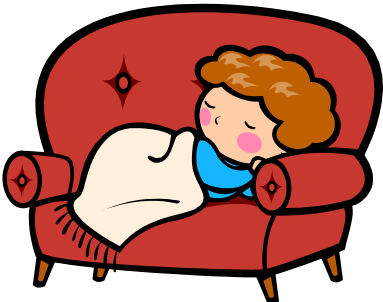



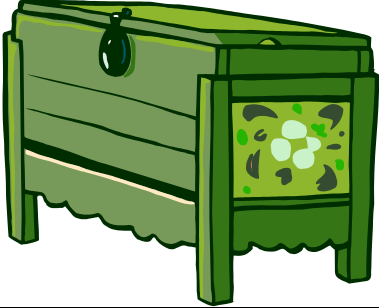
COMMUNITY PAEDIATRIC OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

SENSORY RUBBING/PRIVATE TOUCHING

Many children will rub or touch their genitals to gain pleasurable sensations and comfort. This behaviour can become very repetitive. Parents, brothers and sisters and the wider family can find this behaviour embarrassing and difficult to cope with.

It is important to remember that this behaviour is perfectly normal even for very young children. In order to protect the child and to help the rest of the family cope with the behaviour we need to make sure that the child learns that there are safe places for private touching. We always need to remember to respect the dignity of the child and make sure this behaviour does not make them vulnerable to others or to ridicule.

DIFFICULTY	IDEAS TO TRY
<p>The child starts private touching or rubbing in a shared family area.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the child to go to a 'Private Space', usually their bedroom. (The bathroom is not the best place as it can mean that the rest of the family can't use this when they need to). • Use a coloured / patterned card, (avoid using a red card) as a visual prompt.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This card can be shown to the child and taken with the child to their bedroom. This means that the child may learn to show the card when they want to be private. Parents can also redirect the behaviour to the Private Space when others are sharing the family area, this

	protects the dignity of the child without causing embarrassment to others.
The child seeks this behaviour whenever they are left without other stimulation, when parent needs to do an activity such as answer the phone or make a meal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a sensory toy box in the shared space. Don't fill it with lots of toys, select a few (3 or 4) things and change them regularly. Give the child an item from the box when you need to do something else, or direct them to the box.
Once the child starts the private touching they find it difficult to stop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to divert the child before they start the behaviour. Use toys from a sensory box, or sensory games. • Redirect the child to the safe space. 
The child does not stop private touching and this stops them eating a meal, or getting ready to go out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use 'This/Then' cards or language, e.g. "Private touching, then dinner". Then use a timer (or say 1 more minute then 'finish'). "Private touching is finished", show the 'then' card and say "It is dinner – let's go".
One of your other children has a friend playing at your house, your child starts to do Private Touching. You don't want to embarrass either child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show your child the coloured card and say "Let's go" and lead them to their safe space.

<p>Your child shares a bedroom with a brother or sister. You want him/her to have a safe space, but both children need to use the room.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are using a coloured card, this can be placed on a Velcro strip on the outside of the room when your child is using the safe space for Private Touching. This lets the other child know they should not go in to the room. You may need to negotiate time using the timer and <i>This/Then</i> visual cues.
<p>Your child starts to Private Touch in public or in someone else's home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are using a coloured card show them and say This (the activity you are doing, Then and show card. E.g. "Shopping first Then (coloured card)" • Have sensory toys or twizzles with you to distract. • Avoid redirecting them to a public bathroom or someone else's toilet as this might make them more vulnerable in the future.
<p>You are worried that your child may be vulnerable to someone who may want to touch your child inappropriately.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your child is able to understand explain that Private Touching is when you are by yourself. • Demonstrate this by allowing your child the space on their own. Reinforce this with verbal cues, such as "this is safe, you are Private". Talk about unsafe touching; schools will usually have information about this.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibration toys can be a good distractor, but be aware that the child may use them as part of the Private Touching. The reason we would want to use a toy is to distract rather than encourage the behaviour in an unsafe space.
	<p>Sensory Toys can be found from specialist outlets such as : www.specialdirect.com www.ROMPA.com</p> <p>But you can find fantastic sensory toys from other outlets like pound shops,</p>

	<p>Garden Centres, Hawkins Bizarre, and markets. These may not be as strong as the specialist toys and you will need to be aware of possible hazards.</p>
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DATE:

Ideas to try	Outcome
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