

Early access to porn resulting in highly sexualised behaviour in school playgrounds, Kidz Biz Education says

Tim Williams, EDUCATION REPORTER, Sunday Mail (SA)
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YOUNG children are inadvertently accessing pornography at primary school while innocently searching for their favourite cartoon and television characters.

And parents are letting children as young as 10 join social media sites, giving them another avenue to pornographic material that results in “totally inappropriate”, highly sexualised behaviours in the playground.

Adelaide-based personal and social development provider Kidz Biz Education says schools are asking for help after incidents including Year 4 boys “dry humping” each other, girls doing “gyrating and crotch-grabbing” dances in front of boys and sexting between upper primary students.

Founder Wendy Hill said students were being exposed to porn through “pop-ups” on otherwise innocent-looking web pages, despite the best efforts of schools to block explicit materials.

She said social media hashtag searches were another minefield, citing a search for “Autumn” being likely to bring up images of porn stars of that name as well as pictures of trees and leaves.

The images and videos children were stumbling upon at home or at school, then actively seeking more of, were “very hardcore, degrading, often brutal” porn.

But the children were often “too scared” to tell parents or teachers about their online discoveries for fear they would be banned from computers.

“It’s causing little kids to start simulating sex acts at school,” Ms Hill said.

“Kids need to be educated because the bottom line is we can’t stop it (access to porn). It misrepresents the reality (of sex) on so many levels.”

Ms Hill said parents who allowed young children to use social media sites, in breach of the sites’ age restrictions, had “a lot of problems not understanding, or perhaps not caring” about the consequences.

An Education Department spokesman said use of “rigorous internet filtering” was “one part of a solution to protect students” from harmful online material and that it was equally important for parents and schools to educate students.

He said school staff received mandatory training in dealing with inappropriate sexualised behaviour, including counselling and reporting and liaising with parents and police. Cyber safety was a key part of the child protection curriculum.

Kidz Biz Education, which works across 120 schools each year, said more most pupils who completed feedback surveys preferred to learn about sex and relationships from “other professionals” instead of teachers and parents.