



HEALTHY SEXUALITY IN FIRST GRADERS: SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM



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Introduction

The problem of sexually abused children has significantly increased in Mexico during the last decades. According to some reports, the average age of victimized children is 5.7 years old. However, violence against children in specific regions like the United States-Mexico border has underscored the importance of examining the extent and efficacy of preventive initiatives on this phenomenon.

Purpose

Present the main results of a prevention program on sexual abuse in the City of Tijuana among six year old children, focusing on sexual health issues.

Methodology

The targeted population was four groups of first grade children at two public elementary schools, with low household income. The targeted population of this program was four groups of first grade children at two public elementary schools. This program was organized into thirteen workshops and divided in three different themes.



Themes, Variables, Objectives, and Activities Included in the Program

Themes	Variables	Objective	Activities
My uniqueness	Sex	Genitals' differences	<p>Drawings of themselves in different contexts.</p> <p>Puzzles of men and women, what parts made them different?</p> <p>Display of posters of body parts of boys and girls, and men and women.</p> <p>Indicate their differences, and point out their ordinary and formal names</p> <p>How are we be born?</p> <p>Point out the reproductive apparatus by name and functions.</p>
	Physical differences between bodies and development	Children differentiates expected gender actions	
		Identification of child and adult body differences	
Reproduction	Appropriate knowledge on reproduction		
Children's rights	Self protection and hygiene	Boys and girls may consider important their bodies.	<p>Highlight the fact that we have a body to take care of.</p> <p>Guidance to take care of their bodies with specific actions through the story "The dirty caterpillar".</p> <p>What are my needs?</p> <p>Ensure understanding about their needs on health, provision, caring, protection, education, expression, participation and a healthy environment.</p>
	Children's rights	Teach the children their rights	
Different ways to express affect	Limits	Set personal limits	<p>Modeling by setting personal limits through a play with puppets.</p> <p>The expression of affection in appropriate manners for their different ages.</p> <p>Establishing healthy relationships.</p> <p>Recognizing sensations and emotions in their bodies.</p>
	Acceptance	To promote self acceptance	
	Intimacy	The children recognize their own personal specie	
	Affection	Children recognize their sensations and emotions	
	Self esteem	Encourage them to give and receive affection in healthy manners	

Table No. 1. Themes, Variables, Objectives, and Activities Included in the Program



RESULTS

Children's responses showed differences between groups related to the extent of their curiosity and their acceptance of the themes.

The outcomes were more significant in some of the areas than others. However, we could confirm that the purpose of the program was achieved, given that the post-test reflects acquisition of knowledge about the body including genitals, the importance of self protection and caring. Likewise, it was observed an increase in the children's abilities to communicate more assertively their needs and feelings. There was also an increase in the number of people they are willing to speak up in a risk situation, as well as their ability to determine to whom demonstrate affection and in which manner.

Finally, throughout all the sessions the children displayed a significantly positive attitude toward sexuality.

CONCLUSIONS

We conclude that this kind of preventive programs among first graders is deeply needed in contexts like this, thus reducing the likelihood of sexual abuse on this and later stages of their development.

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