



## Kidfluencers and Family Vloggers:

### The Exploitation of Children Under the Mask of Modern Freedom

In today's age of digital exposure, nothing remains private. Even the most intimate moments of children's lives are now traded on social media platforms—not just as content, but as commodities. Kidfluencers and family vloggers have become the face of this trend, a phenomenon that not only upholds commercial interests but also violates the fundamental rights of children. Behind the seemingly innocent videos lies a structural imbalance deeply rooted in the secular, capitalist, and individualistic worldview of the modern West.

#### What Are Kidfluencers and Family Vloggers?

Kidfluencers are children with a large social media following, often managed by their parents. Family vloggers document family life, including their children, and share these videos with hundreds of thousands or even millions of viewers. They generate income through ads, sponsorships, and brand deals.

What may have begun as a harmless way of documenting memories has, in many cases, evolved into a model of exploitation where children—even from birth—are used as instruments for profit.

#### Concerns from Research and Government

The *Exploratory Study on the Use of Children in Family Vlogs and Social Media Content* by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (SZW, 2020) raises alarming questions about child protection in this space. The findings include that there is virtually no legal protection for children working on social media. Children are often intensively and frequently featured, without oversight or support and there is no monitoring of the income generated by parents through their children.

A follow-up *SZW study in 2022* reiterates these points: the commercial interests of parents and companies outweigh the mental and social development of the child. This trend reflects a society where individual gain takes precedence over collective care and ethical responsibility.

#### The Dark Side: A Breeding Ground for Abuse

In addition to economic exploitation, there are serious risks of child abuse. Experts warn that exposing children publicly on digital platforms attracts unwanted attention from pedophiles. The content—often seemingly innocent—is shared, edited, and fetishized in certain online networks.

This reveals a painful truth about the Western idea of freedom: parents essentially have the right to exploit their children online under the guise of "personal choice." But the price is paid by the child—exposed without consent, without comprehension of the consequences, and without legal protection.

#### The Root Problem: Secular Capitalism and Individualism

The breeding ground for these phenomena is secular Western capitalism, where the individual and economic profit are central. In this system parenthood is seen not as an *amanah* (trust), but as a private matter where parents enjoy unchecked freedom to use their children for personal gain. Moreover, children are increasingly viewed as extensions of the parent's ego—a status symbol, a brand, a revenue source. And media companies and Big Tech enable this by designing algorithms that push child-focused content without restrictions.

This systemic deviation undermines the dignity of the child and erodes the family bond.

## The Islamic Perspective: Responsibility, Protection, and Honor

In Islam, parenthood is a sacred responsibility. Children are not property but a trust (*amanah*) from Allah. The Prophet Muhammad (saw) said: «أَلَا كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْنُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ» “Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*)

### Parental Responsibilities in Islam

In Islam parents are obligated to raise their children in an environment of respect, faith, and protection. There is a no harm principle (لا ضرر ولا ضرار) that says parents are not permitted to harm their children, neither physically nor emotionally—and not by exposing them publicly.

Islam obliges parents to provide sound moral and spiritual education and Privacy and dignity. The child's honor and privacy are sacred. Sharing intimate images or personal content violates Islamic ethics.

### The Rights of the Child in Islam

- The right to a name and identity
- The right to protection and safety
- The right to food, clothing, and shelter
- The right to love and compassion
- The right to education and moral upbringing
- The right to privacy and dignity

Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا﴾ “O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire...” [Surah At-Tahrim, 66:6].

### An Islamic Society: Preventing Exploitation

An Islamic society, governed by *shari'ah* principles, establishes clear boundaries to prevent such abuses.

**Media regulation:** Children cannot be commercially exploited without consent and proper protection.

**Social accountability:** Parenthood is not unlimited freedom but a duty bound by religious and societal ethics.

**Moral economics:** Profit must never come through the exploitation of the vulnerable, especially children.

**Community guardianship:** The Muslim *ummah* serves as a moral compass, correcting public harm and protecting communal values.

### Conclusion: Returning to Human Dignity

The phenomenon of kidfluencers and family vloggers is not a harmless trend—it is a symptom of a much deeper problem: the failure of secular individualism to protect children from exploitation. Children do not need an audience—they need protection. Islam not only provides a spiritual framework for this but also a practical one, where the child is at the center as a dignified human being, and parents are seen as guardians—not content producers.

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