

Reveals Results Behavior Study

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way, and we can't give an absolute reason for it," Haugaard commented. He believes that if a behavior is labelled as inappropriate, there should be a reason for that label.

Although his study — which only related to non-coercive activities — would not provide an answer for which sexual behaviors are appropriate and which are inappropriate, Haugaard believes that his study "might provide some evidence upon which an answer could be built."

Adult Orientation

The results of the study show that sexual behaviors which are more adult-oriented, such as "intercourse," "attempted or simulated intercourse," "digital penetration of vagina or anus," and "oral-genital contact," were least acceptable to the professionals.

The behaviors that were the second least acceptable "involve traditional sexual areas but not intercourse type behaviors," Haugaard explained. These behaviors included "fondling" of different areas of the body.

The professionals considered the behaviors Haugaard labelled as "looking," such as "undressing together" and "showing genitals," the most acceptable behaviors for children.

Haugaard found that a child's age plays a role in the acceptability of his or her actions. In examining the effect that different age groups (ages four, eight and 12) had on the acceptability of sexual behaviors, he found that as children grow older, professionals considered the behaviors to be decreasingly acceptable.

Gender was also an important factor when considering the acceptability of sexual behaviors. Haugaard explained that for age eight, significantly more professional males than females found the sexual behaviors acceptable. For age 12, a gender difference was only found for the "looking" category.

He said that this difference might be accounted for by the possibility that young males were more likely than young females to engage in these behaviors.

The data from the undergraduate students indicated that significantly more males than females engaged in two of the four sexual behaviors between the ages of seven and ten. A significant gender difference for ages 11 to 12 was found for "exposing genitals" as well.

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