

The changing faces of parenting, from the 1960's to the 21st century

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It was the profound social movements of the decade in the sixties that affected changes in American social institutions, causing a shift in views regarding parenting, dating, and our sexuality and the sexuality of others. Before the impact of the social movements of this era began to affect even more changes in American Social institutions, mothers had already begun to slowly pull away from the prevailing inflexible wisdom and practices of their own mothers by utilizing new, revolutionary and more interactive methods introduced by Dr. Benjamin Spock; dating was used as a vehicle for finding suitable marriage partners; and most states had legislation that ruled homosexual activity as illegal; and women were expected to stay virgins until marriage. In the early sixties, profound changes to old ideals and values, including parenting, were initiated, with rock music as a backdrop.

For instance, researchers at Princeton University compiled data from a survey aimed at college students and discovered that, “ the new decade was affecting changes in the way the general media used certain images to depict, ‘ normal ‘families, and that Americans were becoming increasingly accepting of single-parent families,” and that the number of households in this category has growing at a fast rate. The political and socio-economic climates were changing and these we.

General media also began to change the images they utilized to depict, “ normal” families. All of these things, along with the changing climates on the political and socio-economic fronts, were factors which initiated changes in the ways parents interacted with their children. Jeffrey Escoffer reported in his report, “ The Sexual Revolution, 1960-1890,” that, “... attitudes about sexuality began to change as new medicines and the introduction of “ the <https://assignbuster.com/the-changing-faces-of-parenting-from-the-1960s-to-the-21st-century/>

Pill” eliminated fears about contracting AIDS and pregnancy. (Escoffer. Web) Baby Boomers have been credited for making drastic social changes in areas of social equality, the acceptance of premarital sex and homosexuality, and, suddenly, mothers found themselves addressing issues about sex that their mothers before them hadn’t. In 1970, “swinging” was introduced, pornography began to emerge and dating was longer looked at as a means to find a life partner.

In a cross-generational study conducted by students at Missouri Western State College it was determined that, “... students ranging in ages from 18-45 having premarital sex had passed the 80% mark... (Youm. Web. 1995) and sex was more recreational rather than procreation. Yet, the report also noted that Baby Boomers, who were beginning to have babies of their own, were becoming more conservative about selecting partners, and becoming more attuned to what they wanted emotionally and physically.

Baby Boomers were now faced with the challenges of conveying to their children all they’d learned from the sexual revolution and from the Civil and Equal Rights Movements had experienced and that sex was considered safer because of the pill. The days of handing your children 5-volume books series’ to address the questions regarding adolescents’ sexuality was being replaced by intelligent, increasingly creative, and more engaging ways to discuss sexual issues and to stay attuned to their children’s questions regarding sex and their sexuality.

The eighties was the decade of advanced technology and personal computers. During this decade, the divorce rate peaked at 50%, in the United States, and most of those households consisted of Baby Boomers. <https://assignbuster.com/the-changing-faces-of-parenting-from-the-1960s-to-the-21st-century/>

Newly divorced, the “ boomers” got down to the business of dating, discotheques, polyester leisure suits, and smoking marijuana. Boomers also shared common ground on topics regarding sexual activity and the AIDS virus, which resulted in the “ free love” spirit being chilled out and replaced by a new, prevailing fear of contracting a disease.

Baby Boomers were also enjoying higher levels of education than the women of earlier generations had enjoyed, and this was an important tool in helping Baby Boomers to better interact and communicate with their own children, “ Generation X. ” “ Generation Xers” arrived on the scene with a new attitude on authority, having seen many leaders take a fall from grace; they are more tech-savvy; and having been groomed to be both high-performing and high-maintenance, these children believe in their worth and do not hesitate to question the motives of adults, nor do they shy away from verbalizing their values and beliefs.

It is clear that the 60’s was an era that served as a springboard for profound social change, including the Civil Rights Movement, The Sexual Revolution, and Affirmative Action, which was birthed to address issues of disparity in the workplace for women and minorities. This era also redefined what was deemed acceptable socialization of sexuality behavior, broadened our understanding of social identities, and opened up more methods of communication and receiving information from other sources.

All of these factors forced mothers to redefine what they had been taught was acceptable sexual identities and behavior; open our minds to the possibilities that our children’s ideals, values and beliefs could conflict with our expectations; and to find more interactive ways to better understand the <https://assignbuster.com/the-changing-faces-of-parenting-from-the-1960s-to-the-21st-century/>

serious life issues our very intelligent children were dealing with. Jeni Loftus, PhD candidate at Indiana University noted in her research paper, "America's Liberation, Oct. 2001, that "... the changing demographics, in America, and higher levels of education for mothers," (Loftus, Web 2001. are all factors that may account for changes in our attitudes toward sexuality, communication with our children, and in trying to obtain a deeper understanding of the people are children are becoming. This statement holds some truth but all the changes experienced from 1960 through the decade in which we now live were initiated during the profound social movements of the 60's, an era that demanded a deviation from the methods and ideologies taught to us by those who came before us, and this included the art of parenting.