



# DAY ONE PRESENTS: **THE "TALK"**

How to talk to your children  
about important and sometimes  
difficult topics

Day One

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# INTRODUCTION

## Why are these conversations important?

- Need to make sure youth are getting accurate information, instead of harmful messages they might find on their own online or through other media
- May prevent violence and/or reduce risk for experiencing violence

## Lessen the pressure by controlling your environment

- Have a conversation during an activity you do together
- At bedtime with lights dim
- While watching a movie or playing a game you've watched or played before
- Uninterrupted time in the car

## Be honest about what you don't know

- Say "Help me understand..." when you are unsure what they are saying or asking
- Do research together and teach them how to find credible sources of information

## Use concrete examples

- Use examples from media
- Use personal examples

## Have on-going conversations

- Check-in often to see how things are going
- Takes the pressure off having to say everything in one conversation





# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Strong connections are key to mentally and emotionally fulfilling lives. Teaching healthy and safe dating and intimate relationship skills to adolescents are key components of sexual violence prevention.

## AGES 2-6

### Friendships

Children at this age are just beginning to learn how to interact and relate to others, so it's important to set a strong foundation that they can build off of for the rest of their lives. Look for opportunities to encourage positive behaviors like sharing and taking turns.

"You did such a good job waiting your turn to use the swings today. I'm so proud of you! It's more fun to swing with friends, even if we have to wait our turn."

### Communication

While children at this age are still building their language skills, they should be encouraged to use their words, especially when dealing with negative emotions. Set rules about name calling, teasing and insults.

"I see that you're upset because you're throwing your toy and frowning, but can you tell me what's making you mad instead?"

### Boundaries

Talking with children about expressing and respecting boundaries is an essential foundation for important future conversations, like those about consent. Children's boundaries are often violated by adults in seemingly innocent ways, but it is important children learn that their bodies are their own and they deserve to have their boundaries respected.

"Never touch someone else's body if they've told you not to."

"You don't have to give anyone a hug or kiss if you don't want to."

## AGES 7-12

### Peer Pressure

Children of this age may not already be experiencing peer pressure in the way that they will in their teenage years, but it is important to prepare them for those experiences and to practice strategies they can use in those situations.

"If you're ever in a situation with friends that makes you feel uncomfortable, you can tell them that you need to get home or you'll be in big trouble, but you won't be!"

### Managing Conflict

Helping children manage their emotions and communicate their feelings is essential for healthy communication and relationships. Teach them coping skills for how to regulate their bodies and emotions when they feel anger (like deep breathing, counting backwards from 10, or walking away). Using "I" statements that focus on expressing how they are feeling or experiencing, rather than what the other person has done, can be a very effective method for communicating during conflict.

"I feel (blank) when (blank)' works a lot better than, 'You're making me (blank)!'"

## AGES 13+

### What You Want For Them

Tell your teen what you hope for them in their relationships with both friendships and romantic partners. This is a great way to communicate the values or qualities that you find important in a relationship.

"I hope that you find a partner who treats you with respect."

I hope that your friends can help you grow, but still accept you for who you are."

"How should your friends or romantic partners treat you?"

### What They Want for Themselves

It is equally important to ask teenagers to consider what they want for themselves. What qualities are they looking for? What might be deal-breakers for them?

"What do you think is the most important trait in a friend? What about in a romantic partner?"



# ONLINE SAFETY

We are living in an ever-growing, digitally connected world. Online spaces often leave youth vulnerable to exploitation and harmful information. Parents should discuss online safety and limitations regularly.

## AGES 2-6

### Supervision

At this age children do not have the critical thinking skills necessary to be safe online unsupervised and screen time should be extremely limited.

“You can watch one video on my phone, but I have to watch it with you.”

### Setting Limits

As children get a little older they may be slowly introduced to using the internet with significant limitations. Figure out what they want and are allowed to do online, and set bookmarks for specific websites.

“You can use the internet to go to specific websites or play specific games with my permission, but we need to make sure we stay on the same website and be careful about what we click on.”

## AGES 7-12

### Developing Independence Online

Younger children in this age group should still be supervised while online, but older children should be building to independence. Keep internet enabled devices in common living areas and utilize parental controls to compliment supervision.

“I want us to start building trust about using the internet. You can't use these devices behind closed doors, and there will be limits on what you can do.”

## Personal Information

Children at this age are vulnerable to scam and marketers mining personal data. Teach them to come to you before sharing any personal information online and explain why and when it is unsafe to do so.

“We can’t be sure people are who they say they are online, so we shouldn’t tell people our full names or information about where we live.”

## Online Activities

Talk to children about their online activities as you would any offline activities. Get to know what they like to do and who they might be doing it with. Discuss limitations like disallowing chat rooms, messaging or social media.

“I want you to learn how to use the internet safely, but you’re not ready to talk to other people online yet. When you get a little older we’ll talk about how you can safely connect with approved friends or family members.”

## AGES 13+

### House Rules

Establish ground rules for all internet use that works for your family. Have them share login information with you and do periodic check-ups on their browsing history or account use. Being open about this can build trust.

“I need to know that you’re able to use these accounts and sites responsibly. I’m going to be checking in on how you’re using them, and if I see something worrying, we’ll talk about it.”

### Responsible Online Behavior

While youth are gaining independence online, they may test the limits to determine where their boundaries are. Make sure to be clear about what your expectations are and what you consider to be responsible online behavior.

“We do not use the internet to gossip, bully or threaten anyone. If we wouldn’t say it in person, we shouldn’t be saying it online.”



# Online Friends

Youth will likely begin connecting with friends online that they know in real life. However, as they begin to use social media and multi-player online games, they may begin to form relationships with people they have never met before. It is important to help them make the distinction and understand the differences in boundaries between the two. Help them recognize the signs of online grooming from those who would do harm.

“It’s nice to stay in touch with our friends and family online, but there are also people out there who we don’t know, and some of them are dangerous. If you get a request or message from someone and you’re not sure who they are, come talk to me first.”

“Remember, we never share personal information or agree to meet in person with anyone we met online.”



## Strengthen Safety Measures

- Review browser and search engine privacy and security settings
- Contact your internet service provider (or their website) to enquire about potential parental control options or tools that may be available
- Review privacy settings on social media platforms or apps with your family to make sure you’re comfortable with how your data is shared with social media companies and/or advertisers, as well as how visible to the public your accounts may be



## Open Communication about Online Activity

- Talk to your family about what apps or sites they (or their friends) use frequently
- Review the risks of sharing personal and family information online
- Discuss the difference between friends we know, but connect with online, and online friends, and how boundaries with these kinds of friends are different
- Set expectations for behavior online that are similar to in-person expectations, such as being respectful, not harassing or bullying others, and not sharing explicit content of themselves or others



## Observe with Care

- Set expectations of when and where devices may be used, such as in common areas and not late at night
- Discuss your rules around passwords and your plans to monitor their activity
- Keep an eye out for changes in young people’s behavior such as secrecy or agitation around technology, large amounts of unsupervised online time, or withdrawal from family activity
- Be mindful of unexpected calls or gifts, especially if youth attempt to hide these from caregivers, as these may be part of a predator’s grooming process



## Know the Laws

### Federal Laws Prohibit:

- Transfer (or attempt) of obscene matter to minors under 16 years old
- Online enticement or coercion of a minor under 18 to engage in sexual activity
- Online enticement or coercion of a minor to engage in sexual conduct to create a visual depiction

### Rhode Island Laws Prohibit:

- Knowingly and intentionally transmitting indecent visual depiction to a person they know or believe to be a minor
- Minors knowingly and voluntarily, without threat or coercion, transmitting an indecent visual depiction of themselves to another person



## Report Concerns

- Incidents may be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) or [www.cybertipline.org](http://www.cybertipline.org)
- Please notify local law enforcement if you or your family are in immediate danger



## Resources

- Day One: [www.dayoneri.org](http://www.dayoneri.org)
- NCMEC’s NetSmartz: [www.missingkids.org/netsmartz/home](http://www.missingkids.org/netsmartz/home)
- Common Sense Media: [commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org)
- Culture Reframed: [www.culturereframed.org](http://www.culturereframed.org)
- Internet Matters: [internetmatters.org](http://internetmatters.org)
- Connect Safely: [connectsafely.org](http://connectsafely.org)

Day One



# SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence can feel like one of the most difficult topics to approach, given many cultural taboos about talking about sex. However, sexual violence thrives in silence, and talking about these issues takes power away from violence and those who perpetrate it.

**AGES 2-6**

## Body Parts

Use accurate names for body parts, including the genitals. Teach these early on and be specific. Survivors of child sexual abuse often have difficulty reporting their experiences with credibility because they do not have the proper vocabulary to accurately describe what has happened to them. Stay calm and don't show embarrassment when talking about these things, as this may keep them from asking important questions in the future.

"While we're taking a bath, let's play a name game! As we wash each part of your body, you try and tell me the name for it. It's okay if you're not sure, I'll help you if you get stuck."

## Secrets

People who cause sexual harm to children usually attempt to keep their abuse from being discovered by framing the abuse as a secret between them and their victim and reinforce this with coercion or threats. Teach children that it's never okay to keep secrets from their parents/caregivers, and no adults should ever ask them to do so.

"No one should ever tell you you need to keep something secret from me, especially if it's about your body."

## Saying No

Children are often taught to listen to adults and to be obedient. Which is why it is often hard for children put in uncomfortable, compromising situations to say "no." Teach children that it is okay for them to remove themselves from uncomfortable situations, especially involving their bodies. Make sure it is clear these rules also apply with people they know and other children.

"If anyone touches you or says something about your body that makes you feel uncomfortable, you can always tell them that you need to leave to use the bathroom or to find a different adult. You should always tell me if something like that happens, and I promise you won't be in trouble."

## Role Model Helping

Teach children to take opportunities to help others by role modeling this behavior for them. Explain that it feels good to help others. This can help build empathy and teaches children that positive actions should be a part of normal, regular behavior.

“Let’s let this woman who looks tired have our seat. I bet it would mean a lot to her to be able to sit down.”

## Role Model Being an Active Bystander

When you see someone in situations where they might be harassed or assaulted, intervene by using one of the 5 D’s of bystander intervention: distract, delegate, document, delay or direct. It might not always be safe to do this when children are around, so be sure to share these stories as learning opportunities. Situations where safety is less of a concern, like after someone makes a sexist, racist, or homophobic/transphobic joke without being directed at an individual, are good opportunities to intervene that children can observe directly.

“I asked that person to stop making jokes like that because those jokes were mean and not funny, even if they aren’t making fun of someone here. They never know who can hear them, and it’s not okay to say those things in the first place. We don’t make fun of other people to make ourselves feel better or laugh.”

“At the coffee shop I heard a man making comments about the body of the woman behind me in line and she looked really uncomfortable. I turned around to talk to her so she wouldn’t have to listen to him, and I stayed to chat until he left the shop. I wanted her to know someone was there for her in that moment, and he stopped once he knew she wasn’t paying attention to him.”

### 5D's OF BYSTANDER INTERVENTION



DISTRACT



DELEGATE



DOCUMENT



DELAY



DIRECT

Source: Hollaback!

**AGES 13+**

## Consent

Conversations about consent are key to understanding what healthy intimate relationships look like and what abusive acts look like. Consent is necessary before engaging in any sexual activity. Consent needs to include four key components. Consent must be clear, continuous, consciously given and free from coercion.

“If you ask for consent and they say ‘no’, are silent, or seem unsure, you need to stop right away. Consent should be a yes, not the absence of a no. Remember, if someone is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they can’t legally consent.”

“Make sure you check in with your partner. You should be making sure they are okay with what you are doing.”

## What to Do When Things Feel Unsafe

Help your teenager understand what to do when they find themselves in a situation that doesn’t feel right. Choose a code word they can use to let you know they need help getting out of a situation by having you pick them up or asking someone to leave.

“Let’s choose a word you can use to let me know when you feel unsafe. I can come pick you up if you’re ever at a party and things feel like they’re getting out of control, or if you have friends over and need me to tell them to leave.”

## How To Be a Good Friend

Teach your teenager how to be a supportive friend. Helping them understand how they can be caring to a friend who might be experiencing sexual or dating violence is a good way to give them insight that might feel less like a personal critique and indicates your trust in their ability to respond appropriately.

“It sounds like your friend was having some problems with their partner. I’m glad you were able to listen and be there for them. It can be really helpful to talk through relationship challenges, and outside perspectives can help us see potentially abusive signs more clearly.”

You are not alone.  
We are here to help.  
1.800.494.8100

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