

Childhood Sexual Behaviors:

Normative, Cautionary, or Problematic?

Normative



- Voluntary, infrequent, spontaneous
- Easily diverted when adults tell children to stop and explain privacy rules
- Interaction that involves sexual body parts between children of the same general age and physical size
- Occurs among children who know each other
- Not accompanied by strong uncomfortable or upset feelings
- *May not be appropriate for setting/location

Cautionary



- Not suitable for the location (e.g., school, faith community)
- Normative behavior, but more frequent than typical for the child's age
- Not currently harmful or distressing to self or others
- Occurs despite adult intervention
- Typical sexual behavior, but technology is involved, such as taking pictures of private parts

Problematic



- Causes harm or potential harm or distress to any child
- Involves strong, upset feelings, such as anger or anxiety
- Involves force, coercion, or aggression
- Occurs among children of differing ages or functioning
- Continues to occur despite intervention by caregivers or other guiding adults
- Preoccupied with sexual content and topics

ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

- How often is the sexual behavior occurring?
- Is there a significant difference in age, size, intellectual level, or functioning among the children?
- Did it cause harm or potential harm (physical or emotional) to any child?
- Did the behavior continue despite all attempts to change or stop it?
- Did the behavior involve coercion, force, or aggression of any kind?

If yes, don't panic. You are not alone:

- **Breathe, stay calm** and matter-of-fact when speaking with your child.
- Reach out for support.

Call the **Mosaic Program @ 780 460 2195**

For immediate help, call your **local police agency** or **Children and Family Services** office

Children's Services Intervention Line 24/7 @ 1-800-638-0715

Find more information for caregivers at:

www.ncsby.org/content/parents