



Jeffy: What is it and what do you need to look out for?



Jeffy is the main character of a popular YouTube puppet show watched by millions of people published by the channel SuperMarioLogan. At first glance, the puppets and other Muppet-like characters may seem child friendly, but in reality, the videos include a lot of profanity and trivialise some very serious issues such as suicide and learning disabilities. Here is everything you need to know about the YouTube star.

Why could Jeffy pose a risk to children?

In the last few years, there has been a boom in what is now classified as adult animation. A lot of these shows and videos have traits that could make you jump to the assumption that they are meant for children, such as goofy cartoon characters or talking animals, but are in reality produced for an 18+ audience. Jeffy videos fall under this category and children unknowingly scrolling through YouTube might click on them thinking the content is appropriate for their age group.

The character Jeffy is supposed to be a teenager with some sort of unspecified learning disability. He is foul-mouthed and treats his father and the people around him very badly. This could set a negative example for your child if they try to mimic Jeffy's behaviour.

The character also reinforces cruel and insensitive stereotypes surrounding children with disabilities, as he wears a diaper, bicycle helmet and has a pencil up his nose. Children with learning disabilities watching these videos could potentially be very hurt and they could have a negative impact on their self-esteem.

Why is Jeffy a controversial character?

Aside from the swearing and the adult themes hiding behind the mask of a children's show, there are other reasons for why Jeffy has caused controversy. In late 2017, the puppet made national headlines after a mother found her five-year-old child with an improvised noose around his neck, mimicking something they had seen in a Jeffy video.



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In an episode, Jeffy threatens to kill himself by hanging because his father, played by a Super Mario puppet, won't buy him an iPad game. That particular video received 12 million views. The creator of the video issued an apology following the incident but emphasised that his videos were not meant for children. Although it is an extreme example, Jeffy does display a lot of undesirable behaviour which you would not want your child to take on.

How do I prevent my child from watching Jeffy?

Following several complaints from concerned parents, Jeffy was given an adult rating by YouTube and can now only be watched by older audiences. To prevent your child from accessing inappropriate content, make sure they are watching videos through the YouTube Kids app. When using this particular version of the video-sharing platform, the content they can access will be filtered so that no content containing profanity, violence or nudity is available.

If you are wondering how to set up and use YouTube Kids, the Digital Schools Membership includes a separate handout exploring all the functions of YouTube Kids and how to use it.