hadn't told her about porn. And so she, she did what we all do. She had an internet connected device. She typed in sex and away.

She went for months looking at horrible things. So we want to be able to, you know, help children to know what to do and not be, not be caught off guard. We have a guide called my kids, saw porn. Now what a smart plan guide for parents. And it goes step by step by step. First thing is S for stay calm.

You need to deal with your own emotions first before you, and you can take 24 or 48, you know, 72 hours before you confront your child, you should not confront your child immediately calm yourself down. Then you mean, you need to make a plan M make a plan. And so we go through, step-by-step make a plan. Here are the questions that you're going to need to ask your child,

find out what they've seen. What device are you using? You know, we have about 10 questions and you don't want to sit down in it, you know, interrogation style, you know, in the police station, right? But you want to, you know, over several conversations, you know, tease this out. And if you're calm, they'll most likely give you more and more information.

Now, they're not going to give it to you all the first time. I promise you, I'm almost going to promise you that you need to kind of keep it up. And drip, drip, drip, you know, you'll probably learn the whole story after you've had several conversations. So basically some kids will need counseling just depending on. And we have a whole article about that in this guide.



There are some kids you're going to find out. Maybe you'll find out they've been looking at it for years and now addicted. What do you do about that? Where can you find resources? Again, we have information in our guide about that it's really like 80 or 90 pages where like a book. And, and I really don't know of any other book like this out there,

because we really focused on helping that the parent that has this problem in there, we've also even focused on, you know, what, if my child has been looking at this stuff and then wanted to experiment on another child, which is how I got started writing the book. Right? So what do you do in that situation? Because as bad as being addicted to porn is it's much worse if your child starts,

you know, just, and it really, you know, we, I don't even want to say perpetrator. They're just plain because they're wired to imitate. They're just kind of playing, Hey, I found this out, this new thing. And they usually find some younger, more vulnerable child. And we have information about that situation. So we really want to help parents no matter where this takes them,

but I would just start, don't think the worst and don't freak out. I would say that most parents are going to be in this situation where they're going to find out. Hopefully they will find out. I mean, I know people that have been addicted to porn and gone through recovery and said, my parents don't even know. They don't know that I went through this.

And so hopefully we'll find out if this is the case. And that's a good thing, because if you find out, then you can be it, you know, then you can help them. The thing that's hard for parents to kind of grasp is that they can help if their child wants help. Right. But if you have a 15 year old that's into porn,

you can make some rules. You can, you know, set some boundaries, but they have to want to get out of it themselves. And if you're there for them and you keep that relationship intact, then when they come around and they need help, they'll know, they can come to you. So there's a, there's a wide gamut. But again,

that book, that smart plan guide is very helpful for parents to know exactly what to do after this has happened. And after they find it. Yeah, That's great. I, I think there's a ton of value here that we're talking about. And as we're wrapping up, I just want to check in and see, is there anything that you want to say with any as any final words or a big ask for folks here in the conference?

Yeah. Well, I would just ask parents to really open their eyes and not underestimate problem or the amount of bad stuff that's going to, that their children will be exposed to. Their children have to make a choice at some point that they're not going to look at porn or use porn or hire porn, you know, and every child's gonna really pretty much have to make that choice.

So one thing that we have an extra resource, so we are committed at defend young minds to provide resources that make this easy and effective for parents, not only to have these conversations, but to train their children with digital defense skills and our curriculum, which is

brain defense, digital safety, that curriculum is taught by a cohort of six teens. And it is based on the best and latest prevention science that we know.

And it is all, you know, the methodology and, and everything is based in, you know, social science and, and, but basically what it teaches your kids is not only screen time, you know, good tech habits, but how, what to do if they see pornography and why pornography is problem. And then also how to be a good digital citizen,

you know, how to be kind what to do. If they're bullied, all of these things that kids are facing. And they're taught with humor and they're taught by their older peers, which again, in prevention science, we know that having older peers teach kids is really powerful. So we can tell them this, but if they hear it from these other kids,

we call them the brain gang. They hear from the brain gang, and they just love that we've we pilot it in a lot of schools and with a lot of families. So I would want them to check out Brain Defense, digital safety, go to [braindefense.org](http://braindefense.org), or see it on our website, [defendyoungminds.com](http://defendyoungminds.com) and check it out and use everything that you can find to prepare your children to reject pornography.

It's so valuable. This is a very big topic, obviously. And I want to appreciate you for taking on a difficult topic. You know, this is not an easy thing I think for you to take on, but it's so important for families. And you have a, a lot of resources here. You know, we were talking about your program,

we're talking about books, tracking my guides. What's the best way for people to find out about these. And you you've mentioned at least a couple of guides there as well. Yeah. We've prepared and poli updated around, I think six guides and some of them are free. Some of them are a small fee, but they're all available on our guides page.

And I think you can put that in the show notes and link to that. And we'd also welcome to come and join us on Instagram. We have a large following on Instagram that we're really excited about and we're on Facebook and Twitter and Pinterest, but yeah, find us and, and, you know, get that constant drip, drip, drip information.

Cause if you get on our list, then every week, we'll just remind you, here's something else you can talk about. Here's something else you can try. Here's a threat out there. You may not have known about. Here's a new product that may help you. So that's what we're trying to do. We're just trying to help families and their children.

We love to see a generation of children that are not harmed by pornography. That's what we're working for. Thank you for that, For the work that you're doing with that. And I encourage everyone to go check out the work that they're doing. You know, there's, it's a tough topic for parents. And I think that parents are lost on how to approach this and they feel very alone and they're like,

you know, you like, you experienced yourself. Like they don't know where to start. And there's just not a lot of resources available out there. And this is so valuable. So coach books, go check it out, see, see what you can find that fits for you and for your families. And Kristen, thank you for taking the time to talk to us here.

Thank you for all the work that you're doing. And we look forward to continuing to keep this conversation. Yeah. Yeah. Thank you so much for inviting me. It's a tough topic and you've got a lot of courage and I know you're everyone that's watching. I appreciate their courage to face this head on so their kids won't have to face it alone.

Thank you. Thank you. Bye bye.