
A Parent Toolkit About Consent

A Parent Toolkit for How to
Teach Consent at All Ages

CARE RESOURCES ARE HERE FOR YOU

How to access us:

Available for emergency support at
(530) 752- 3299

Email us at ucdcare@ucdavis.edu



center for advocacy,
resources & education

WHAT IS CONSENT?

Consent must be affirmative, conscious, revocable and voluntary. Someone is not legally able to give consent if they are incapacitated, unconscious, underaged, or coerced.

There are many different ways to model consent to your children:

1. Ask for consent from them in everyday interactions

Do you want a hug right now?

Can I sit next to you while you fall asleep?

2. Listen to the answer

Read their nonverbal cues and communicate what you are seeing

It is important to model that the absence of "no" doesn't mean "yes"

3. Accept the answer they give you

If the child communicates a "no" to you, don't push it & accept their answer cheerfully

While consent is an important part of any sexual experience, it is also applicable to many other parts of your life. If something is related to one's body, it is important to obtain consent.

Can I give you a hug right now?

Are you okay with tickles?

Your child should never feel that they are being convinced to be okay with something

Oftentimes consent is thought about strictly in terms of relationships and hook ups but it actually is important in everyday life which makes it important to talk to our kids about.

- Consent means giving someone a choice about touch or actions and respecting the answer they give. (Healthy Communications with Kids, NSVRC)
- With children, it teaches them healthy communication and that their boundaries deserve to be respected.

There are lots of social norms regarding children being forced to show physical affection to an adult but this does not allow a child bodily autonomy.

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

A lot of schools and families chose to wait until children have grown into teenagers to introduce conversations about consent but it is important to start the conversations young so children are learning those things from a young age. This helps them integrate consent into lots of facets of their lives, not just relationships and sex. It is normalizing consent as something that is common in our everyday lives and it is a regular reminder that we have power over our own bodies.

GENERAL TIPS

Educate yourself
about topics you may
feel uncomfortable
talking about

Don't force it

Consent and
boundaries do not
only apply to sex
They apply to all relationships

Be inclusive

While the conversation may feel hard to start, think about what things you want your child to take away from these conversations?

What do you want them to gain?

What skills do you hope they will have?

What knowledge do you want them to take with them into their experiences?

While it may take a while for their skills and knowledge to develop, this will help you as the role model think about what examples you want to give them.

Be prepared to answer their questions honestly. This will create a hopefully open channel for communication between you and your child so they feel comfortable to come to you with questions in the future.

Having conversations with your kids in an open and honest way will motivate them to do the same and help them feel more comfortable having conversations in the future.

Educating youth about the importance of empathy, healthy communication, setting boundaries, and respecting other people's boundaries and, of course, consent is key to prevention dating and sexual violence.

HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT CONSENT: AGES 1-5 YEARS OLD

TEACH CHILDREN TO ASK PERMISSION

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

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

START BUILDING THEIR VOCABULARY WITH WORDS LIKE BODY, SPACE, AND TOUCH

While you are not introducing the concept of consent to your child,
it allows them to start to have words for how they feel

If someone tries to hug them & they do not feel comfortable with that, it is
important for them to have the words to express that it is something they do not want.

ASK THEM FOR CONSENT

Ask if they want a hug right now or if they are okay with
the tickling game you are playing

Model that it is okay to check in and make sure someone is comfortable

DON'T FORCE THEM TO HUG OR TOUCH SOMEONE THEY DO NOT WANT TO

Kids have pretty clear body language so you can see when a child is
feeling uncomfortable with the prospects of giving someone a hug

HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT CONSENT: AGES 5-12 YEARS OLD

TEACH KIDS THAT THEIR BEHAVIORS AFFECT OTHERS

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

TEACH KIDS THAT THEY ARE ALLOWED TO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS

Too often, adults discourage kids from showing sadness, anger, or discomfort but allowing them to learn about their emotions helps them learn how to advocate for themselves

BREAK DOWN WHAT CONSENT IS

These conversations do not have to be about sex or sexual violence but these conversations allow children to understand boundaries

RESPECT WHAT STUDENTS ALREADY KNOWS

Do not assume that they know nothing about what consent is

Try asking questions like "what type of boundaries do you have?" or "is there something in particular you are uncomfortable with?"

LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO GRADUALLY INTRODUCE THEMES RELEVANT TO CONSENT OR TO ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS ABOUT BOUNDARIES

Sometimes we become more welcoming to new ideas through gradual exposure and exploration

USING HETEREONORMATIVE AND BINARY LANGUAGE MAY SEND THE SIGNAL THAT YOU WON'T BE SUPPORTIVE OF THEM, AND MAKE THEM SHUT DOWN.

Assert the existence of different gender identities. This creates a safe environment for your teen to explore their own identity

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Conversations about consent are not one & done, it is important to continue talking about why these things are important and why they are necessary.

HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT CONSENT: TEENS

NIP “LOCKER ROOM TALK” IN THE BUD

- 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
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KEEP TALKING ABOUT SEX AND CONSENT

- 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
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RESPECT YOUR TEEN'S CRITICAL THINKING ABILITIES

- Ask open ended questions, use active and reflective listening (repeat what they said in your own words) and ask them if you correctly understood what they said.
 - Talk with your teen, not at them.
If you are uncomfortable talking about consent, your teen will notice
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DEBUNK THE STEREOTYPES PORTRAYED IN THE MEDIA

- Teens see so much messaging in the media about sex and what it should be like so it is important to explain that sex is something you have to talk about with your partner
 - Remind that that it is okay to say no to something and it is okay to change their mind in the middle of something
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TEACH THEM HOW TO ASK FOR CONSENT

- While teaching them how to establish and maintain
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TALK HONESTLY WITH KIDS ABOUT PARTYING

- 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

CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES

Resources for Staff and Faculty

Center for Advocacy, Resources & Education (CARE)

<http://care.ucdavis.edu>

Confidential resources for any UCD student, staff, or faculty who has been impacted by sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and sexual harassment.

Academic & Staff Assistance Program (ASAP)

<http://hr.ucdavis.edu/departments/asap>

Confidential, cost-free assessment, intervention, consultation and referral services to all UC Davis and UC Davis Health faculty, staff and their immediate families.

Office of Ombuds

<http://ombuds.ucdavis.edu>

Confidential, independent, impartial and informal problem-solving and conflict management resource for all members of the UC Davis and UC Davis Health campus communities.

Empower Yolo

<http://empoweryolo.org>

24-hour crisis intervention, emergency shelter, confidential counseling, legal assistance, and other services for individuals and families affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, and child abuse.