



CANADA'S CENTRE  
FOR DIGITAL AND  
MEDIA LITERACY

## Managing Music in the Home

- Listen to the music your children like. Read the lyrics and discuss them with your kids.
- Broaden your kids' musical tastes by exposing them to different kinds of music: jazz, classical, folk, country, blues, show tunes, etc., through recording and live concerts. Show them how the music they enjoy didn't develop in a void, but is a culmination of many different earlier musical influences.
- If your kids like music videos, watch with them and use violent or sexist content as starting points for discussing gender stereotyping and media violence.
- Talk about the role gender stereotyping plays in the marketing of female artists. An examination of some magazine covers will help illustrate how the industry continues to promote women artists as sex objects.
- Watch out for body image issues in music and discuss them with your kids. Whether it's a video or a news story or profile about a musician, encourage your kids to look at how much attention is paid to their attractiveness compared to their performance or musical skill. You can also have your kids look more broadly at how many different body types are found among the successful artists in a particular genre: are all the female artists thin, attractive and sexual? Are all the male artists heavily muscled?
- When your kids are young, you have the right to ban music you find inappropriate from your house. Talk to your kids about your decision and explain why you find the music objectionable. Even if they disagree, your kids will probably respect your decision if you explain your motivation.
- Teens will object to censorship of their music, and they have the right to defend their viewpoint. Discuss freedom of expression versus censorship, and try to come up with a compromise that respects everyone's feelings.
- When purchasing music for your kids, look for Parental Advisory labels that warn of explicit lyrics. Keep in mind that labeling is voluntary for recording companies, so you can't assume that music without a label will be appropriate for all ages.
- Sit down with your child and create some house rules regarding music downloads. For example, explain that they're not allowed to download music that is tagged as having explicit lyrics in the iTunes store. Make sure you're automatically notified when purchases are made. Consider buying your child a gift card or a prepaid credit card to keep spending under control.



- If your child bought a CD with an advisory label without your permission, at a store, return it. Most stores have a "hassle-free" return policy if a parent disapproves of a child's purchase.
- Supervise your kids' access to music on the Internet. The music and lyrics for virtually any song can be freely downloaded from the Internet by anyone, regardless of age. In some cases there are even additional lyrics that have been censored in the retail version.

To make a complaint or comment about specific music, you can contact:

- The retailer carrying the product
- The producers of the recorded music or music video
- The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) (<http://crtc.gc.ca/eng/contact/#complaint>) if the song or music video was broadcast on Canadian radio or television stations
- The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council (CBSC) (<http://www.cbsc.ca/make-a-complaint/>) for music or music videos that violate the Canadian broadcast codes for *ethics*, *sex-role portrayal* and *violence*

If music promotes hatred towards a specific group, consult our guide [Responding to Online Hate](#) for tips on how to take action. Note that some streaming music services, such as Spotify, have a policy of not censoring music under any circumstances: while you may choose to block access to the service, talking to your children about the issue is almost always the best choice.

If the music was streamed or downloaded from the Internet, contact the site or service where it was found. For instance, YouTube allows visitors to "flag" offensive videos (you need to have a YouTube account to do this). For more information see <http://support.google.com/youtube/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=95403>.

