

Problematic sexual behavior in children



Hearing that a child is engaging in sexual behaviors can be extremely stressful for everyone involved. It's important to know that there is help.

What is Problematic Sexual Behavior

Some sexual play between young children close in age, such as playing doctor or looking at private parts, is considered normal. However, behavior becomes problematic when it is planned, coerced, illegal, there is disparate ages, or it preoccupies the child's time.

What causes problematic sexual behaviors?

Any child can be affected. Both boys and girls can display problematic sexual behaviors and sexual abuse isn't necessarily a factor. In fact, most children who have been sexually abused do not exhibit these problems. However, research suggests that many factors can contribute, including:

- Child Vulnerabilities
- Exposure to sexual material or sexual abuse
- Exposure to violence or physical abuse
- Factors that hinder parental guidance & Supervision

It is important to know that Problem Sexual Behaviors do not equate with adult sex offenses

- Adults who sexually abuse are motivated by sexual urges
- Problem Sexual Behavior usually occurs when the child feels anxious, angry, is reacting to trauma, is overly curious after being exposed to sexual material, is seeking attention, is trying to imitate others, or is trying to calm themselves down
- Children who have problem sexual behaviors typically have low impulse control, low social skills, and poor decision making ability

We can help

The Dakota Children's Advocacy Center serves families with children who have demonstrated problematic sexual behavior. This outpatient group treatment for school-aged children is a pioneering program that is nationally recognized for its success.

Many youth who exhibit problematic sexual behaviors can be helped with outpatient treatment. They can live at home and attend school and other outside activities without jeopardizing the safety of other children. Most do not continue to have problematic sexual behaviors into adolescence and adulthood.

Call (701) 323-5626 to learn more or visit us online at www.dakotacac.org



Dakota Children's
ADVOCACY CENTER