



AI's Pals™

Kids Making Healthy Choices

by  Teaching Strategies®

Dear families,

Hi, it's AI! In your child's class, we are learning about **CONSENT**. We talked about how we should ask for consent before hugging or touching others and that people should ask for consent before touching us. We practiced asking for consent to give someone a hug, handshake, high five, or fist bump and practiced saying "no" when we don't want people to touch us.

In the coming weeks, we will learn more about how we are in charge of our own bodies and ways to keep ourselves safe. To help us remember, we practiced the following affirmations. Consider reciting these affirmations with your child at home.

I am in charge of my body.

I can say "no" when I don't want to be touched.

I will respect others, and they will respect me.

I will ask others before giving them a hug.

I am important.

My voice is strong.

Your pal,

AI

(See the next page for at-home activities!)

At-Home Activities

Ask your child before touching them.

- Ask your child before picking them up, hugging them, or kissing them. It may feel unnatural at first to ask your child for consent, but doing so when they are young models the respect we want others to show them and helps them learn that they are in charge of their bodies.
- Talk with extended family members and friends about this approach. Share that this is important because you are teaching your child about consent and empowering them to pay attention to how they feel in different situations. Explain that developing these skills will help your child make safer choices and helps protect them from harmful situations.

Listen when your child says “stop” or “no.”

- Ask before tickling, cuddling, holding, hugging, or roughhousing with your child. If you are doing one of these activities and your child says “stop” or “no,” stop immediately and let your child know that you won’t do it again unless they say “yes.”
- Support your child’s choice if they say “no” or move away from someone who wants a hug, kiss, or other type of affection. You might say, “It looks like he doesn’t want a hug right now. Let’s wave good-bye to Nana instead.”
- Remember not to respond with emotions when your child says “no” to a hug or other affection from you. Pretending to be sad or upset when your child refuses a hug does not teach them appropriate boundaries and gives the false impression that they are responsible for your emotions.

Encourage your child to ask others for consent.

When your child is playing with others, notice when they touch others without asking. Remind your child to ask for consent. For example, encourage your child to use the following phrases:

- Can I have a hug?
- Can I give you a kiss?
- Can I hold your hand?
- Would you like a high five?

At-Home Activities

What happens when “no” is not an option?

There may be times when your child says “no” to something they need to do for health or safety reasons. For example, if your child refuses to put on shoes to go to school, you can respond with the following steps:

- Explain why they need to do something: “It is a rule that you have to wear shoes at school to keep your feet safe.”
- Give your child choices: “Would you like me to put on your shoes, or would you like to put them on yourself?”
- If your child still refuses, validate their feelings while maintaining the boundary: “I know you don’t want to put on shoes, but you have to wear shoes to school.”
- Maintain a calm presence and respect for your child as you complete the task: “I am going to put on your shoes now so we can go to school.”