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Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse

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INDICATORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

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Behaviors and drawings of children were observed to determine indicators of child sexual abuse. Three sexually abused children and six non-abused children, ranging in age from 5 to 7 years old, were studied. These children attended Headstart in Bloomington and Hammitt School in Normal. Five of the children were male, four were female, seven were caucasian, and two were black. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) was administered in session one, the Draw-A-Man Test was administered in session two, and doll play was engaged in during session three. Nine behaviors were rated after each session on a scale of one, not at all present, to five, extremely present. These behaviors included anxiety/fear, sadness, time on task (%), aggression, social withdrawal, sexualized behavior, happiness, feelings of inferiority, and tension. After completing a F-ratio, no statistically significant results were found between the groups on any of the behaviors. In session one, seven of the children had significantly lower mental ages than chronological ages. The mental ages ranged from 4.75 to 5.5 years with an average difference of 1.33 years between the mental and chronological ages. The other two children were at the normal level. In session two, two children drew genitalia on their human figure drawings, but they were in the non-abused group. One of the children drew a penis and the other child drew a pair of breasts. In session three, there was a large difference, although not statistically significant according to the F-ratio, between the average ratings of sexualized behaviors displayed by each group. The non-abused group averaged a 1.5 on a 5 point scale while the abused group averaged a 4.67. This study shows that sexualized behaviors during doll play can be an indicator of child sexual abuse.