

HOW TO TEACH CONSENT TO LITTLE KIDS

#NATIONALSEXEDUCATIONDAY

INFANTS:

Touch a baby with warmth and love. Coo and talk softly. You are communicating respect and consent in their rapidly developing brain. They may not have language at this point, but they understand love.



TODDLERS/ PRESCHOOL

Warm, caring, respectful, consensual conversations at home transfer over into your child's life.

Model consensual behavior with friends and family.
Your kids are watching. "May I hug you?"
"Would you share your cookies with me?"

Demonstrate and discuss what the word 'no' means.

Help them understand that their body is their own.
One way is to ask before sharing hugs. "May I hug you?" "Let's ask her if she'd like a hug."

TODDLERS/ PRESCHOOL CONT...

ACTION STEPS

- Practice refusal skills before family events.
- For older children, use developmentally appropriate television or movies to illustrate body language and facial cues.
- Read books together about consent such as *No Means No* by Jayneen Sanders or *C is for Consent* by Eleanor Morrison.
- Watch Blue Seat Studios video called *Consent for Kids*.

If your child is uncomfortable with certain shows of affection, such as hugging, offer an option such as a high-five or blowing a kiss. Explain to family members that you are teaching your child to respect their own boundaries and the boundaries of others.

Rather than saying, "Give Grandma a kiss" ask, "Would you like to give Grandma a kiss?" These conversations can take place before the family event.

When your child says "stop" or "no" while tickling or hugging, stop immediately. You are demonstrating appropriate consensual responses.

There is a difference between social manners and forced affection. Children should be taught to be respectful, but should honor their boundaries and their own comfort levels.

Teach kindness, but also educate the importance of a firm, definitive "no".

Help them identify their inner voice. Does their tummy feel funny when someone asks them to do something they don't want to do? Listen to that voice.

Help kids to read body language. Do faces look sad or scared? Are they relaxed and happy? What might that mean?

Teach children how to politely ask to play with another child's toy. Help them understand it is okay if the friend says "no".

We must teach children to share with others, but sometimes it is okay to say no with kindness.

SPECIAL NOTE



We are at an important crossroad when it comes to talking to our boys about consent. In this #MeToo movement we are aware that conversations about consent and respect are of the utmost importance. These conversations about respecting others begins before our kids can talk - body language is a fabulous communicator. Conversations about treating others kindly, and that no one has the right to touch, kiss, or have sex without the other person's permission, must be ongoing.

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