

Questions for caretakers to consider regarding child sexual behaviors

Question	Comments
<i>When was the behavior first noticed? Have there been any recent changes or stressors in the family?</i>	The behavior may be related to a recent stressor, such as a new sibling or parent separation.
<i>Does the behavior involve other persons?</i>	Most sexual behavior problems involve other persons.
<i>How often have you seen this behavior? Is the frequency or nature of the behavior changing?</i>	Escalation in the number or frequency of behaviors may indicate increased anxiety or stressors contributing to the behavior.
<i>Can the child be easily distracted from the behavior? How do you (the caregiver) respond to the behavior?</i>	Normative behavior is usually easy to divert; caregiver distress may escalate the behavior.
<i>Does the behavior occur at home, school/daycare, or both?</i>	If occurring only at home, the behavior may be related to stressors or changes at home, or the behavior may be related to differences in observer perception.
<i>If the behavior involves another person, how old is the person?</i>	Behaviors involving persons four or more years apart in age are not age appropriate.
<i>Is the activity disruptive, intrusive, coercive, or forceful?</i>	Disruptive, intrusive, coercive, or forceful behaviors are abnormal.
<i>Does the child become anxious or fearful during the behavior? Has the child been diagnosed with emotional or behavior problems?</i>	Sexual behavior problems in children have been associated with conduct and other behavior disorders.
<i>Is there any violence among persons living in the home?</i>	Intimate partner violence has been associated with sexual behaviors in children.
<i>Does the child have or has the child had access to sexual material, acts, or information, including pornographic movies or images, nudity, internet chat rooms, and texting that includes sexual language?</i>	Children may mimic what they see or hear.
<i>Has anyone ever spoken to the child about possible abuse?</i>	Sexual behaviors in children as associated with physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.

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