

Real Parenting Lab Q + A: CURIOUS KIDS: What's the range of healthy childhood sexual behaviours PART I of II

We welcome you to take a view of an often contentious topic. Many parents are not comfortable about hearing the words 'children' and 'sexual' spoken in the same sentence.

We have a lot of questions posed to us by parents of many different backgrounds about whether their child's interest in body parts, sexuality and behaviour that involves exploring sexualized talk or actions is 'normal'. While there is no easy answer to these questions because there are many variables, based on the age of the child, the frequency of the actions, level of interest in the topic, and many others that impact any conclusions you may draw - which we explore in this video and its Part II counterpart - but we do, in this Q + A, take a run at walking you through some healthy sexual behaviours seen in children to give you some guidelines.

One of our bottom lines, is that we do not advise any parent to conclude that their child's behaviour is healthy or unhealthy based on looking at one or two actions in isolation. When noticing and assessing healthy vs. unhealthy with regard to our children's sexuality, similarly to when we are observing their academic functioning or overall health, we are looking for signs of a significant change over a short period of time, but with sexualized behavior or sexual health development, it may raise concern when:

their knowledge or vocabulary is considerably different than what they've been exposed to by your family there are other parts of their behavior that 'don't add up' to you and your family based on your family values or routines

Both our Part I and Part II videos on sexual behaviors are meant as guidelines and information. If you have concerns about your child's sexual development at any time, please do consult with your healthcare provider and make note of both concerning actions and healthy actions that you have noticed. Like with all things with our kids, there is no gold standard of 'normal' or typical that holds true for all ages of kids all the time.

Please join us for PART II on this topic:

Should I Be Worried? Concerning childhood sexual behaviours

For anyone interested in delving deeper into some research, here's a key work from which many of us in the area began our work and research:

Chaffin, M., Berliner, L., Block, R., Johnson, T. C., Friedrich, W., Louis, D., et al. (2008). Report of the ATSA Task Force on Children with Sexual Behavior Problems. *Child Maltreatment*, 18(2), 199-218.

You asked, we answered. To ask us other parenting questions that may be featured in one of our upcoming Q + A videos, please drop by www.realparentinglab.com and just ask!

#TheDrFs