

How to tell if sexual play is not OK

- When the behaviour is **not mutual** play
- When a **tamaiti** (child) is forced, bribed or tricked into doing things
- When the sexual play, language and knowledge of a child is beyond their developmental age and stage
- When there is an **age difference**
- When it is harmful, whether emotionally, mentally or physically
- All **whānau** (families) have differing values, beliefs, cultural differences and parenting styles. However, children need clear **rules and boundaries** relating to OK and not-OK touching

Responding to concerning sexualised behaviour

A **safe adult** has an important role in giving clear messages to **tamariki** (children) about the rules and boundaries of playing safely.

What to do if you see children engaging in concerning sexualised behaviour:

- Keep **calm**
- Do not 'lose it' or get angry, as this may prevent open communication taking place
- Be **curious** and ask non-threatening questions: 'What are you playing?', 'Where did

you get the idea to play that?' or 'Whose idea was it to play that game?'

- **Name** the behaviour and be clear about the rules e.g. 'It's not OK to be playing with your pants off'
- **Re-direct** the play with something like: 'Put your pants on and come into the lounge'
- Inform the parent/caregivers so they can have an open conversation with their child
- See this as an opportunity to have open conversations

about playing safely. Be mindful that you don't bring it up too many times - name it, talk about it and move on

- Children need adults to provide **aroha** (love) and support when responding to incidents of not-OK sexual play or behaviours
- If the behaviour occurs again and you're concerned, contact a professional who can **tautoko** (support) you

For more information, check out
www.stop.org.nz