TEACHING KIDS CONSENT

Talking about consent early and often will help young people feel empowered to speak up about their boundaries and build a strong, lifelong foundation. Here are some tips on how to talk about consent with children and teens:

AGES 0-4:
• Model consent during day-to-day life. Even if a child is smiling and having fun, stop playing when the child says no and only continue when they tell you they’re ready.
• Let them know that it’s OK to cry and express their feelings. Learning to be in touch with their emotions can help them let you know if something is wrong.

AGES 5-10:
• Introduce the meaning of consent using examples like sharing toys and respecting personal space.
• Teach your child that they get to decide about their own body, and that no one should touch them without their permission.
• Practice consent by asking your child’s permission to hug or play with them and respect their decision if your child says no.

AGES 11-13:
• Talk about what consent means in romantic relationships.
• Emphasize the importance of asking for consent and respecting a “No,” even if it’s not the answer you wanted.
• Remind them that a trusted adult can help them if they’re unsure or feel unsafe about something.

AGES 14-18:
• Introduce complex aspects of consent, like how alcohol can play a role. Explain that intoxicated individuals can’t give consent.
• Empower your teen to speak up when they see something that violates consent.
• Even if your teen is not sexually active in high school, conversations about sexual consent can equip them for dating relationships as they grow into adulthood.

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

You can help prevent sexual violence by starting a conversation about consent with your classroom, student group, or organization. Contact Cleveland Rape Crisis Center at educationoutreach@clevelandrcc.org to request an education program today.

24/7 CRISIS & SUPPORT HOTLINE
CALL/TEXT (216) 619-6192 OR (440) 423-2020
CHAT @ CLEVELANDRAPECRISIS.ORG/CHAT