

# Children's Center

*A place where healing begins*

## Supervision Guidelines for Children with Sexual Behavior Problems

These recommendations are intended to increase community safety and reduce the risk of your child developing more severe, persistent behavior problems. It is imperative that caregivers understand the need for increased vigilance and supervision. It is suggested that caregivers arrange for regular respite to avoid burnout from increased responsibilities. NOTE: This list includes suggestions and is not comprehensive. It is recommended that you seek the help of a counselor who specializes in working with children/youth with sexual behavior problems to develop a safety plan specific to your child's needs.

### Decrease Opportunity:

- Supervise your child at all times. If s/he is awake, you should be able to see and hear what s/he is doing and saying.
- Don't leave your child alone with other children, even older ones. If your child is playing with another child, stay in the room and supervise closely. Your child should be in your line of sight at all times.
- Don't have your child and another child bathe, sleep, use the toilet, or change clothes together. No cuddling, like under covers watching TV. No rough-house play or tickling between children. No sleepovers until you get an okay from your child's therapist.
- Children should have their own beds and should preferably sleep in a room of their own. If they must share a room, the door should remain open and a (baby) sound monitor used so you can follow what is happening in the room. Some caregivers purchase a motion detector, although these are very loud and can be upsetting to children. Motion detectors have been available through Home Depot and Radio Shack.
- If your child gets up in the middle of the night to roam, or if s/he often wakes up before you in the morning, put a "ding/dong" type alarm on their door so that you will know when they leave their room and can monitor their behavior. The child's window may also need an alarm. These have been available at Radio Shack and are not as loud as sound monitors.
- Discourage games your child may have used to get another child to go along with the sexual behavior in the past such as playing doctor, house, building forts, hide-and-go-seek, etc.
- If others care for your child (relative, teacher, daycare provider, Sunday school teacher, etc.), you need to teach them how to supervise your child. Encourage caregivers to send an adult with the child to the bathroom to supervise, not another child.
- Allow the child to visit friends only where you know they will be closely supervised. This means that the adult supervising will be informed if the child has a sexual behavior problem. Do not allow your child to go to someone's house where there are children two years or more younger than your child. Have the other child over to your house instead so you can supervise them closely.

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## Teach Sexual Safety and Privacy Rules:

- Bathrooms are private; others don't enter when someone is bathing or using the toilet.
- Doors are closed when someone is changing or using the bathroom.
- Bedrooms are private; other children enter only with an adult.
- Clothing is worn when one is in the presence of others.
- One should knock and wait for permission before opening a closed door.

## Limit Exposure to Sexual Material:

- Don't allow exposure to movies, soap operas, or music that depicts sexual or violent themes.
- Interrupt sexual talk, jokes, or stories and describe how this can harm others. Do not allow the child to engage in sexual sounds, activities, or sexual play with other children, sexual play with you, or other adults. Have them stop immediately and move on to a non-sexual activity instead.
- When adults engage in sexual behaviors, they should do so in private settings where they cannot be seen or heard by children.
- Give clear messages about when and where masturbation or touching one's own private parts is okay (for example, in their room, alone) and having healthy, non-abusive thoughts while doing this. Try redirecting and/or providing support and comfort to the child if s/he is frequently using masturbation to self soothe. This will teach the child other options for reducing stress/anxiety.
- Videos and magazines containing graphic violence or sex should not be stored or used by adults at home (if they are in the house, children will eventually find and know about them).

## Interrupt and Redirect Misuse of Power:

- Discourage your child's "bossiness" or use of force to handle problems with another child. Help them problem-solve other ways to handle each situation.
- Set limits and give clear messages that it is never okay to hurt someone else.