

Social Skills & Sexual Education

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Based on Sexual Education Workshop with Dr. Sorah Stein,
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What is ABA?

- ABA is a hard science. This means it is based on scientific principles that have been tested and re-tested in laboratories, clinics, and in applied settings (e.g. homes, schools, and community settings).
- These scientific principles have been tested and re-tested for decades.
- ABA is the **only** treatment that is evidence-based that shows improvement in the reduction of unwanted behaviors and an increase in appropriate skills.
- ABA is not just used for children with Autism.

Myths about Autism and Sex

- Individuals with ASD are not sexual.
- Individuals with ASD engage in uncontrolled sexual behaviors towards others.
- Some individuals with ASD cannot learn how to engage in appropriate sexual behaviors.
- Some individuals with ASD with cognitive impairment will always remain “children” and will not be sexual.
- Individuals with ASD do not have a sexual orientation.

Typical Sexual Behaviors (Ages 6-12)

- **Continued** self-stimulation (in private)
- **Continued** experimental sexual play with peers (hidden from adults)
- Peer discussions about sex and relationships
- Sexual orientation
- Interest in children of the opposite sex
- Establishment of more adult relationships (e.g. boyfriends and girlfriends)
- Increased need and want for personal privacy
- Onset of puberty
- Changes in physical characteristics (e.g. hair growth, etc.)

Typical Sexual Behaviors (12-18)

- Motivated to gain access to sexual gratification
- Increased knowledge of sex and alternative forms of sexual expression
- Casual sexual encounters
- Coaching from peers (can also be peer pressure)
- Continued peer discussion
- Development of long-term intimate relationships

Social skills are extremely important...

- **Continued** self-stimulation (in private)
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- Sexual orientation
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Social skills needed continued....

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Some things to think about...

- If our kiddos do not have the social skills needed to engage in in-depth discussions, they will be missing out on sexual knowledge and experience.
- Sexual development occurs **outside** of cognitive development.
- Kiddos in special education classrooms are **exempt** from sex ed and must be **opted in**....
- Kids receiving sex ed are not taught about the mechanics of sex. They are expected to already have this knowledge.
- Our kids are especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Teach everything as opposed to teaching some things... Sexual knowledge leads to a **REDUCTION** in inappropriate sexual behaviors.

Some Important Skills to Teach

- Proper terminology (No need for embarrassment. It's science!)
- Public vs. Private Settings
- Public vs. Private Behaviors
- Appropriate personal space
- **CONSENT** (Research state law)
- Body Parts
- Masturbation
- Hygiene
- STIs

How do I teach these things?

- First, assess what your child already knows.
- Base teaching methods on the needs of the individual.
- What has worked in the past?
- Teach both appropriate terminology and slang that your child might hear in their social circles.
- Foster an atmosphere of acceptance, tolerance, and privacy.
- Your BCBA can help guide from assessment to implementation

Public vs. Private Settings

- This is a crucial step to teach.
- Our kiddos should have a sense of privacy.
- Be aware that some kids with excellent expressive language skills might need some help with receptive language skills.

















Any Questions?

