

Problematic Sexual Behaviour

Engaging in problematic sexual behaviours can be a cry for help from the abused child.

Children who sexually abuse other children need professional therapeutic assistance.

Families of children who sexually abuse other children often:

- Deny the allegations against their child, and
- Are hostile about getting professional help for them.

Effects of Problematic Sexual Behaviour on Children

Victims of problematic sexual behaviour feel stressed, anxious and angry.

Nightmares, sleep problems and a fear of the dark are common reactions.

They refuse to go near the abuser. Or show distress when near the abuser.

If they tell an adult, who does not believe and protect them, they blame themselves for their abuse.

They regress to an earlier stage of development, i.e. they wet the bed.

Information contained in this pamphlet was taken from "Sexualised Children" by Eliana Gill Ph.D & Tony Cavanagh Johnson, Ph.D (1999)

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Problematic Sexual Behaviour in Young Children

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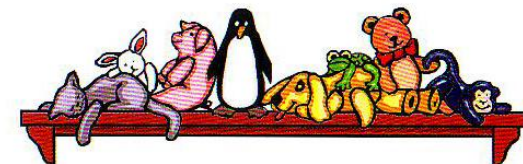
Normal Sex Play in Young Children

**Goulburn Valley Centre
Against Sexual Assault**

1800 11 2343

24 Hours

58 312 343 (Business Hours)



Children's Sex Play

Young children are curious about their world. They want to know about other children's bodies in the same way they want to know where the sun goes at night.

Age appropriate, exploratory sex play between young children is entered into willingly by children who are friends.

Age appropriate sex play is light hearted and spontaneous. The children feel excited, silly and "giggly". They may feel some confusion and guilt; but not deep shame, fear or anxiety.

Age appropriate, exploratory sex play can be dealt with successfully by parents or teachers. It usually stops when children are told that it is unacceptable.

Problematic Sexual Behaviour

Problematic sexual behaviours in young children contain themes of force, threat and dominance. Emotional threats, eg., "I won't play with you if you tell" are used to coerce other children into these activities.

Children who sexually abuse other children are agitated, anxious, fearful and intense.

Sexual behaviour becomes the focus of their life. They know more about sexual behaviour than their peers.

Up to the age of 12, abusers can be younger and smaller than the children they abuse.

Children between four and six who exhibit problematic sexual behaviour have usually been sexually abused themselves.

The problematic sexual behaviour stems from their confusion, anger, shame and anxiety at being sexually abused.