



Sexual Behaviors in Children

Guidelines for Parents and Caregivers

Preschool (0-5 years)



Common	Inappropriate*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Questions about differences in body parts, boys and girls, hygiene and toileting, pregnancy, and birth ➤ Self-stimulation of genitals (masturbation) ➤ Showing and looking at private body parts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sexual acts or use of sexual language ➤ Sexual contact with other children ➤ Masturbation not responsive to redirection or limits

School-Age (6-8 years)



Common	Uncommon*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Questions and needs knowledge about menstruation, pregnancy, physical development, relationships, sexual behavior, personal values ➤ Experimenting with same-age and gender children, including kissing, fondling, exhibitionism, and role-playing ➤ Self-stimulation of genitals (masturbation) in private 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discussion or knowledge of explicit sexual acts ➤ Adult-like sexual interactions ➤ Behaving sexually in public, phone or internet technology

School-Age (9-12 years)



Common	Uncommon*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Questions and needs knowledge sexual materials, information, relationships, sexual behavior, the use of sexual words, discussion of sexual acts and personal values among peers ➤ Increased experimentation of sexual behaviors and romantic relationships with same-age children ➤ Self-stimulation of genitals (masturbation) in private 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Regularly occurring adult-like sexual behavior ➤ Behaving sexually in public places

Adolescence (13-16 years)



Common	Uncommon*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Questions about decision-making, social relationships, and sexual customs ➤ Self-stimulation of genitals (masturbation) in private ➤ Sexual experimentation among the same age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sexual interest in much younger children ➤ Aggression in touching others' genitals ➤ Adult participation of explicit sexual acts

References:

- Kellogg ND. Sexual behaviors in children: evaluation and management. *Am Fam Physician*. 2010;82(10):1233-1238
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Child Welfare Information Gateway, and StopItNow.org

For more information, including puberty and reproduction, visit www.procarseatsafety.com/childsexualbehaviors.html

***Questions talk with your pediatrician or call 1-888-773-8368**



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