



What is Child-on-Child Sexual Abuse?

Child sexual abuse can occur even if an adult is not involved. Child-on-child sexual abuse happens when a child is sexually abused by another child, adolescent or group of children. This type of abuse involves sexual activity between children without consent, or as a result of physical or emotional pressure.

When sexual abuse is perpetrated by one sibling upon another, it is called inter-sibling abuse. When victims of inter-sibling child-on-child sexual abuse grow up, they often have distorted recall of the act, such as thinking it was consensual or that they initiated contact.

This type of abuse often goes unreported — either because it's dismissed by adults as “kids being kids,” or for fear of what will happen to one or both of the children if the abuse is reported.

Kids may engage in normal sexual play. This looks like:

- * Anatomical curiosity
- * Exploration of their own body parts
- * “Playing doctor”

Child-on-child sexual abuse:

- * Is an overt and deliberate action directed at sexual stimulation, such as orgasm
- * May involve a child using a power difference — age, size, ability — to pressure or coerce another child into sexual activity
- * Is known as harmful sexual behavior (HSB)

If you become aware of child-on-child sexual abuse:

First, remember both children need help.

Remember

The **child being abused** needs the appropriate care of any survivor of sexual abuse, such as crisis counseling and medical attention.

The **child who initiated the sexual contact** needs to see a licensed medical or mental health professional to help them work through these age-inappropriate sexual behaviors. Children who get this care are less likely to engage in HSB again.

Learn more at rainn.org/after-sexual-assault



Our Kids is a Nashville-based clinic that provides expert medical evaluations and crisis counseling in response to concerns of child sexual abuse. For more, visit OurKidsCenter.com