

Sexual Development

4 to 11 Years Old



Age	Typical Development	Typical Sexual Development
4 to 5 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Separates easily from parents and caregivers <input type="checkbox"/> May get upset with big changes in routine <input type="checkbox"/> Often cannot tell the difference from real and make-believe <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to be like friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Occasional masturbation (touching their own private parts) as a soothing behavior, not as a sexual behavior in public or in private <input type="checkbox"/> Consensual (agreement of all people involved) and playful exploration with children of the same age (Ex. playing “house” or “doctor”) <input type="checkbox"/> Notices a difference between genders <input type="checkbox"/> Asks questions about sexuality or reproduction such as “Where do babies come from?” <input type="checkbox"/> Helps to dress/undress themselves <input type="checkbox"/> Curious about adult bodies (Ex. wants to go to the bathroom with parents or touches a woman’s breast) <input type="checkbox"/> Uses slang terms for body parts and bodily functions <input type="checkbox"/> Is aware of gender
6 to 8 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shows more independence <input type="checkbox"/> Start to think about the future <input type="checkbox"/> Pays attention to teamwork and friendship <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to be accepted by peers <input type="checkbox"/> Able to talk about thoughts and feelings <input type="checkbox"/> More concern for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Continued use of slang words, “potty humor” for body parts and function <input type="checkbox"/> Acts the way traditional social norms identify gender roles (Ex. girls want to wear dresses, boys play with cars) <input type="checkbox"/> Plays in ways that explore sexuality and bodies (may occur with same and opposite sex friends) <input type="checkbox"/> Some children may touch their genitals (private parts) for pleasure (masturbation), usually in private
9 to 11 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Starts to form stronger, more complex friendships and peer relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Important to have friends <input type="checkbox"/> Becomes aware of their own body <input type="checkbox"/> Independence continues to grow <input type="checkbox"/> Can see other points of view <input type="checkbox"/> Can pay attention for longer periods of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Increased need for privacy/independence is often expressed <input type="checkbox"/> Becomes interested in romantic relationships <input type="checkbox"/> Curious about adult bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tries to see people naked ○ Looks for sexual content on T.V., internet, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> May try masturbation in private as social norms become clearer <input type="checkbox"/> Aware of their own body <input type="checkbox"/> Menstruation (periods) may begin