

Red Flags Regarding Children's Sexual Behaviours

- The children engaged in the sexual behaviours do not have an ongoing mutual play relationship.
- Sexual behaviours which are engaged in by children of different ages or developmental levels.
- Sexual behaviours which are out of balance with other aspects of the child's life and interests.
- Children who seem to have too much knowledge about sexuality and behave in ways more consistent with adult sexual expression.
- Sexual behaviours which are significantly different than those of other same-age children.
- Sexual behaviours which continue in spite of consistent and clear requests to stop.
- Children who appear to be unable to stop themselves from engaging in sexual activities.
- Sexual behaviours which occur in public or other places where the child has been told they are not acceptable.
- Children's sexual behaviours which are directed at adults who feel uncomfortable receiving them.
- Children (four years and older) who do not understand their rights or the rights of others in relation to sexual contact.
- Sexual behaviours which progress in frequency, intensity or intrusiveness over time.
- When fear, anxiety, deep shame or intense guilt is associated with the sexual behaviours.
- Children who engage in extensive, persistent, mutually agreed upon adult-type sexual behaviours with other children.
- Children who manually stimulate or have oral or genital contact with animal/s.
- Child sexualizes nonsexual things, or interactions with others, or relationships.
- Sexual behaviours which cause physical or emotional pain or discomfort to self or others.
- Children who use sex to hurt others.
- When verbal and/or physical expressions of anger precede, follow or accompany the sexual behaviour.
- Children who use distorted logic to justify their sexual actions, e.g. "She didn't say 'no.'"
- When coercion, force, bribery, manipulation or threats are associated with sexual behaviours.

Source: Toni Cavanagh Johnson, Ph. D.