

Childhood Sexual Development Chart

Age	Typical Behaviors	Behaviors or Areas of Concern That May Indicate Abuse
2–3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and touch their own genitals and show them to others • Rub their genitals on purpose (masturbate) • Can have erections (boys) • Take off their clothes and want to be naked • Try to touch mother’s breasts • Ask questions about bodies and bodily functions like “poop” and “pee” • Respond to requests to do something else other than genital play • Begin to understand this kind of genital play is private 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sexually transmitted disease • Bruising around the genitals or on the face • These also apply to any age group
4–6 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes masturbate in front of others and can have orgasms • Try to see other people naked • Explore genitals with other children, such as “playing doctor” • Play-act dating behavior, such as holding hands and kissing • Can be taught that genital play and masturbation are private behaviors • Talk about genitals and use sexual slang and swear words even when they don’t understand them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot redirect their genital play or masturbation when asked • Have excessive interest, knowledge, or language about sexual behaviors • Act out sexualized behaviors not typical for children of their age • Have knowledge of sexual behaviors not typical for children their age • Have behaviors typical of a younger child • Are overly concerned about their bodies—for example, may wear multiple layers of clothing
7–12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masturbate, usually in private • Play games involving sexual behavior such as “Truth or Dare” or “Spin the Bottle” • Try to see people without their clothes • Look at pictures of people who are naked or with just a few clothes on • Watch or listen to media with sexual content (TV, movies, music, websites, games) • Want more privacy, such as wanting to undress alone, or not wanting to talk about sexual issues • Begin to be sexually attracted to their peers • Begin to have a sexual orientation 	