

# Kids and Sexuality: Enough Is Enough

Stop.

No, that's not enough. To paraphrase "the girl" in Hemingway's story "Hills Like White Elephants," "Would you please please please please please please stop?"

Second-graders at a swimming pool should not be placed in an adult changing room.

Anyone with a grain of sense understands this concept.

In Asheville, North Carolina, I used to belong to the YMCA. My youngest son, then a teenager, belonged as well, and often we drove together to the Y, where he would play basketball and I would try to fight off the sagging muscles that arrive with aging and lassitude. He changed in the room provided for young guys – there was also a family changing room – and I changed in the room for adult males.

Men used to wander around naked everywhere in that room. I'm not just talking young men, I mean guys my age and up, men in their sixties and seventies. The sight of some of those bodies was frightening, even when you are 60 years old yourself. Without going into too much detail, just imagine a lot of wrinkled, grizzled codgers with sagging muscles who for whatever reasons couldn't bother to put a towel around their midriff, much less don a minimum amount of clothing. Ugh.

I see equally horrific spectacles when I visit the beach. Droopy pecs, bellies hanging over swimming trunks like bragging rights on how much beer, ice cream, and peanut butter have traveled through the system, and even speedos on old dudes who should be wearing bathrobes: Please please please stop. Put on a T-shirt when you're up and moving across the

sand. (I'm leaving the women out of my observations. You're on your own, ladies.)

Now if an old guy like me regards the sight of naked or near-naked old men as shocking, think how some seven-year-old is going to see that wreckage. The kid could be scarred for life. I don't even look in a full-length mirror anymore because I could be scarred for life.

Apparently, not everyone agrees.

Parents of kids at Brooklyn's Sunset Park School [were shocked](#) to find their second-graders were in changing rooms at the Asphalt Green fitness center with both teachers and naked patrons. To be fair to Asphalt Green, an organization representative said that the fitness center has provided "swimming lessons to tens of thousands of public school students" and that it offers "private family changing rooms to allay any concerns."

Sunset Park School principal EuJin Tang sent a letter to parents in June stating that students would receive "'more real-world experiences. For example, every second grader will learn how to swim.'"

That sounds admirable. But if real-world experiences include encountering naked adults in a changing room, many parents want out.

Tang has created controversy in the school several times. She once junked Christmas celebrations, promoted "fall harvest" instead of Thanksgiving, and installed tables after tossing out 1,200 perfectly fine desks.

All that aside, this problem of naked adults in the dressing room is easily solvable. Station a teacher at the door. Have a sign that says the dressing room is closed for five minutes. Have the kids change their clothes. If this option is unavailable, use the family changing room.

This controversy over the changing room is, admittedly, the proverbial tempest in a teacup, but the ongoing [sexualization](#) of our children is an abomination. Drag Queen Story Hour, television sit-coms, sexual material in stories aimed at elementary school kids, fashions for girls, popular contemporary songs, access to online pornography: on and on it goes.

Have we lost the idea of childhood innocence?

To those who keep pushing sex at kids or who insist on propagandizing them about certain lifestyles, I have just two words:

Please stop.

No, that's too polite.

Just stop.

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