

NO, YOU CAN'T TOUCH IT, YOU ALREADY BROKE YOURS OFF!!

# Childhood Sexuality?

## *Denial & Repression*

- Adult Discomfort with Sexuality.....
- Innocence of childhood ..... **sexual is incongruent**
- Lack of knowledge .... **What is normal? Am I normal?**
- **Don't need to know till older.....?**

Playing Doctor.....

Genital Play.....

Doing something "inappropriate"....



Cut that out and don't let me catch you doing it again!

>>>> secrecy

# Human Sexuality's Developmental Trajectory ....

## Infancy/toddlerhood:

*Genital discovery ..... >>> Motor skills .....*

*Touching Sensations .....*

*Physiological **Capacity for arousal/pleasure.....***

*Solitary Masturbation.... **Reinforcement***

## Preschool/childhood;

*Parallel 'play' ..... >>> Interpersonal Interactions.....*

*Playmates/agemates.... **Same sex/opposite sex...***

*Friendship..... Opportunity.... **Privacy/Modesty.....***

## Puberty:

*Which friend, which gender? ..... "special friend" ..... "first love" ....*

## Adolescence:

*Developmentally driven to seek adult autonomy/independence*

***Identity formation during adolescence includes sexual identity***

*and preferences >>>> **by adulthood: early 20's??***

# Motivation for Sexual Behavior

(lots of Reasons Why Child Might Do Something Sexual)

## **Exploration / Curiosity**

(What's This All About? Self / Others)

## **Imitation / Learning**

(See / Do / Practice / Teach)

## **Sensation Seeking**

(Arousing When Bored / Calming When Stressed)

## **Reinforcement: Feels Good**

(Arousal, Orgasm, Tension Reduction)

## **Pleasure: Self / Other**

(Relationship, Intimacy, Friendship, Love)

## **Compensation / Improvement**

(Feel Better, Do Better, Regain Self Image / Control)

## **Anger / Retaliation**

(Get Back at Others, Make Others Feel Hurt / Angry)

*\*\*\*Same motivations across lifespan.... Just look different\*\*\**

# Range of Sexual Behavior of Children

*Capacity for same behaviors as other humans.....*

*And not latent, just modesty.*

- **Normal: Developmentally expected**
- **A little outside the norm**
- **More concerning**
- **Absolutely No Question: Need to stop!**

....but behaviors, out of context, do not define whether something is a problem or not.

## Evaluating sexual behavior:

Is it a Problem?

If so . . . . .

What Kind of Problem?

## Sexual behavior might be a problem for many reasons:

It might be a problem for the child who is doing it...

*because it puts the child at risk in some way:  
(health, reproduction, exploitation, stigma, lowers self image)  
or Interfering in other developmental tasks or activities.....*

It might be a problem for others...

*because it makes them uncomfortable: violates norms,  
standards, or values; breaks rules or regulations or policies .....*

OR, it might be a problem because it is  
abusive and/or illegal...

***These are very different problems !  
Differentiating the kind of problem helps identify reasonable interventions.***



*Some sexual behaviors are **illegal but not abusive**, while others may be abusive but not defined by law as “offenses”*

## Defining Sexually **Abusive** Behavior

### Sexual Behavior

occurring with:

- \* **Lack of Consent**
- \* **Lack of Equality**
- \* **Coercion**

# Defining Consent Among Kids

- **Similar Knowledge:**
  - Knowing what is being proposed
    - ie, sexual behavior
  - Knowing the possible consequences
    - ie, pain, punishment, stigma, risks
  - Knowing the standards in the community
    - ie, what family and friends think about the behavior
- **Free Choice**
  - Without repercussions for refusal

# Defining Equality Among Kids

-- Size, Age, Intellect, Strength,

-- Power, Authority, Popularity

-- Relationship, Roles

# Defining Coercion Among Kids

Pressure -- Trickery -- Bribery

Threats of Lost Relationship, Esteem, Privilege

Manipulation -- Force -- Violence -- Restraint

# Sexual Offenses are illegal sexual behaviors.

What are the laws?

Under Colorado State statutes 10 year olds are legally culpable

for their behavior. They can be arrested and

adjudicated delinquent in juvenile court for violating the law.

Although legally culpable for their own behavior, juveniles are **legally**

**Not able to give permission to an older partner** to be sexual with them until age 15

which is legally considered the **“age of consent”**.

**More than a 3 year age difference between kids under 18 is always illegal.**

The laws defining juvenile sexual offenses primarily consider

**7 types of sexual behaviors.**

## Types of Illegal Sexual Behavior:

**Sexual Contact** which occurs without consent, with an unequal partner, or as a result of coercion.

*(Sexual abuse; Molestation)*

**Sexual contact with a child by a person in a position of trust**

*(Babysitter, Tutor, Coach, Position of Authority over other child)*

**Incest** *(Sexual contact with a family member)*

**Rape** *(Forced/violent/aggressive and including penetration)*

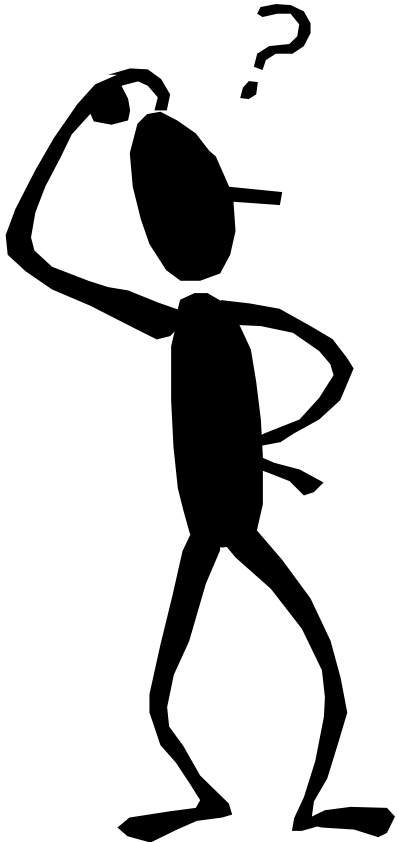
**Non-contact sexual offenses** *(peeping, exposing, obscene calls, stalking, child pornography, sexting)*

**Sexual interaction of person with animals**

**Sexual Harassment** *(unwelcome sexual advances, words or behavior, which causes one to feel uncomfortable or unsafe)*



## Pubertal changes



*The child's body is changing...*

*The brain is changing in ways that effect  
thinking and judgement ....*

less stability and more impulsivity, less foresight...  
*Moody, unpredictable, .....mistakes are made !*

*Adult worries and expectations are changing....*



# Developmental/Environment changes

## \*\* Disparity : Sexual vs Socio-economic Development/maturity

*(Adolescence used to be brief transition from childhood to adulthood. Adolescent developmental drive is to become autonomous & independent..... Now physically, sexually mature a decade before socio-economically mature)*

## \*\* Sexual Stimuli in the environment/culture

*(Used to exercise a lot of containment and parental control over sexual information. Now children constantly exposed to explicit sexual information, much of which is not what we value and want them to be learning)*

## \*\* Knowledge re human beings and especially about brain functioning

*(Pubescent onslaught of growth & pruning reconstructs the brain; Explains adolescent instability & impulsivity ; poor judgement)*

## \*\* Risks Associated with sexual behaviors

*(Used to be risks to health, reputation, & future. Now more extreme, **life changing risks to health/future and harsh legal consequences** )*

# Legal Sanctions.....

- *Teens are experiencing some of the most punitive and intolerant consequences ever.*
  - Arrest
  - Prosecution
  - Labeling
  - Registry
  - Stigma
  - Lifetime publicity ..... life altering consequences

*Children become legally culpable in Colorado at age 10, fifth grade, and many have not yet had sex ed.....*

*Even those who do get sex ed are not routinely taught the laws re their behavior.*

# Adult Responsibilities...

**Adults must *acquire the knowledge to be comfortable* validating and correcting children's understanding of sexuality and behavior.**

**Responsible adults must step up and *teach* kids what the laws and sanctions are BEFORE they are getting arrested!**

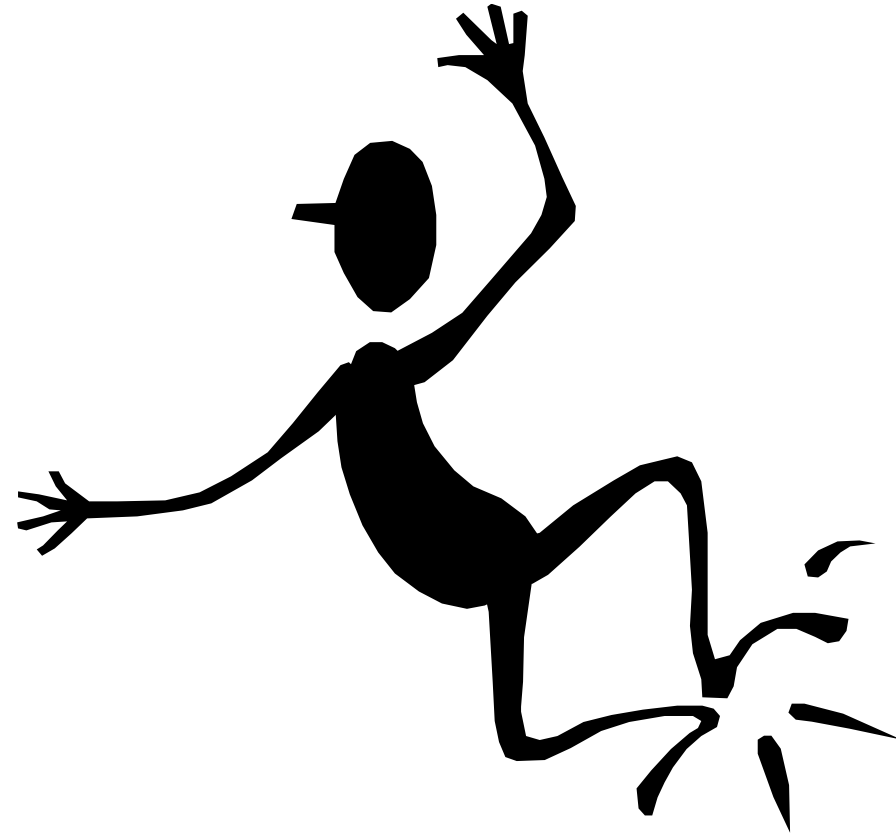
.... And we **must *advocate for juvenile justice & rehabilitation*** when kids make mistakes .

**We must also be *cautious about the language* we use with kids and in records we create.**

**\*\*Behavior and experiences do not define them, whether perpetration or victimization**

**\*\* (Minors should never be referred to as "sex offenders" "predators" "psychopaths" "sociopaths" "antisocial" etc...)**

**But Some things never change.....**



**Good news: human kids are still humans**