



CONSENT ABC'S:

CHOICES!

Often, adults have to make important decisions for children, but we can also create space for making their own meaningful choices. Creating that space can model consent, show them that their feelings matter, and help them learn responsibility.

Awareness

Encouraging your child to make choices lets them explore what is important to them and feel comfortable expressing themselves.

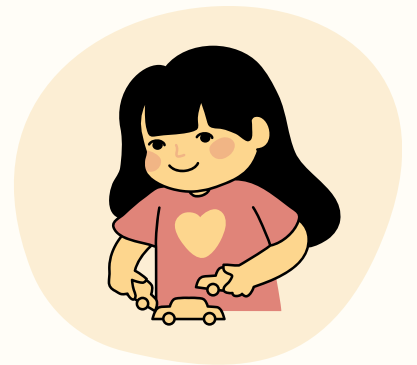
Making choices about their own body allows them to learn body cues such as hunger, fullness, and discomfort, which helps build a healthier relationship with their body as well as knowing when they feel unsafe.



Boundaries

Limiting choices between two options can help keep children from being overwhelmed. When offering broader choices, be clear about boundaries to prevent misunderstandings.

Making meaningful choices means letting them feel in control of their own lives within the options that are safe and healthy.



Choices

Instead of offering choices you can't follow through on, give them control over how important decisions happen. Consistency is important!

Children can struggle to understand why they get to make some choices but not others; introducing routine helps them feel some control.



Difficulties

Sometimes we're not able to offer the choices we want to. Being honest about why helps make these decisions clearer and models how to take responsibility.

When a decision has to be made for a child's well-being, explaining what will happen and why makes the lack of control less scary.



Examples:

"You can trust your stomach to tell you when you're all done eating."

"It's time to brush your teeth. Do you want help or are you going to do it yourself?"

"It's cold outside so we need to bring a coat. Which one do you want to wear?"



Consent skills are important everyday tools! These resources can help build comfort with consent conversations for young children. Values around respect will vary between cultures and families, so use this information however it works for you.