

# 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](mailto:educationoutreach@clevelandrcc.org) to request an education program today.