

How to Teach Kids Consent

(By Age)



Children's Hospital
Colorado

Consent is about more than sex – it's about empathy, courage and respect. At its heart, it's about values, and conversations about consent should start when kids are young.

Here's our guide for teaching kids about consent, by age:



Young children

Let kids decide when they want or don't want to be touched (even by friends or relatives)



TEACH CHILDREN TO NAME THEIR BODY PARTS, AND EXPLAIN:

What parts we don't touch without permission

What parts we don't let others touch without permission



Around puberty

SHARE YOUR VALUES

What sex is and when it's appropriate

What kind of sexual contact (if any) it's okay to engage in



"Teens can't know what their parents believe about sex and why they believe it unless parents tell them."

- Dr. Antonia Chiesa



Teens

DISCUSS WHAT CONSENT IS AND WHEN TEENS SHOULD GIVE OR GET IT



What is consent?

Consent is explicit, verbal permission to initiate and continue sexual contact



What isn't consent?

- Implied permission
- Previous permission
- Silence
- If either party is intoxicated

CONTINUING CONVERSATIONS

As they mature, continue to have conversations with tweens and teens about:

Sexual assault

Sex assault doesn't always mean forcible rape. It can also be:

- Tricking someone
- Getting them drunk
- Talking them into something they wouldn't otherwise do



Dealing with pressure to consent

Almost every teen will encounter sexual pressure at some point. Help them make a plan for staying safe, if it happens.

Sexting

A teen might consider sending a nude picture — but would they give permission for that pic to be shared with dozens or even hundreds of others?