



The Children's Assessment Center

Range of Childhood Sexuality

Normal/Developmentally expected

- Genital or Reproduction conversations with peers or similar age siblings
- Show me yours/I'll show you mine with peers
- Playing "doctor"
- Occasional masturbation without penetration
- Imitating seduction (i.e., kissing, flirting)
- Dirty words or jokes within cultural or peer group norm

Requiring Adult Response

- Preoccupation with sexual themes (especially sexually aggressive)
- Attempting to expose others genitals (i.e., pulling other's skirt up or pants down)
- Sexually explicit conversation with peers
- Sexual graffiti (esp. chronic or impacting individuals)
- Sexual innuendo/teasing/embarrassment of others
- Precocious sexual knowledge
- Single occurrences of peeping/exposing/obscenities/pornographic interest/frottage
- Preoccupation with masturbation
- *Mutual masturbation/group masturbation
- Simulating foreplay with dolls or peers with clothing on (i.e., petting, french kissing)

Requiring Correction

- Sexually explicit conversations with significant age difference
- Touching genitals of others without permission
- Degradation/humiliation of self or others with sexual themes
- Inducing fear/threats of force
- Sexually explicit proposals/threats including written notes
- Repeated or chronic peeping/exposing/obscenities/pornographic interests/frottage
- Compulsive masturbation/task interruption to masturbate
- Masturbation which includes vaginal or anal penetration
- Simulating intercourse with dolls, peers, animals, with clothing on (i.e. humping)

Always Problematic; Requiring Intervention

- Oral, vaginal, anal penetration of dolls**, children, animals
- ***Forced exposure of other's genitals
- Simulating intercourse with peers with clothing off
- Any genital injury or bleeding not explained by accidental cause

*Although mutual or group masturbation is not uncommon among children, the interaction must be evaluated

**Concern about behavior with dolls which may be rehearsals for behavior with peers or more vulnerable children

***Although restraining an individual in order to pull down pants or expose breasts may occur in the context of hazing among peers, it is clearly abusive.

Normal

- Sexually explicit conversations with peers
- Obscenities and jokes within cultural norm
- Sexual innuendo, flirting and courtship
- Interest in erotica
- Solitary masturbation
- Hugging, kissing, holding hands
- *Foreplay, (petting, making out, fondling)
- *Mutual masturbation
- Monogamist intercourse (stable or serial**)

Requiring Adult Response

- Sexual preoccupation/anxiety (interfering in daily functioning)
- Pornographic interest
- Polygamist sexual intercourse (promiscuity***)
- Sexually aggressive themes/obscenities
- Sexual graffiti (especially chronic or impacting individuals)
- Embarrassment of others with sexual themes
- Violation of other's body space; Pulling skirts up/pants down
- Single occurrences of peeping, exposing, frottage with known agemates
- ****Mooning and obscene gestures

Requiring Correction

- Compulsive masturbation (especially chronic or public)
- Degradation/humiliation of self or others with sexual themes
- Attempting to expose others' genitals
- Chronic preoccupation with sexually aggressive pornography
- Sexually explicit conversation with significantly younger children
- Touching genitals without permission (i.e., grabbing, goosing)
- Sexually explicit threats (verbal or written)

Illegal Behaviors Defined by Law; Requiring Immediate Intervention

- Obscene phone calls, voyeurism, exhibitionism, frottage, sexual harassment
- Sexual contact with significant age difference (child sexual abuse)
- Forced sexual contact (sexual assault)
- Forced penetration (rape)
- Sexual contact with animals (bestiality)
- Genital injury to others

*Moral, social or familial rules may restrict, but these behaviors are not abnormal, developmentally harmful, or illegal when private, consensual, equal, and non-coercive.

**Stable monogamy is defined as a single sexual partner throughout adolescence. Serial monogamy indicates long-term (several months or years) involvement with a single partner that ends and then others follow.

***Polygamist intercourse is defined as indiscriminate sexual contact with more than one partner during the same period of time.

****Mooning and obscene gestures have been called "Americana." Although many of the yellow flags are not necessarily outside the range of behavior exhibited in teen peer groups, some evaluation and response is desirable in order to support healthy and responsible attitudes and behavior.