



Co-management Guide

Child Abuse
Pediatrics

Child Safety Team

“Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse”

Guidelines Referenced	Clinical Report – The Evaluation of Sexual Behaviors in Children – AAP Policy Statement http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/124/3/992	
Background	It is common for children to exhibit sexual behaviors during their childhood. This can confuse parents who may worry that their child was sexually abused or has been taught to behave in sexual ways.	
Initial Evaluation	Detailed history is essential. Ask the parent to describe the sexual behaviors that concerns them: <u>types</u> of sexual behaviors, the <u>frequency</u> of the behaviors and the child’s <u>response to being redirected</u> . Are their stressful or situational factors that may be triggering the behavior? A change in the family or in caregivers (such as a new babysitter)? What is the family practice around nudity and sexuality? Could the child have accessed sexually explicit materials or accidentally been exposed to adult sexual acts? Is there concern for dysfunction in the home – domestic violence, substance abuse or parental mental illness? Is the parent concerned about possible sexual abuse by a particular caregiver? If so, why?	
Initial Management	If the behaviors are part of normal development, reassure the parents and provide guidance on how to respond to the behaviors.	
When to Refer	<p>Referral for further evaluation is indicated when the sexual behaviors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are persistent, resistant to parental distraction, or if the child becomes angry in response to efforts to distract them from the behavior • Involve coercion or physical aggression by the child • Are disruptive to others • Cause the child physical pain or emotional distress • Demonstrate that the child’s knowledge of sex acts is beyond their developmental level <p>A report to CPS is indicated if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is more than a 4 year difference between the children • You believe the parents are not protective or have not followed through on recommendations to address the concerns 	
Co-management Strategy (as appropriate)	<p>Specialist scope of care Evaluation to address family dynamics and possible sexual abuse</p>	<p>Primary care scope of care Reassurance – provide education for parents about normal and expected sexual behaviors. https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/preschool/Pages/Sexual-Behaviors-Young-Children.aspx</p>
Return to Primary Care Endpoint	Routine healthcare and monitoring of the child’s behaviors resumes after the evaluation addresses concerns about possible sexual abuse and family dysfunction. Mental health support for the child and family may be recommended after the evaluation.	