

The Normal Stages of Sexual Development Ages

0 - 5 years

Expected development

Intense curiosity about others' bodies and bathroom activities. Masturbation (touching genitals) from infancy/pre-school continues as a self-soothing behaviour, generally are indiscreet. Behaviour is exploratory. May show genitalia to others in a curiosity seeking way. Children at this stage respond quickly to re-direction.

Worrying development

Curiosity becomes obsessive pre-occupation. Exploration becomes re-enactment of specific adult sexual activity. Behaviour involves coercion toward others or injury to themselves. Cannot be re-directed - "stuck" behaviour - makes them feel less anxious.

6 - 10 years (Latency)

Continue to touch and fondle their own genitals, evolving to masturbation. More secretive about self-touching/curiosity. Seeking turns to game-play ("I'll show you mine...show me yours"), play "doctor".

Sexual penetration. Genital kissing. Oral copulation. Simulated intercourse. Putting objects inside self/others.

10-12 years (Pre-adolescence)

Masturbation continues. Some same gender sexual experiences and viewing of others' bodies, especially of the gender they are attracted to.

Sexual play with younger or more vulnerable children and young people (or vulnerable adults), behaviour involves coercion, bribes, and threats. Other

Interest in pornographic materials (Playboy, Penthouse, etc). Sexual activity with peers, which includes, but is not limited to, kissing, fondling, sometimes penetration.

Pre-occupation/obsessive quality