

## A Checklist to Help Parents, Teachers, and Counselors Identify Children with a Possible Sex-Specific Problem

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1. Any child using sexual language beyond his or her age group. This suggests that the child has been looking at sexual material or engaging in sexual behavior beyond his or her age group.
2. Any child who acts out sexually at school or home.
3. Any child who continues to engage in chronic sexually harassing behavior after an adult has told the child to stop.
4. Any child who others report as having excessively sexually provocative behavior.
5. Any child who attempts to get another child or adult nude; especially at school or outside the home.
6. Any child who is overly attentive to younger children (three or more years younger).
7. Any child suspected of having a sexually transmitted disease.

If any child or teenager you know falls under any of these categories, that child may be developing an inappropriate sexual interest in other, younger children and/or may have been sexually molested. As an adult hero, there are actions you can take.

A child exhibiting this type of behavior needs an evaluation by a sex-specific therapist to determine the cause of the behavior. That therapist can provide a treatment plan to stop the developing inappropriate sexual interest in its tracks and/or can refer a victimized child to a therapist who specializes in child victims of sexual abuse. Sometimes both types of treatment are necessary.

It is an unfortunate fact that some children who are molested also develop their own inappropriate sexual interest in other, younger children (because of the molestation and through no fault of their own) and are at risk to become future molesters without a professional intervention. The greater the number of molestation incidents, the greater the chance that the molested child may develop an inappropriate sexual interest in other, younger children. It is also possible for children who have never been molested to develop an inappropriate sexual interest in other, younger children (also through no fault of their own). In either case, professional help from a sex-specific therapist is necessary.

Sex-specific therapists and therapists who specialize in child victims of sexual abuse are two very different types of therapists and each should be consulted for each separate problem. Most therapists who specialize in the treatment of molestation victims do not have the specialized training or tools to effectively treat a child's or teenager's developing inappropriate sexual interest in other, younger children. To find a qualified sex-specific therapist, please refer to [Six Questions to Ask When Selecting A Sex-Specific Therapist](#) and [Sex-Specific Therapy Sites by in North America](#). A child or teenager who has been victimized or who is developing an inappropriate sexual interest in other, younger

children needs an adult to intervene to make sure he or she gets the specialized help needed. You can be that adult.

Moreover, if someone is currently sexually abusing the child, an adult needs to take immediate action to protect that child from further molestation and to ensure that the abuser no longer has access to any other children. The abuser also needs to receive immediate treatment from a sex-specific therapist. Protective actions may include contacting the police, contacting child protective services, removing the abuser from the home with children (or from any job or activity that provides the abuser with access to children) and immediately enrolling the abuser in treatment with a sex-specific therapist.

Above all, don't ignore the warning signs. Take action. Seek professional help. Be an adult hero. Your action may save many children.

\* Checklist reprinted with permission of Gene G. Abel, M.D. and Nora Harlow (authors of [\*The Stop Child Molestation Book, What Ordinary People Can Do In Their Everyday Lives To Save Three Million Children.\*](#) All profits from book sales donated to The Child Molestation Research and Prevention Institute.).

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