

tools and tips for helping to raise respectful and mindful human beings

Our best chance at a future with **far less sexual violence** is to help **raise a generation of children who contribute to a culture of consent and respect**. We get there by encouraging important conversations about relationships and sexual health that meet children where they are and by tackling the hard questions even when they're uncomfortable. Adulting is hard—no doubt. Being responsible for guiding healthy, timely and meaningful conversations to ensure our children have less sexual assault and healthier relationships in their lives? That takes adulting to a whole new level.

step one: don't panic. you can do this.

- They need you. They trust you. You've got this.
- Pace yourself. Regular chats are good. Constant talks could be annoying thus less effective.
- You don't have to have all the right answers! Check in with a friend or fellow parent for support.
- You don't have to cover everything in one sitting. Take advantage of everyday moments.
- If they're older and you're just getting started, remember step one: don't panic. It's never too late. Meet them where they are regardless of age.

ages birth to 5: let's start at the very beginning.

- Talk to your child about their body from the get go. If you start from birth and bath time it becomes second nature to everyone.
- Teach your child to wash their own genitals. You can model consent by asking permission to touch them from a very early age.
- Be mindful of gender stereotypes.
- Teach your kids to ask for consent (permission) before touching or embracing friends.
- Never force or reward your child to show affection to anyone.
- Give your children everyday opportunities to say yes and no.
- Respect the words "no" and "stop." Every. Single. Time.
- Look for opportunities for kids to help others who may be in trouble, like helping a friend who falls on the playground.
- Help them understand body language and non-verbal clues with games like charades.
- No shame. Let kids talk about their bodies and label them correctly.
- Be prepared to talk about sex and answer questions like "where do babies come from?" Tell kids you will always answer their questions with honesty and love.
- Foster empathy in children. Empathetic children = better friends and future partners.
- Introduce gut feelings and instincts.

ages 6 to 12: where did my baby go?

- Acknowledge that their bodies are developing and changing. If you educate in advance it is less scary.
- Change is normal. They are normal. Development is natural and it happens at its own pace.
- What feels good and what does not? Wrestling at home? Fun! When my friend punches me? Bad! Help them articulate these feelings.
- Take a break during play. Every so often call a timeout. Make sure the play is not too rough.
- Further develop their understanding of body language and nonverbal clues.
- Dismantle gender stereotypes, and address them in real time.
- Create junior bystanders. Show them how their behavior affects others and talk about safe ways they can seek opportunities to help others.
- Engage your children in what they see and experience. For example, ask how they may have stopped a bully when they share stories or you see something on TV.
- Respect early crushes.

ages 13 and beyond: who is this person, and what have you done with my child?

Please note: Many of the suggestions in "ages 13 and beyond" can also be introduced in younger stages. Remember, meet them where they are.

- You can teach them nothing because they (think) they know everything? Not true. They still need you more than ever.
- Become the self-esteem dream team.
- Introduce more advanced sex education beyond mechanics of menstruation, puberty, safety and consent, such as detailed conversations about consent. Remind kids that you will always answer their questions with honesty and love.
- Destroy the objectification nation.
- It is not a sign of affection or acceptable play nor is it ok for someone to slap you on your bottom, punch you in the genitals, pinch your nipples, snap your bra and/or other touch games that occur without consent.
- Encourage healthy masculinity. Reframe manhood.
- Talk about exposure to drugs and alcohol. Ask them how they will respond. Tell them how you will support them. Also, ask how will they know if it is ok to kiss someone, touch someone or have sex with someone when you have been drinking.
- Help them define what kind of relationships they want. Explain what a healthy relationship looks like and better yet, model that behavior with your relationships.
- They may not ask, but they do want information. Make sure it comes from a loving, accurate place. You!
- Even when they pull away and assert their natural independence, keep talking.

five fab things we can say to help create a #consentculture

1. You never owe anyone your time and you should spend it with people you want to hang out with. 2. You get to choose who you want to show affection to/have sexual experiences with (be that hugging, kissing or otherwise). 3. Consent is important. No one has the right to touch you without your permission regardless of whether you are in a relationship, if you are intoxicated, if you feel pressured or otherwise. 4. All human beings deserve to be treated with respect and dignity, and if you see someone who is unable to care for themselves, look for a safe way to make sure they are okay. 5. Regardless of the choices you may make, I will always show up for you without judgement. I will always be honest. My love for you overrules everything else.