

Typical Sexual Development

Age	Typical Behaviors
Birth to two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touching genitals for pleasure-self-stimulation • Discovering body. • Physical closeness with primary caregivers, holding, clinging, cuddling, nursing, dressing, playing • Adjustment of self-stimulation to conform to external reactions from others • Initiating and responding to physical touch, including hugging and kissing.
2-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued exploration of body. • Increased curiosity about differences between boys/girls, men/women. Dressing up (including boys dressing up as girls). • Labeling/naming of body parts, sensual feelings, and body functions • Touching genitals in public. • May rub genitals for relaxation. • Some reflexive sexual response (erection or lubrication). • Curiosity about private parts. • Trying to view adult or peer nudity. • Enjoys touch and nudity. • Playing games such as 'doctors and nurses' and 'I'll show you mine ... ' i.e. showing genitals to peers and exploring peers' genitals. Consensual exploration of same age peers' bodies. • Questioning how babies are made and delivered. • Joking about genitalia and body functions • Fascination with "obscene" words • Modeling of parental interactions of expressing affection; continued responding to others with hugs, kisses, and cuddling • Possible jealousy of intimacy shared by parents • Opportunity for parent-child communication about sexuality development
5-10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in how babies are made. • Continued self-stimulation in private. Masturbation for pleasure. • Continued curiosity about bodies. (Can be same gender and is not indicative of future sexual preference.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer discussion regarding sexual behavior • Beginning to adhere to peer group style and gender roles in clothing and play. • Increased need for personal privacy • Opportunity for parent-child communication about sexuality development

10-14 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued sexual play and exploration between same and opposite sex peers (secretive and hidden from adults). • Thinking, talking and dreaming about sex. • Watching sexually explicit material and masturbating to orgasm. • Interest in the opposite sex. Feelings of attraction may become sexual. Sexual fantasies. • Dating, kissing and 'petting'. • Interest in sex in the media. • Peer discussions about sexual behaviours. • 'Boyfriends' and 'girlfriends' often established. • Onset of puberty (late childhood); making the shift into adolescent sexuality development • Continued opportunity for parent-child communication about sexuality development
14-18 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued masturbation for pleasure. • Becoming self-conscious. Body-image and self-esteem issues may arise. Continuing to be influenced by peer group. • Fitting in is important. • May begin having sex. • Sexual wishes and fantasies. • Continued opportunity for parent-child communication about sexuality development

(from Hartman, 2014; and Realmuto & Ruble, 1999)