



**DO  
YOU**

**ASK.  
LISTEN.  
RESPECT.**

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT CONSENT  
CONVERSATION TIPS FOR PARENTS



Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence  
**ACTIONALLIANCE**

# A FEW WORDS ABOUT CONSENT...

## CONSENT IS...

- a clear and enthusiastic “yes”.
- an active, voluntary, and verbal agreement.
- a process, which must be asked for every step of the way.

## HOW EARLY CAN WE START TALKING?

As early as age 1, we can begin teaching kids that “no” and “stop” are important words and should be honored by children and adults. We can teach even very young children that they have a right to have their “no” and “yes” respected too.

## WHY TALK TO MY KIDS ABOUT IT?

Communication, respect, and honesty are the building blocks of healthy relationships, and consent is about all of those things.

**Teaching kids about the skills of consent can help reduce sexual coercion, harassment, and even assault.**

When we teach kids about consent, we help them learn how to express what they want and don’t want. We give them tools to express their limits. We teach them that they deserve to be treated in a respectful way.

Teaching consent also means teaching kids that it’s just as important to respect others’ limits and wishes. We teach them that their friends have a right to say “no” and “yes” and have that be respected.

Two ways parents can show young children we respect their limits:

- 1 Ask your child if they would like to play a tickle game; listen for “yes”. If your child says “stop”, stop and wait for them to invite you to play again.
- 2 If your child does not want to hug or kiss a relative, offer them an alternative rather than forcing them: “Would you like to give Grammy a high-five instead?”

## IT’S NEVER TOO LATE.

Talking about consent can start at any time...and it’s never too late to begin the conversation.

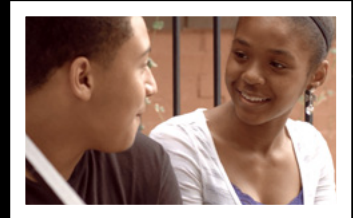
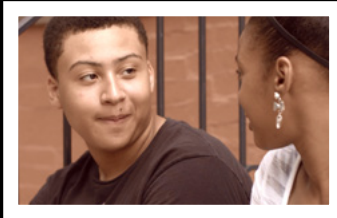
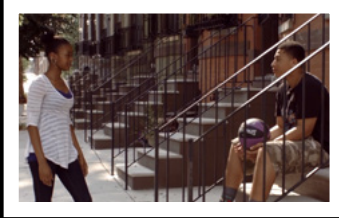
You can begin by asking kids for their consent in a variety of ways.

## HERE’S AN EXAMPLE...

The more you talk about consent, the more normal it will become, so talking openly and respectfully with friends and partners will become second nature.

“ I’d like to post this great picture of you on my social media. Can I get your consent to do that? ”

# SPARKING A CONVERSATION



The **ASK. LISTEN. RESPECT.** video was created for kids ages 11-16 to show concrete examples of:

- ➔ how to ask for consent
- ➔ what enthusiastic, verbal consent looks like
- ➔ how to respond to “no” respectfully

You can use the video to spark conversations with your child/teen about respectful relationships, the importance of consent, and how teens can ask for and give consent in their friendships and dating relationships.

The video is approximately 1 minute long.

## CONVERSATION STARTERS AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO:

- “This video is about consent. What does ‘consent’ mean to you?”
- “Can you spot 2 or 3 examples in the video for how each teen asked for consent?”
  - Here are the examples of asking for consent in the video:*
  - o Girl: “Can I come over?”      Boy’s response: “Sure”
  - o Boy: “Want to shoot some hoops?”      Girl’s response: “Um no, not really.”
  - o Girl: “Do you want to play [this video game]?”      Boy’s response: “Yeah”
  - o Girl: “Hey, do you want to go see a movie?”      Boy’s response: “Nah...”
  - o Boy: “You want to kiss?”      Girl’s response: (smiles) “Yeah!”
- “In some cases, one of the teens did not give consent. How did each teen respond when the other said, ‘no’?”
- “Do you think this could happen in real life? Why or why not?”

## CONVERSATION STARTERS ABOUT CONSENT IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS:

This is a great time to explain the importance of asking permission (consent) to touch or kiss someone.

- “How do you know when someone gives their consent?”
- “How can someone tell if the other person is ready to touch or kiss?”

Explain that only “yes” means “yes”. Just because someone doesn’t say “no”, it does not mean that person is giving consent. Ask. Listen. Respect.

- “If a person’s date (or anyone else) touches or kisses them without their consent, what is that called?”

Explain that forced sexual contact (which may include touching or kissing) is called coercion and may be assault.

### REMEMBER...

You don’t need to set aside a huge chunk of time to have these kinds of conversations. You can have conversations anytime you’re together without lots of distractions: in the car, at mealtime, etc.

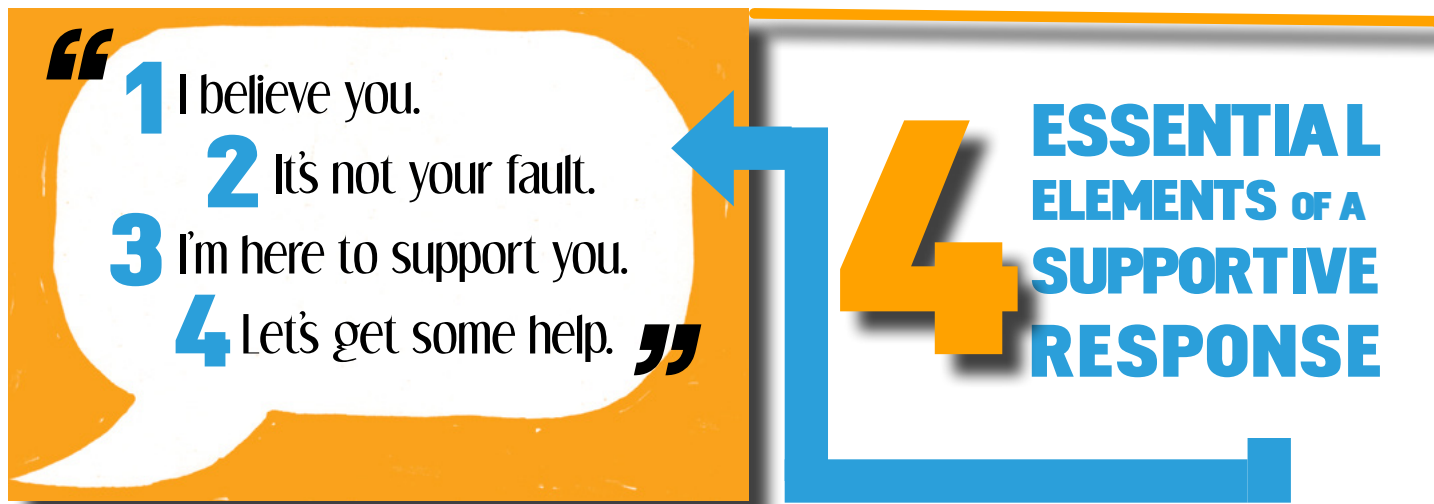
Teaching about consent works best when it’s talked about regularly in lots of different ways.



# HELP IS RIGHT HERE

## IF YOUR CHILD/TEEN HAS BEEN COERCED OR ASSAULTED...

It is possible that your child/teen might talk with you about a situation where they have not been respected, and may even have been coerced or assaulted. If that happens, the most helpful first response is to listen and offer support.



## YOU AND YOUR CHILD/TEEN CAN GET HELP, SUPPORT, AND INFORMATION FROM THESE GREAT RESOURCES:



### Virginia Family Violence & Sexual Assault Hotline

Call: 1.800.838.8238 (24 hours a day)

Text: 1.804.793.9999 (Monday-Friday 8am-8pm)

Chat: [www.vadata.org/chat](http://www.vadata.org/chat) (Monday-Friday 8am-8pm)



### LGBTQ Partner Abuse and Sexual Assault Helpline

Call: 1.866.356.6998 (Monday-Friday, 8am-8pm)

Text: 1.804.793.9999 (Monday-Friday 8am-8pm)

Chat: [www.vadata.org/chat](http://www.vadata.org/chat) (Monday-Friday 8am-8pm)



### Love is Respect Teen Dating Violence Hotline

Call: 1.866.331.9474

Text: loveis to 22522

Chat: [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org)



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**DO  
YOU**

Virginia's leading voice on sexual and domestic violence for over 30 years.

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