

- Friedrich, WN, Fisher J, Broughton D, Houston M, Shafran CR. Normative sexual behavior in children: A contemporary sample. *Pediatrics*,1998;101(4).

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9521975>

Abstract

OBJECTIVE: Sexual behavior in children can cause uncertainty in the clinician because of the relationship between sexual abuse and sexual behavior. Consequently, it is important to understand normative childhood sexual behavior.

DESIGN: Sexual behavior in 1114 2- to 12-year-old children was rated by primary female caregivers. These children were screened for the absence of sexual abuse. A 38-item scale assessing a broad range of sexual behavior (Child Sexual Behavior Inventory, Third Version) was administered along with the Child Behavior Checklist and a questionnaire assessing family stress, family sexuality, social maturity of the child, maternal attitudes regarding child sexuality, and hours in day care.

RESULTS: Sexual behavior was related to the child's age, maternal education, family sexuality, family stress, family violence, and hours/week in day care. Frequencies of sexual behaviors for 2- to 5-, 6- to 9-, and 10- to 12-year-old boys and girls are presented.

CONCLUSIONS: A broad range of sexual behaviors are exhibited by children who there is no reason to believe have been sexually abused. Their relative frequency is similar to two earlier studies, and this reinforces the validity of these results.