

# TEACHING YOUR CHILD CONSENT

A conversation about the WHAT, WHY, and HOW of teaching your kids about consent.

At Defend Innocence, we believe that empowering communities with knowledge is one of the best ways to prevent child sexual abuse. Thank you for your willingness to facilitate learning in your circle of influence. You are an essential part of everything that we do. Here are some best practices to consider before, during, and after the presentation.

## BEFORE

- **Communicate clearly** when and where the presentation is taking place.
- **Prepare teaching materials:**
  - Download the video onto your computer and watch it all the way through.
  - Read the discussion guides for all three parts.
  - Print handouts ahead of time—worksheets and one infographic (see Part 2).
- **Arrive early and set up:**
  - Ensure AV equipment is present, plugged in, and functioning properly.
  - Arrange seating in circle, if possible, to encourage discussion.
  - Have pens available for people to take notes and complete writing activities.
  - Start the video in full-screen mode and **PAUSE** it on the opening title for Part 1.

## DURING

- **Add energy to the room.** Be friendly, positive, and enthusiastic.
- **Trust the material *and* your intuition.** Follow the organization and activities outlined in the research-based discussion guides while being yourself and considering the needs of your group. Share personal experiences that enrich and illustrate critical principles.
- **Sit with the group, if possible.** Larger groups may require you to stand.
- **Encourage discussion:**
  - Create a safe environment where people can be honest and candid.
  - Thank participants for comments.
  - Help as many people as possible participate.
  - Don't allow one person to dominate the conversation.
- **Manage time.**
- **Emphasize the invitations to act.**

## AFTER

- Review what went well and what can be improved for your next presentation.
- Congratulate yourself for the efforts you've made to improve your community!

# UNDERSTANDING CONSENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Part 1: What Is Consent? (15–20 min)

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to define consent and identify its principles.

### EXPLAIN:

Consent is such an important thing to teach to your children. We'll dedicate this session to better understanding consent and identifying some principles that are key to practicing consent. We'll start by watching a video of some children explaining what they've learned about giving consent.

### ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION:

- **Watch:** Press PLAY to start the Kid Chats: Consent video. Remember to press **PAUSE** to discuss after the video.
- **Small Group Discussion:** (3-5 min.)  
Have participants turn to a partner to discuss the following question:
  - How would you explain consent?
- **Explain:** Consent is an agreement between individuals that is enthusiastic, reciprocal, and continuous. But what does all of this actually mean? Let's break the definition down into parts.
- **Large Group Discussion:** (5-7 min.)  
Have the full group of participants discuss the following question:
  - What do the words enthusiastic, continuous, and reciprocal look like to you?
  - Think back to the Kid Chats video. What is one concept that is missing in the children's explanations that you'd want your own child to understand?
- **Explain:** With the definition in mind, let's talk through the principles involved in giving and receiving consent. (Distribute the "Understanding Consent: Guiding Principles" handout to participants.)
- **Large Group Discussion:** (5-7 min.)  
Have the full group of participants discuss the following question:
  - From the list of principles, choose one that deepens your understanding of consent. Explain why this principle stands out to you.

### CALL TO ACTION:

Encourage participants to share with someone the new things they've learned about consent.

# UNDERSTANDING CONSENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Part 2: Why Teaching Consent Is Important (25 min)

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to explain how teaching consent may reduce the risk of children being sexually abused, or sexually abusing others.

### EXPLAIN:

Our last discussion focused on understanding consent, but now we want to talk through why consent is such an important thing to model and teach. Consider these statistics:

- 90% of children will know their perpetrator.
- The average age a child is first sexually abused is seven years old.
- In child-on-child sexual abuse cases, the average age of a first-time perpetrator is 14 years old.

These statistics point to the importance of preventing your child from becoming a victim, but also serve as a reminder of how teaching consent can prevent your child from abusing others. Keep this information in mind as we watch this video; it is a powerful example of consent in action.

### ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION:

- **Watch:** Press PLAY to start the You Have a Voice: Paige's Story video. Remember to press **PAUSE** to discuss after the video.
- **Large Group Discussion:** (5-7 min.)  
Have the full group of participants discuss the following questions:
  - There's so much that can be discussed from this video, but what is one thing that stood out to you?
  - In this example, Paige demonstrated both verbal and nonverbal communication. As a parent, how can you teach your child to acknowledge and respect all forms of communication?
  - If you were the parent of the boy, how would you respond and what would you do to help him?

### CALL TO ACTION:

Invite participants to share the You Have a Voice: Paige's Story video on social media with an example of a way they've empowered their children to give or receive consent.

# UNDERSTANDING CONSENT DISCUSSION GUIDE

## Part 3: How to Teach Consent (10–15 min)

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to

- Understand that consent can be taught to children of various ages and stages of development.
- Identify ways to explain and teach consent, including the use of Defend Innocence resources.
- Identify examples of organic moments to teach principles of consent.

### EXPLAIN:

We've discussed the definition and principles of consent, as well as why teaching it can help prevent sexual abuse from happening to your children. Next, let's explore some ways to approach teaching children of all ages.

### ACTIVITY AND DISCUSSION:

- **Watch:** Press PLAY to start the From Parents For Parents: Teaching Consent video. Remember to press **PAUSE** to discuss after the video.
- **Worksheet:** (7-9 min.)  
Distribute a copy of the "Teaching Consent" worksheet to each participant and give them several minutes to complete it.
- **Group Discussion:** (5-7 min.)  
When the group is ready, invite the full group of participants to discuss these questions:
  - What types of ordinary life situations could serve as opportunities for you to teach consent?
  - How do you create a sense of safety that encourages your children to talk to you about these issues?
  - Imagine that you've just finished a great discussion on consent with your 15-year-old. How might you adjust the things you say and examples you give when you have a similar conversation with your 7-year-old?

### CALL TO ACTION:

Implement the ideas that you've identified on the "Teaching Consent" worksheet to engage in learning opportunities with children in your home.