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## FAQ and Resource Guide for Parents and Caregivers: Problematic Sexual Behavior in Children and Youth

### Background

Problematic sexual behavior in children and youth is defined as behavior initiated by children and youth under the age of 18 that involves using sexual body parts in a manner that is developmentally inappropriate or potentially harmful to the individual or individuals impacted by the behavior.

A [new Department of Defense policy](#) expands the responsibility of the [Family Advocacy Program](#) to address problematic sexual behavior in children and youth. This change in policy allows the program to support families whose children or adolescents have exhibited, or been impacted by, concerning or problematic sexual behavior. It also allows the program to convene a multidisciplinary team to manage the coordinated community response to these behaviors, and recommend a safe way forward for all involved.

### For Parents - Understanding Child Sexual Development and Concerning Sexual Behaviors

#### Learn more about child sexual development

- [What's Normal? What's Not? Fact Sheet](#)
- [Healthy Sexual Behaviors in Children](#)
- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network - Sexual Development and Behavior in Children](#)
- [Military Families Learning Network - Sexualized Behavior in Children and Youth Series](#)

## Find ways for parents and caregivers to cope and offer more support

- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network - Understanding and Coping with Sexual Behavior Problems in Children](#)
- [National Center on the Sexual Behavior of Youth - A Guide for Parents/Caregivers Concerned About Children's Sexual Behavior](#)
- [National Children's Alliance Resources for Children's Advocacy Centers, Partners and Caregivers](#)

## Talk with your children

Start early, and talk often with your children about [healthy body boundaries](#) to help them understand what safe and respectful interactions should look like.

## Questions and Answers

### What is problematic sexual behavior in children and youth?

PSB-CY is behavior initiated by children and youth younger than 18 that involves using sexual body parts in a manner that is:

- Beyond their stage of development or atypical of behavior for kids their age
- Potentially harmful to the child initiating the behavior as well as any children impacted by the behavior

### How can parents learn more about child sexual development?

Call Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 to be connected to resources and information about healthy child sexual behaviors, including tips for parents to promote healthy child sexual development. Learn more through the [Family Advocacy Program Essentials](#) page.

### How does the Family Advocacy Program respond to PSB-CY and what kind of help is available?

When a child or youth exhibits or is impacted by PSB-CY, the Family Advocacy Program will reach out to the family to offer guidance and support guidance for parents and caregivers and support to navigate next steps and treatment after an incident of PSB-CY. Next steps may include trauma-informed assessments, rehabilitation and treatment to eligible children and youth at military treatment facilities.

The Family Advocacy Program may also provide resource and referral information to civilian medical treatment facilities for children and youth who are not eligible for care in military facilities, or for parents who would like to seek outside services. Services extend to both children impacted and children exhibiting PSB-CY. The [Family Advocacy Program](#) also provides education for parents on healthy child sexual development as a means of preventing PSB-CY.

## **Who should refer concerning sexual behavior to the Family Advocacy Program?**

Anyone can make a referral. Referrals come from DoDEA, child and youth programs, Military and Family Life Counselors and others. If you are concerned about sexual behaviors exhibited by or impacting a child or young person you know, contact your:

- [Family Advocacy Program](#)
- [National Children's Alliance](#)

Contact your [Family Advocacy Program](#) to assist your child and family with:

- Information
- Supportive counseling
- Specialized resources

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Connect with support and resources for families impacted by problematic sexual behavior in children and youth.