

# Kristi House's Pathways for Strong Families

## Defining and Treating Problematic Sexual Behaviors (PSB) in Children



Sexual behaviors in children are often the result of harmless curiosity, but there are times when these behaviors become harmful to the children or others. Guidelines now exist for those seeking answers to help determine what are normal developmental behaviors in children and which are problematic. Sexual behaviors in youth are considered problematic when they have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Occur frequently;
- Take place between children of widely different ages (e.g., a 12 year old and a 4 year old) or between children of different developmental abilities;
- Involve intrusive interpersonal behavior with other people or animals;
- Are initiated with strong, upset feelings, such as anger or anxiety;
- Cause harm or potential harm (physical or emotional) to any child;
- Do not respond to typical parenting strategies (e.g., discipline); and/or
- Involve coercion, force, threats, bribery, or aggression of any kind.

## Treatment Options

Kristi House Children's Advocacy Center, with support from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services SAMHSA, offers an evidence-based approach for addressing PSB in school age children.

The Kristi House **Pathways for Strong Families** program, based on the Oklahoma University Problematic Sexual Behaviors-Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (OU PSB-CBT) group treatment model, address problematic sexual behavior in school-aged children. These outpatient group treatment programs are recognized and supported by research as being effective in reducing or eliminating problematic sexual behavior in youth. The programs work with caregivers and the youth to increase safety and communication as well as promote healthy, positive choices in youth with PSB.

**Groups are open for school-aged children, 7-12 years old, at Kristi House.**

*There is no cost to families to participate.*

**Groups are available in both English and Spanish.**

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