

# A Treatment Program for Families of Children with Problematic Sexual Behavior

**Adapting Treatment During COVID-19** Currently, PSB-CBT assessment and treatment are conducted through a secure telehealth platform (online).

Some sexual play among young children, like playing doctor or looking at private parts, may be considered normal. However, some sexual behaviors are inappropriate and potentially harmful to children. For example, some children display intrusive, aggressive, or coercive sexual behaviors.

There isn't one type of child who develops problematic sexual behavior (PSB). Both boys and girls can have PSB. While some of the children have been sexually abused, many have not. Most children who have been sexually abused do not have PSB. Research suggests that many factors can contribute to developing problematic sexual behavior, including:

- Family sexuality patterns • Exposure to sexual material
- Exposure to family violence • Physical abuse
- Other non-sexual behavior problems

## Problematic Sexual Behavior – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Many children with problematic sexual behavior can be helped with outpatient treatment from 18 to 26 weeks. They can live at home and attend school and other activities without jeopardizing the safety of other children. Most of these children do not continue to have sexual behavior problems into adolescence and adulthood.

Programs are available for children **ages 7 to 12** and their caregivers. Children are referred for behaviors including:

- Repeatedly exposing themselves to others
- Excessive masturbation
- Failure to recognize socially acceptable physical boundaries
- Preoccupation with pornography and other sexualized content
- Generation and/or dissemination of sexualized images of self or others
- Aggressive sexual acts



## Group Treatment

The first step is an assessment to determine if the group treatment program is a good fit for the child and family. If accepted into the program, children will learn:

- Rules about sexual behavior
- Privacy and boundary rules
- Coping skills and impulse control skills
- Social skills

Caregivers must participate in the program. They learn:

- To distinguish normal from problematic sexual behaviors in children
- Appropriate responses to children's sexual behaviors
- Ways to prevent problematic sexual behavior
- Effective responses to other behavioral problems

Children and their caregivers meet at the same time in separate groups once a week in the early evening. Combined sessions occur where children and caregivers can practice new skills.

## Serving Durham, Orange, and Surrounding Counties

**Contact us if you know a child who might benefit from this program. We accept referrals from:**

Parents and guardians • NC Department of Social Services • Mental health, medical, school, and other professionals  
Daycare providers • NC Department of Public Safety • Juvenile Justice

Services are provided at the Center for Child & Family Health,  
1121 W. Chapel Hill Street, in Durham, NC.



**For more info or to refer a child:**

Email the PSB Clinical team at [psbreferrals@ncchildtreatmentprogram.org](mailto:psbreferrals@ncchildtreatmentprogram.org)

Learn more about this subject at [www.NCSBY.org](http://www.NCSBY.org), [www.icctc.org](http://www.icctc.org), and [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org).

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