



CONSENT ABC'S:

SAFETY!

Modeling consent skills teaches children how to care for themselves and others, and who to turn to for help. Focusing on the importance of safety also helps us explain why decision-making for children often has limits, although we can still involve them in those choices!



Awareness

Talking about how we feel when we're (un)comfortable helps children build language skills for feelings.

Using accurate words for body parts (like penis and vulva) can reduce feelings of shame about bodies and ensure they can communicate effectively with other adults if they need help.

Boundaries

Children often need support in establishing physical boundaries, especially with adults who expect hugs, kisses and other physical touch.

Consistency is important! When boundaries or comfort can't be respected, such as when getting an injection, take time to explain why this health or safety situation is different.



Choices

Explaining why some choices are for children to make and other choices, often about health and safety, are for adults to make can help clear up confusion.

Small choices like the option to sit and take a few calming breaths can make necessary decisions like going to the dentist feel more controlled.

Difficulties

Sometimes children don't want to do things that are important for them.

We can't always ask for their permission, but we can try to help them understand that we care about both their opinions and their safety.



Examples:

"Do you want to hug or wave goodbye to your grandparents?"

"You look nervous, you started shaking your hands and talking quickly. Is that how you're feeling?"

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.

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