

# HEALTHY COMMUNICATIONS WITH KIDS

## THINK ABOUT THE CHILDREN IN YOUR LIFE.

Whether you're thinking of your child, grandchild, niece, nephew, or friend's child, you want them to always feel safe and secure. Help kids feel safe by teaching them that the choices they make about their bodies deserve to be respected.

## WHAT IS CONSENT?

- Consent means giving someone a choice about touch or actions and respecting the answer they give.
- Practicing consent in how you interact with kids teaches healthy communication and that their body belongs to them.

## ASK FOR CONSENT

- Ask for consent in everyday interactions.

*For example: "Do you want a hug goodbye today? We could also wave or high five." or, "Can I sit beside you while we read this book?"*

- Model that asking for consent is an ongoing process.

*For example: "Do you need a break from tickling, or are tickles still okay with you?"*

## LISTEN TO THE ANSWER

- Nonverbal cues can be hard for young children to understand.
- Modeling consent helps kids grow up knowing the absence of a verbal "no" does not mean "yes."

*For example: "You're hiding behind your mom. It looks like you would rather wave goodbye to me today."*

## ACCEPT "NO"

- If you ask a child for a hug or kiss and they say "no," accept their answer cheerfully, even if you are disappointed.
- Don't show anger or pout, even playfully – this sends mixed messages.

*For example: "Okay, no kiss today. See you later!"*



## RELATIONSHIPS AND CONSENT

- A child should never be forced to show physical affection to an adult, even if they're a relative or family friend.

*For example: "It's time to leave. How do you want to say goodbye?"*

- This idea could go against your family or cultural norms or be different from what you experienced as a child.
- Think about ways you can uphold your values while also incorporating consent.

*For example: "Some people in our family give hugs and kisses to show their love, but you can show your love in other ways if you want to, like a smile or kind words."*