# A mother’s reflections on raising a daughter amid today’s beauty and fashion pressures



A mother and former fashion writer has shared her reflections on raising a young daughter amid the pervasive culture of beauty ideals and image obsession that dominate today’s society. The Guardian reports that the mother’s experiences highlight the challenges many parents face in navigating a world where fashion and appearance are increasingly tied to status and identity, especially for young girls.

The mother describes an early encounter with these pressures when her seven-year-old daughter played a game on her husband’s phone, which involved cleaning, moisturising, and applying exaggerated makeup to a cartoon character’s face, culminating in a princess-like makeover. This scenario led her to ponder whether exposing her daughter to the fashion industry she works in might inadvertently support narrow and commercialised standards of female beauty.

Having taken her daughter to a fashion show at age four, the mother recalls her child’s excitement photographing models dressed in glamorous and provocative outfits, with questions about being “cool” reflecting early engagement with appearance-based validation. The subsequent release of the Barbie film sparked further contrasts in the daughter’s perception, as she compared herself to the iconic doll portrayed by Margot Robbie, who embodied traditional, pristine beauty standards. Despite having a range of modern Barbies with diverse appearances, the child noted her difference from the film’s image of Barbie.

The article observes that contemporary culture subjects young people to an overwhelming volume of beauty-related imagery, especially through social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, where algorithms intensify exposure to idealised and often edited appearances. Educational strategist Chloe Combi, cited in the piece, explains that young girls today encounter vastly more images daily than previous generations and face constant peer pressure around beauty rituals such as acrylic nails, skincare routines, and makeup. Combi describes this pressure as a factor in rising anxieties about body image and self-worth.

The British College of Aesthetic Medicine’s 2024 report highlighted an increase in requests for aesthetic treatments from under-18s, raising concerns about the accessibility of unregulated cosmetic procedures to children and teenagers. The phenomenon known as the “Ozempic effect”, referencing the use of weight-loss medications within the fashion world, further exemplifies unhealthy standards linked to thinness that persist in certain sectors.

The mother’s reflections indicate a desire to shield her daughter from these pressures, encouraging critical thinking and self-acceptance instead. Education specialist Cathy Walker, also featured in the report, emphasises the importance of teaching young people to question beauty content they encounter online, helping them understand motivations behind such images and reclaim their agency.

The mother and other parents attempt to model positive body image at home, countering societal messages by normalising diverse bodies and rejecting diet culture. Clinical psychologist Jo-Ann Finkelstein warns that an excessive focus on appearance from an early age can cause girls to prioritise beauty over inner qualities, complicating their self-esteem and wellbeing. She advocates for attention to character and depth rather than superficial traits.

As fast fashion brands and social media influencers continue to promote often unrealistic and uniform styles, challenges around clothing choices and self-esteem arise even before adolescence. Efforts such as encouraging sustainable practices like upcycling and personalising clothing are part of strategies to encourage individuality and reduce conformity to fleeting trends.

The article closes on a poignant moment as the daughter plays with a broken Barbie doll, labelling it “her weird Barbie” as it is assembled and disassembled. This image symbolises the complex relationship children have with beauty standards—wonder and playfulness alongside confrontation with imperfection and difference.

In sum, The Guardian’s report offers an in-depth look at a mother's navigation of motherhood, fashion, and feminist concerns as she aims to support her daughter growing up in a world saturated with beauty expectations and image modification, emphasising the need for resilience, critical engagement, and diverse representation.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/features/a9587361/stage-mother-beautiful-daughter/> - This article explores the relationship between mothers and daughters in a world obsessed with beauty, referencing Shirley Temple's mother as a historical example of managing a child's image. It highlights the temptation for mothers to enhance their child's natural beauty in today's visually driven society.
2. <https://www.elle.com/culture/books/a41805097/balancing-motherhood-creativity-art-monster-essay/> - This piece touches on the creative challenges of motherhood, which can encompass navigating societal pressures on beauty and identity. It reflects on the balancing act between personal creativity and parenting responsibilities, relevant to mothers dealing with beauty ideals.
3. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/uk/fashion/fashion-news/a60252272/generational-fashion-sharing-clothes-mother-daughter/> - This article discusses intergenerational fashion, highlighting how mothers and daughters can bond over fashion while navigating generational differences in beauty and style preferences. It shows how shared fashion experiences can influence perceptions of beauty across ages.
4. <https://annehelen.substack.com/p/unpacking-the-nap-dress> - This piece examines the cultural context of mommy-daughter relationships through fashion choices, such as matching dresses, which can shape and reflect societal beauty standards and family bonding practices.
5. <https://www.elle.com/culture/books/a41805097/balancing-motherhood-creativity-art-monster-essay/> - This article indirectly supports the idea that mothers navigate multiple roles, including managing their daughters' perceptions of beauty, by exploring the multifaceted nature of motherhood and creativity.
6. <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/features/a9587361/stage-mother-beautiful-daughter/> - This article further highlights the enduring influence of mothers on their daughters' perceptions of beauty, drawing historical parallels with how influential mothers like Gertrude Temple managed their child's image.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/apr/27/seven-year-old-daughter-loves-fashion-can-i-protect-her-from-a-world-of-impossible-beauty-standards> - Please view link - unable to able to access data