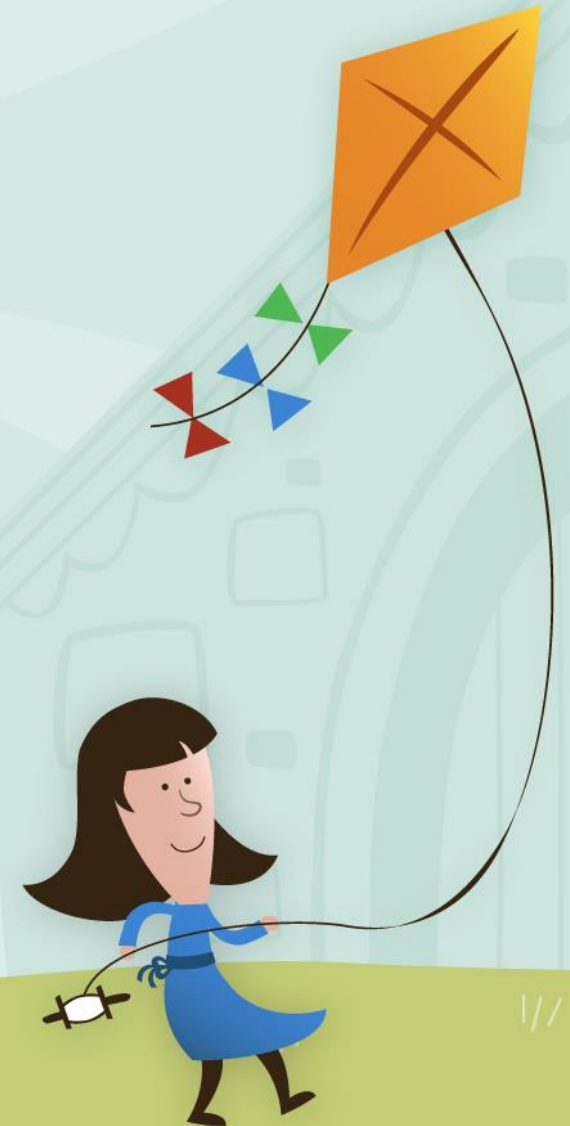


Raising Safe, Smart and Healthy Children

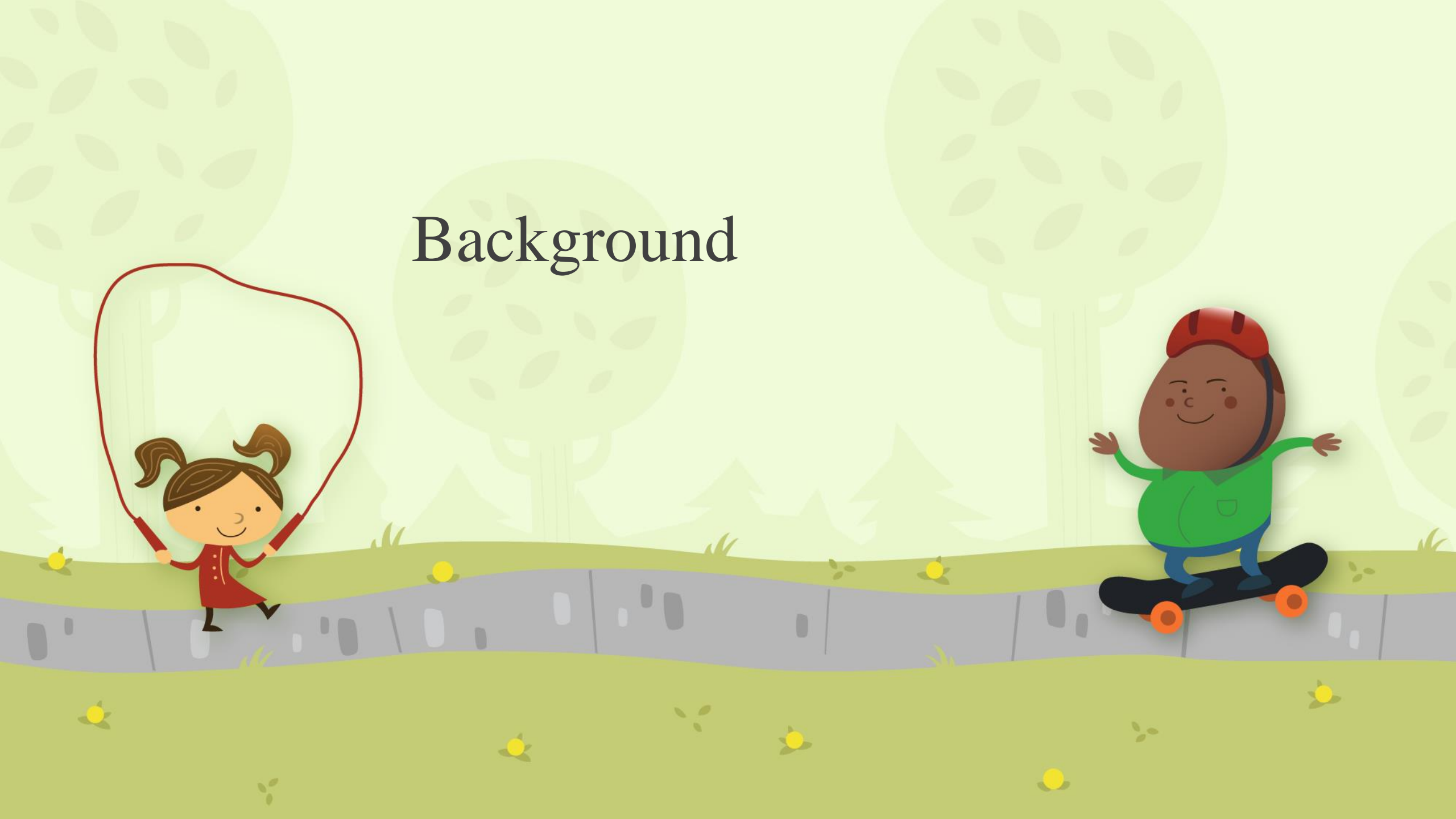
Addressing Healthy Child Development as a Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse



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Background



INTRODUCTION



Facts about Child Sexual Abuse:

- 8.3% of **substantiated** cases of child abuse in the US in 2014 involved sexual abuse (US DHHS, 2014)
- 26.6% of girls (1 in 3.8) and 5.1% of boys (1 in 20) is a victim of child sexual abuse (APA, 2014; Finkelhor, et al., 2014)
- During a one-year period in the U.S., 16% of youth ages 14 to 17 had been sexually victimized;
- Over the course of their lifetime, 28% of U.S. youth ages 14 to 17 had been sexually victimized;
- Children are most vulnerable to CSA between the ages of 14 and 17 (Finkelhor, 2009)



PERPETRATORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

- Offenders are overwhelmingly cisgender male, ranging from adolescents to the elderly.
- Some perpetrators are cisgender female. It is estimated that women are the abusers in about 14% of cases reported among boys and 6% of cases reported among girls.
- Approximately one-third of offenders are themselves juveniles and 23% of reported cases are perpetrated by juveniles.
- 40%-80% of juvenile sex offenders have themselves been victims of sexual abuse (Becker & Hunter, 1997).
- 86% of children who suffered sexual abuse were violated by a person they knew. Hence, the phrase “Stranger Danger” is misleading.

(All points on this page can be found at the National Center for Victims of Crime, <https://victimsofcrime.org/media/reporting-on-child-sexual-abuse/statistics-on-perpetrators-of-csa> which were pulled from the Finkelhor, 2009 article in *The Future of Children*, Volume 19, Number 2)



PERPETRATOR GROOMING BEHAVIORS

- Identifying and targeting the victim.
- Gaining trust and access.
- Playing a role in the child's life.
- Isolating the child.
- Creating secrecy around the relationship.
- Initiating sexual contact.
- Controlling the relationship.

National Center for Victims of Crime, <https://victimsofcrime.org/media/reporting-on-child-sexual-abuse/grooming-dynamic-of-csa>



IMPACT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

- In the short-term (up to two years), victims may exhibit regressive behaviors (e.g., thumb-sucking and bed-wetting in younger children), sleep disturbances, eating problems, behavior and/or performance problems at school, and unwillingness to participate in school or social activities.
- A number of studies found that over 50% of women who had suffered sexual abuse by a family member also reported a rape or attempted rape after the age of 14 (Lalor, & McElvaney, 2010).
- A child who is the victim of prolonged sexual abuse usually develops low self-esteem, a feeling of worthlessness and an abnormal or distorted view of sex. The child may become withdrawn and mistrustful of adults and can become suicidal.
- A 2012 study found that compared to those with no history of sexual abuse, young males who were sexually abused were five times more likely to cause teen pregnancy, three times more likely to have multiple sexual partners and two times more likely to have unprotected SEX (Homma, Wang, Saewyc, & Kishor, 2012).

American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,
http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Facts_for_Families/FFF-Guide/Child-Sexual-Abuse-009.aspx



National Center for Victims of Crime,
<http://www.victimsofcrime.org/media/reporting-on-child-sexual-abuse/effects-of-csa-on-the-victim>



PREVENTION MEASURES



Historically Put the Focus on Warning Children:

- Stranger Danger
- Good Touch, Bad Touch
- Go-Tell-Retell



SHIFT OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS TO A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

- **Primary Prevention-**
 - PSAs aimed at everyone to prevent CSA
 - Teach parents how to enhance communication and monitoring to prevent CSA (Mendelson & Letourneau, 2015)
 - Teach all children and adolescents about healthy relationships, how to identify a situation that could become abusive
 - Teach child serving organizations policies and actions they can take to prevent CSA
 - Teach people what to do if they suspect that someone is at risk of abusing or being abused
 - Change social structures and norms that support the occurrence of CSA

Letourneau, Eaton, Bass, Berlin, & Moore (2014); National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (2012). *National Plan to Prevent the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children*. www.preventtogether.org; National Sexual Violence Resource Center (2011). *Child Sexual Abuse Prevention: Program for Adults*; www.nsvrc.org).



CSA PREVENTION: AIMED AT ADULTS

- Educate adults about what CSA is and how it can be prevented.
- Decrease secrecy and increase conversation about sex and sex abuse. Adult to adult, adult to child.
- Teach adults about healthy sexual development and how to have open conversations with children about their bodies, sex and relationships.
- Help adults learn to recognize warning signs of abuse and act appropriately on that knowledge.
- Teach adults to recognize problematic behavior in others and hold them accountable for changing their behavior to be more appropriate.
- Improve adults' reactions to children's disclosures of abuse and get help for children and youth with sexual behavior problems.
- Teach adults to support children's healthy development, emotional and sexual.
- Increase adults' sensitivity to children.
- Help adults talk to children and other adults about prevention topics.



National Sexual Violence Resource Center (2011).
Child Sexual Abuse Prevention: Program for Adults;
www.nsvrc.org).



SHIFT OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS TO A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH (continued)

- **Secondary Prevention-**

- Reduce harm to children who are victims by getting them the advocacy, health care, mental health care, trauma care and legal services they need to heal.
- Teaching responders how to screen for CSA and how to respond if it is detected or disclosed
- Increasing awareness about where to go for help
- Reducing the stigma

- **Tertiary Prevention-**

- Work with perpetrators to prevent re-offense (especially effective with juvenile offenders)
- Work with survivors to prevent long-term problems



CONTEXT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (Barbee, 2016)

- We have two streams running through American culture. One is based on the legacy from our Puritan roots (Puritans were a sect of Christianity that was overly obsessed with hierarchy, obedience and sexual sin-especially by women. When sexual sin was discovered, especially by women, it was harshly punished. Those who committed sexual sins were shamed publically. Sex and everything associated with it- genitals, breasts, masturbation, foreplay- was seen as dirty and bad. Thus, when people had sexual urges, they were forced to “go underground” to express their sexual needs and desires. No one ever talked about sex. This led to a great deal of secrecy).
- For hundreds of years- and for many of us growing up in the 60s, 70s and 80s- children, who are naturally curious about their bodies and sexual urges, were forced to learn about sex by sneaking *Playboy* magazines, telling one another dirty jokes, and learning from one another what sex was all about because it was taboo to talk about sex. A lot of misinformation was spread.



CONTEXT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

- The repression led to rebellion. The sexual revolution was a reaction to Puritanism, Sexism, and the Abuse of Power. Our culture went from one extreme to another. For the past 60 years:
 - Sex has become an increasing focus of the culture- sex sells in advertising, sex is depicted freely in movies, TV, video games, pornography rose and now is the #1 focus on the internet.
 - Girls continue to be sexualized and it is starting at younger and younger ages.
 - While people speak of sexual “freedom” most of the latest trends do not benefit girls or women at all (e.g., beginning with fellacio, hooking up)
- Sex is everywhere, but frank and honest discussions with children and youth about their bodies, healthy relationships, healthy sexuality, prevention of pregnancy, prevention of disease, prevention of heartbreak, signs of danger, control and abuse are sorely lacking.



CONTEXT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

- While children and teens are inundated with sexual themes in magazines, TV shows, movies, videogames, and the internet through social media and content...
- Parents, teachers, church youth leaders and others are not teaching children and teens about their bodies, normal sexual development, how to deal with their sexual desires, how to fulfill their dreams of being in close romantic relationships.
- Where there is a void- the media and youth leading youth are filling it.
- Messages like “just say no” continue to shame young people and send sex underground. Secrecy is still the norm when it comes to sexual behavior. If a predator comes after a child, the child feels guilt and shame and is often afraid to tell trusted adults what is happening for fear that they will be rejected if they do.
- It is time to normalize sexual development, have ongoing conversations with children about themselves as sexual beings- just as we do about them as intellectual and social and spiritual beings.



Sexual Development



CHILD SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT (Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky Tip Sheets)

- Child development occurs in stages. So does child sexual development.
- Sexual development begins at birth.
 - Infancy: Birth until age 2
 - Toddler and Preschool: Ages 2-4
 - Middle Childhood: Ages 5-8
 - Late Childhood/Pre-teen: Ages 9-12
 - Adolescence: Ages 13-18
 - Emerging Adulthood: Ages 19-25 or 30 (Arnett, 2014)



INFANCY: Birth to age 2

- The most important task at this stage of development is to develop TRUST and LOVE
- TRUST is developed with the primary and secondary caregivers meet the infant's needs by responding to cries with:
 - Attention and comfort to alleviate loneliness, sadness, fear or fatigue
 - Feeding to alleviate hunger
 - Diapering and burping to alleviate discomfort or pain
- This is the time when the first attachment to another human being occurs (Bowlby, 1969).
- Infants want safety and security. These needs are met through attachment with caregivers (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980, 1988).
- There are four types of attachment- largely based on how primary and secondary caregivers interact with the infant over time (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).
- Remember the Mary Ainsworth studies on attachment (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978).
- Research finds attachment affects exploration of the world (interest in school) and a child's ability to make friends (Waters, et al, 1991)



INFANCY: Birth to age 2

- TOUCH is key to positive development. Touch all over the body is comforting (swaddling) (Hyde & DeLamater, 2014).
- Primary and secondary caregivers touch the baby- give infant massage, hug the baby, kiss the baby, pat the baby on the back, hold the baby close to the body, carry the baby, rock the baby, clean the baby. This is important to do for comfort, for bonding/attachment. This helps the baby feel safe and secure (Martinson, 1994).
- Baby will begin to explore the world to learn. Explores through touch. Baby's grab our fingers, the pacifier, the bottle, toys (Shaffer, 2008).
- Eventually baby will touch their own body. At this stage there is no shame associated with the body. Babies love to be naked. They love to feel the wind, water, etc. on their bodies (de Graaf, & Rademakers, 2006).
- Boys, in particular, often have erections and eventually find their penis. It feels good.
- Girls at this stage may feel their clitoris or vagina- or may happen later.



INFANCY: Birth to age 2 (Stop It Now, http://www.stopitnow.org/sites/default/files/documents/files/prevent_child_sexual_abuse.pdf)

- Parents can get in the habit of saying to the baby: I am going to hold you now or bathe you now, or clean your bottom now and put on a fresh diaper. Is that ok? Children need to get in the habit of giving permission for adults or anyone else to touch them.
- Don't make children hug people they don't want to ("Give Granny a hug."). Children need to be in control of their own bodies, who they give affection to and whom they receive affection from. All older people in their lives need to ask for permission to hug them, kiss them, touch them in any way.
- Parents usually label body parts as babies discover them. Fingers! Toes! Belly!
- Good time to label genitals as they clean them during diaper changes and bath time. Use correct terminology. This normalizes these body parts as just another part of the body- not something to be avoided, shamed, something that is secret. Tell your child care providers!



TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL YEARS: Ages 2-4

- A big developmental milestone during this period is potty training.
 - Don't be punitive
 - Parents and caregivers should continue to ask for permission to change diaper, clean up diaper messes
 - Parents should continue to use proper names of genitals when instructing children about how to go to the potty. Encourage children to use these correct terms as well.
 - This is a good time to introduce the concept of “private parts” and that the genitals are “off limits” to others.
 - Children will begin to see others using the potty at child care or preschool and may see that boys and girls have different genitals. This is a good time to teach children the correct body part for those of the opposite gender (penis, vagina).
 - Children are curious and will observe other family members in the bathroom. Partly to understand using potty and gender. Also good time to model privacy.
- During these years, most children will begin to identify as male or female, boy or girl based on cultural stereotypes.
- They will want to know **how** boys and girls differ. They will think it is other indicators like wearing dresses, playing with dolls, liking pink. . . .(Martin & Ruble, 2004).



TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL YEARS: Ages 2-4

- They will begin to masturbate at this age (and into the next stage). Especially boys who can find the penis easily and like the feeling.
 - 60%-71% of boys and 44% of girls touch themselves, between 17%-28% of boys and 17% of girls masturbate (de Graaf & Rademakers, 2006).
 - Stay calm
 - Don't shame or blame or say anything negative. Acknowledge that it feels good and is normal.
 - Calmly redirect them to the bathroom or bedroom to do that activity "in private." **Good time to teach about privacy.** Begin to knock on the door to their room and ask if you can come in. Ask them to do the same for you and other members of the family.
- They may play house or doctor or other forms of body exploration with other children. Talk to them about respecting other people's bodies and always asking for permission to touch another person's body (de Graaf & Rademakers, 2006).

Continue to insist that older others ask permission to hug or kiss your child and don't make your children receive or give affection that they don't want.



TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL YEARS: Ages 2-4

- Often during these years their mother will get pregnant with a sibling or another family member, teacher or close family friend will be pregnant.
- This will make the children curious about what pregnancy is? Where babies come from? How babies are made?
- This is not the time to give the full sex talk.
- This is a good time to introduce some good books on this and related topics.
- Always stress being kind towards others-especially other children. Teach them to respect others. Don't tolerate aggression, selfish play behaviors at all.
- Talk to your children- keep the conversation going.



MIDDLE CHILDHOOD YEARS: Ages 5-8

- Children tend to be sex role stereotyped in their expression of what it means to be a boy or a girl, especially at the younger range of this stage. This is a phase and doesn't mean a child is doomed to be trapped in stereotypical aspirations (Martin & Ruble, 2004).
 - Girls may gravitate to pink, feminine clothing, feminine toys, only want to play with same sex friends
 - Boys may gravitate to blue, masculine clothing, masculine toys, only want to play with other boys
- Ironically, these strong same sex friendships can be very intense emotionally. Sex play tends to be within same-sex groups or dyads (Myers & Raymond, 2010).
- As children move closer to age 8, they become more and more concerned about being liked by their peers, to feel included. Self-esteem emerges by age 8 (Shaffer, 2008).
- Most children know their sexual orientation by the age of 8-11 (in terms of liking boys or girls most romantically, Rosario, et al, 1996, and how they like to express themselves with regards to gender). Bullying of children who do not conform to gender or sexual orientation stereotypes or who don't fit in generally begins at these early ages. Few places attend to the needs of transgender, gender nonconforming or gender fluid youth.
- **Again, emphasize kindness.** Don't tolerate exclusion or bullying.



MIDDLE CHILDHOOD YEARS: Ages 5-8

- Children become more self-conscious as they move across this stage of development. **Their modesty and desire for privacy increases while dressing or going to the bathroom.** Honor their desire for privacy. Again, knock on their doors and ask to enter their rooms.
- Girls, in particular, are starting to incorporate cultural messages into their views of themselves. Because girls are sexualized in our culture, girls may strive by the age of 8 to be “sexy.” They need to learn the problems with those messages. Messages of achievement need to be emphasized. Messages of respect- respecting self, respecting others and expecting respect from others are key (APA, 2007).
- **By the end of this stage of development, children are extremely curious about sex. They want to learn about human reproduction and may begin to ask questions about sex.**
- It is best to begin with explaining the reproductive process around 7 or 8- what happens to the body during puberty, how the body is preparing for reproduction, how that differs for boys and girls, that a child is conceived when sperm from a male reaches an egg that a female releases. If fertilization occurs, then the blastocyst roles down fallopian tube to the uterus and implants and begins to develop into an embryo and fetus. The development takes 9 months and then a baby is born.



MIDDLE CHILDHOOD YEARS: Ages 5-8

- By age 8 most children will want to know how the sperm gets to the egg? Have heard about sex and will want to know what it is.
- Age 8 may be the first time to broach the subject of sex. Best if parents teach their own children about sex. Keep it simple. Put in context of family values. Again, if explained calmly, using scientific terminology and with family value context, will normalize the understanding of what sex is, makes it less of a mystery, taboo and something that they must try...
- This message must be accompanied by strong messages of consent, boundaries and talking to a trusted adult should those ever be violated. Continue to encourage children to use correct words for parts of anatomy.
- Parents need to know that research finds- if they talk to their children about sex early and often, their children are less likely to become sexually active at an early age (Miller, et al., 1998).



LATE CHILDHOOD- PRETEEN YEARS: Ages 9-12

- Major milestone- Puberty begins for most. Many girls complete puberty during this period. (Hyde & DeLamater, 2014).
 - Changes in females
 - Gain weight in hips, breasts (sometimes all over)
 - Grow pubic hair, hair under arms, more on legs
 - Cheekbones become more prominent
 - Estrogen and other hormones increase, mood swings
 - Ovulation and menstruation begin
 - Changes in males
 - Gain muscle mass, grow taller
 - Grow pubic hair, hair under arms, more on legs, hair on chest
 - Cheekbones and chin become more prominent
 - Testosterone increases and so may competitiveness and aggression
 - Voice cracks then gets lower and lower
 - Penis and testicles grow larger, sperm produced. Ejaculation possible.

There needs to be constant conversation about how the body is changing, what that means for the youth, & how older kids see them. Try to keep them in childhood as long as possible, don't allow to wear makeup, shave legs, wear sexy clothing, push "dating" or having a girlfriend or boyfriend too early. Don't drop off at the mall or movies unsupervised to be with friends.



LATE CHILDHOOD- PRETEEN YEARS: Ages 9-12

- Because of all the changes, youth become more self conscious. Don't want others to know have to wear bra, start of period, body changing. Want to dress alone. Some react by being overly sexual. Encourage modesty. Increase messages about respect.
- Increases in sexual feelings, fantasy, masturbation and sex play (continue with same sex exploration but can also include opposite sex-especially by end of this stage). Surveillance of kids is very important. Keep them busy. Set boundaries.
- Talk about sexual issues with friends increases (especially among females).
- Peer pressure in increasing. Trying to fit in. Dress alike, speak alike. Swear more.
- Crushes or falling in love can start as early as age 5, but because of the increasing sexual feelings, the number of crushes or feelings of falling in love increases- can be towards peers, older kids, teachers, media personalities. Talk about healthy love.



LATE CHILDHOOD- PRETEEN YEARS: Ages 9-12

- **Respect privacy** but monitor computer and internet usage, social media, phone usage.
- Children are influenced by media a great deal (Brown & Bobkowski, 2011). Be careful to counteract those influences. Monitor what they watch. Watch TV with them and share values as relationship and sexual situations arise. Set expectations for their behavior and the types of people (in terms of character, treatment, similar interests and values, achievement) you hope they date and one day marry.
- Children are also looking at adults around them as models for relationship formation and maintenance, relationship stability, how we conduct ourselves sexually, how we manage alcohol, drug use (Witbeck, Simons, & Kao, 1994). Another reason if single to keep sexual partners away from the home. Talk about expectations and dangers regarding substance use.
- **Continue to emphasize kindness towards peers.** Discourage and punish bullying and exclusionary behavior. Also, if your child is being bullied, intervene and talk about the importance of not allowing anyone to treat you with disrespect or trying to control you.



LATE CHILDHOOD- PRETEEN YEARS: Ages 9-12

- Some children will receive the talk about sex in this stage.
- Some schools will begin to teach anatomy, reproduction and how to avoid alcohol and drug use, misuse and addiction. Some may give more details about sex by age 12.
- Since children at this age are curious about sex but are less likely to be engaging in much sex play yet, this is an ideal stage to talk about family values, expectations, what rules there will be with regards to dating or “hanging out.”
- Good to talk about risks of sex too soon- physically and emotionally. Role play how to get out of situations they may find themselves in during middle school regarding bullying, sex, alcohol, drugs, dating violence.
- Very important to talk to kids around 12 about not “sliding” into sex. Discourage oral sex (now this is the first things kids do). They see kissing as too intimate and do oral without a second thought. They don’t know they can get a disease from oral sex. Most is fellatio
Girls think they have to offer this to get a boy to like them.



ADOLESCENCE: Ages 13-18

- Major milestone- Puberty is complete.
- Major goal: to become independent- developing identity. Do this through trying different identities often through wearing different types of clothes, different types of self-expression, different personalities, joining different friendship groups, engaging in different clubs, sports or activities. Very peer oriented (Shaffer, 2008).
- In establishing own identity- may rebel against family rules. Trying to see how they are different from the family.
- **Now relationships with both friends and romantic partners is valued. Developing confidence in social situations.**
- Vacillate between wanting to be independent and needing parental help, support and stability. Keep the lines of communication open so that teens can talk if a problem arises.
- Emotions tend to be very strong. Extreme highs and lows.
- Reasoning is developing- can foresee consequences of actions, wonders how decisions made.



ADOLESCENCE: Ages 13-18

- **Desire for close relationships is strong.**
- Sexual desire is strong too. Average first age of intercourse (vaginal or anal) with genitals or objects is age 16. Masturbation increases.
- Vulnerable to predators:
 - Older youth or adults trying to “date” younger youth (Wolak, et al., 2008).
 - Youth who have troubled home lives, trauma histories, or who are rebellious, driven to streets, heavy users of drugs and/or alcohol are targets by gangs, sex traffickers, violent/controlling people (CSOM, 2008).
 - Youth share naked pictures and could be indicted for child porn.
- Monitoring of internet, social media, phone usage, chat spaces is imperative (Dittus, et al., 2015).
- Monitoring of friends, where they are spending time is also very important. Family meetings.
- Goal: Keep adolescents busy and engaged in positive activities that build skills and friendships with high achieving people.



ADOLESCENCE: Ages 13-18

- Articulate values and expectations for your youth with youth and their friends and the adults in their lives- regarding drinking and drugs, sex, etc. Hold adults in their lives accountable for keeping them safe from harm.
- Youth need to be fully engaged in discussions and lessons about sexuality, healthy relationships, unhealthy relationships and dating violence, sexual assault and the role alcohol and drugs play.
- We used the healthy relationship curriculum, *Love Notes*, to teach young people between the ages of 14 and 24 to teach these lessons and to reduce dating violence, high risk sexual behavior, and teen pregnancy. It was successful (Pearson, 2016; Barbee et al., 2016).



Protecting Children



HOW PARENTS CAN BE VIGILENT ABOUT POTENTIAL PREDATORS

(CDC, 2007; CMOS, 2008)

- Get to know the other parent of each of your children. Have conversations to plan on how to keep your children safe from sexual predators (or those who are abusive, violent, criminal).
 - Ask about whether or not the parent(s) of your child(ren) was ever sexually abused as a child? Did they get counseling? How did that affect them? How are they now? Both can share their history.
 - If so, who did that action (this lets you know people in their family or close circle of family friends to keep away from your children)? Think about your own family. Keep children away from any predators in your own family. Make sure everyone in the family complies with your wishes and doesn't allow predators near your children if they are taking care of them.
 - Were there any sexual predators in the family, neighborhood, community? How did their family keep them safe?
- Both parents need to be on the look out, monitor children and communicate about sexual development. Children and youth gain different perspectives from each parent (or caregiver or trusted adult).
- If a parent is single and dating, it is best to:
 - Not bring the adult around your children. Have sex away from your home and your children. Don't allow a boyfriend or girlfriend to babysit your children. Don't let children become attached too soon. A non-parent is 9x more likely to physically or sexually abuse a child than a parent or step-parent.



HOW PARENTS CAN BE VIGILENT ABOUT POTENTIAL PREDATORS

- Vet all babysitters, Boy Scout and Girl Scout leaders, Sunday School Teachers and Youth/Music leaders, Ministers/Priests, Coaches, Piano and other Teachers, School Teachers, After School Program Personnel, Supervisors at work, carefully.
- Use babysitters that others also use- part of a network of surveillance and trust. Get to know them, their family situation, how they were raised.
- Those working in organizations- how were they selected? Were their criminal records checked? Who knew them before they came to work at the program? What safeguards are in place to prevent exploitation of children? Do applicants and employees know about your vigilance in this area? What are staff to youth ratios? Ensure there is no chance for one-on-one interactions.
- Get to know adults in your child's life. Predators may shy away from children whose parents are highly involved, ask a lot of questions, are close to their children. Don't allow one-on-one interactions unless it is in a public place or where other responsible adults will drop in.
- Drop in unannounced periodically to Child Care Centers, After School programs, Sports Practices...
- Volunteer to help out in your child's activities.

US DHHS, CDC (2007). Preventing child sexual abuse within youth-serving organizations: Getting started on policies and procedures. Atlanta, GA.



HOW PARENTS CAN BE VIGILENT ABOUT POTENTIAL PREDATORS

- Get to know your neighbors. Tell your children who in the neighborhood is ok and who is not ok.
- Check the Sex Offender Registry to see if any predators live nearby or near any of your children's friends. Tell your children to avoid those homes, people. <http://kspsor.state.ky.us/>
- Get to know the families of your children's friends.
 - Don't allow your children to go to the home of someone you don't know.
 - Call ahead to make sure parents will be present (remember 1/3 of cases are juvenile offenders). No weapons accessible to children in home- safety is important at all levels.
 - If you know there are problematic people in the family or unknown adults allowed in their home, have the friend come to your house for spend the night parties, etc.



HOW PARENTS CAN BE VIGILENT ABOUT POTENTIAL PREDATORS

- Get to know your children's friends- of both genders...
 - Watch out for the crowd your child is hanging out with. Alcohol, drugs, criminal behavior.
 - Ensure that they are being supervised by adults (especially important for teens).
- Give teens tips for safety against sexual assault:
 - Biggest issue is the character of the people they are around.
 - Once go to college- discourage drinking, always have friend along at party, don't walk alone late at night, have way of getting help if in bad situation. Bystander intervention is key.
- Technology: Have computer in central space in the house- monitor internet usage, FB friends, phone usage, history. Talk to your child about the fact that anyone can pose as someone else in chat rooms, etc. Don't send suggestive imagery on the internet or phone.



TAKE HOME MESSAGE

- Don't be afraid to talk to parents and caregivers about how to effectively prevent CSA.
- Fight for more openness with children about healthy sexual development and healthy relationship formation.
- Ensure your organizations are taking all steps to prevent predators from being hired, rooting them out when they are detected, and building in safeguards for children's safety.
- See *Top 15 Tips to Prevent Child Sex Abuse*
- See PCAK's toolkit for organizational safety to prevent CSA. Here is the link participants can use to take to use an interactive quiz on our website: <https://www.pcaky.org/self-assessment-questionnaire-organizations>

