

How to Talk to Kids About Consent

True prevention of sexual assault starts with educating youth about the importance of empathy, healthy communication, setting boundaries and respecting other people's boundaries and, of course, consent. Here are some tips on how to start the conversation at any age.

Teach children to ask permission (ages 1-5)

Before touching or embracing a playmate, teach your child to ask first.

If the playmate declines, assure your child that it is okay.

Help create empathy within your child (ages 1-5)

Explain to your child how something they did may have hurt someone.

Be gentle with your language but emphasize that they have hurt someone and that behavior is not okay.

Teach kids that their behaviors affect others (ages 5-12)

Let your children know that their choices affect others as well.

Teach them to observe how people respond and ask them how they would feel in that same situation.

Nip "locker room talk" in the bud (teens)

Teach your kids that it is inappropriate to speak of others like they're objects.

We must model how to talk about our crushes as real people.

Keep talking about sex and consent (teens)

Continue to talk about sex and consent to show your teen how important these issues are to you.

This also normalizes talking about consent and will make communication with partners easier.

Talk honestly with kids about partying (teens)

State that you don't want them to use drugs or alcohol but you know partying happens.

Teach them to help peers who are too drunk and that victims are not at fault.

Adapted from The Good Men's Project:

<https://goodmenproject.com/families/the-healthy-sex-talk-teaching-kids-consent-ages-1-21/>