

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO TALKING ABOUT CONSENT AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: RESOURCE GUIDE

WHO CAN HELP?

- The Blue Bench Hotline (English and Spanish) 303-322-7273
- The Blue Bench's Resource Line 303-329-9922 (English and Spanish)
- Colorado State Child Abuse Hotline 1-844-CO-4-KIDS (264-5437)
- Safe2Tell 1-877-542-7233
- Colorado Crisis Counselors 24/7 at 1-844-493-TALK (8255)
- Suicide Hotline (988)
- National Sexual Assault Hotline 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)
- Children's Hospital Colorado (720) 797-0765

If it is an emergency, call 911. They can ensure the immediate safety of a child and get medical attention if needed.

If it is not an emergency, call 844-CO-4-KIDS.

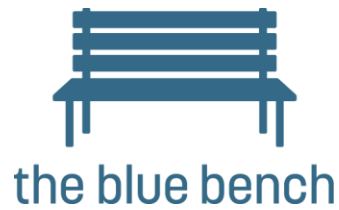
Report to the law enforcement agency in the county in which the abuse took place.

USEFUL ORGANIZATIONS

These organizations can offer additional help with:

- Having conversations with your kids
- Prevention tips
- Talking about body safety
- Safety planning for camps, day care, etc.
- Age-appropriate sexual behaviors in children and adolescents

National Organizations	Metro Denver Children's Advocacy Centers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Darkness to Light• Stop It Now• RAINN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Denver Children's Advocacy Center (Denver metro)• Ralston House (Arvada, Lakewood, Northglenn)• Sungate Kids (Arapahoe, Douglas, Elbert and Lincoln Counties)



THE BLUE BENCH COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Uniting in Action – Developed in collaboration with high school students, educators, and this workshop empowers high schoolers in their role in shaping community responses to sexual violence.

Let's Talk About It – This middle school program focuses on healthy relationships, boundaries, and skill-building to become an active bystander for middle school youth.

Safe Bars– Workshop for preventing or reducing sexual violence in alcohol serving establishments

SHIELD (Sexual Harassment Intervention Education and Leadership Development) – Partnering with local businesses/corporations to offer workplace harassment training

Knowledge is Power– An overview of the problem of sexual violence and techniques that bystanders can use to keep their communities safer

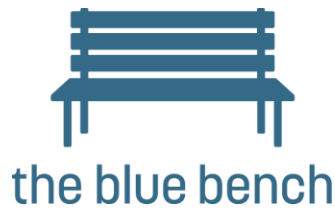
Youth Empowerment and Safety– A program for parents and youth-serving professionals to learn how to identify and prevent sexual violence against young people.

YOUTH PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Let's Talk About It (5TH–8TH Grade) Available in 3 or 5 Day/Hour Format

Students will be able to:

- Identify characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Understand strategies and communication skills for setting boundaries and respecting other people's boundaries.
- Understand what consent is and how it contributes to healthy relationships.
- Identify verbal and nonverbal behaviors that constitute sexual harassment, sexual coercion, and sexual assault.
- Identify media and cultural messages, including ideas about gender roles and masculinity/femininity, that can lead to sexual violence
- Identify decision making steps for acting as an ally/active bystander
- Build empathy for survivors.
- Describe the options for reporting sexual violence to a trusted adult.
- Describe how to support a friend and refer them to resources.
- Describe strategies for becoming an active bystander against sexual assault.



Uniting in Action (9th–12 Grade) Available in 90–Minute and 3 Day/Hour Format

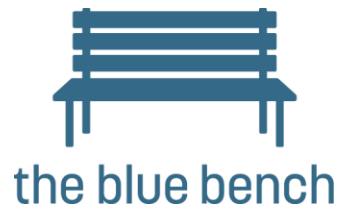
Through this evidence-informed curriculum, participants will be able to:

- Understand the concept of bystander intervention and its role in addressing sexual violence.
- Identify and comprehend a range of sexually inappropriate and violent behaviors.
- Define consent and understand its relevance to the role of a bystander.
- Recognize the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- Analyze how cultural and media messages contribute to sexual violence.
- Acknowledge their role in shifting cultural norms to support survivors and prevent sexual violence.
- Develop empathy for survivors of sexual violence.
- Understand the impacts of sexual assault on survivors and identify ways to support friends or loved ones.
- Apply bystander intervention strategies to various scenarios, leveraging personal strengths and workshop concepts to support intervention.
- Increase willingness and commitment to engage in bystander behaviors that prevent sexual violence, assist in risky situations, and support survivors.
- Build confidence in their ability to intervene effectively in situations involving sexual violence.
- Identify local resources available to both survivors of sexual violence and their supporters.

The Blue Bench Prevention Programs Are:

- Developmentally Appropriate
 - Tailored to meet the needs of learners at every age and stage
- Comprehensive
 - Youth Programs are Multi-Session with options for boosters
- Research-Backed & Evidence-Informed
 - Grounded in strategies proven effective through research
- and promising practices
- Expertly Delivered
 - Facilitated by trained professionals with 90+ hours in:
 - Trauma-informed practice
 - Facilitation skills
 - Content knowledge

Email communityed@thebluebench.org to learn more or to schedule a program.



EFFECTIVE PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

- ✓ Ground Conversations in Facts and Values
- ✓ Be Comprehensive: Start Early and Keep it Going
- ✓ Be Developmentally Appropriate
- ✓ Teach and Practice Skills (Role-Play)
- ✓ Model Healthy Behavior
- ✓ Create a Safe, Trusting Relationship
- ✓ Normalize Talking About Hard Topics
- ✓ Get Support and Keep Learning

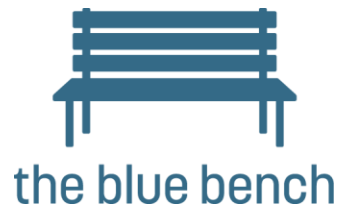
PERSONAL BODY SAFETY TRAINING AND ERIN'S LAW

Erin's Law, named after Erin Merryn, a childhood sexual abuse survivor, is legislation that requires public schools to teach children about personal body safety and sexual abuse prevention. It mandates that age-appropriate lessons be provided to students in grades pre-K through 12 to help them recognize, prevent, and report abuse.

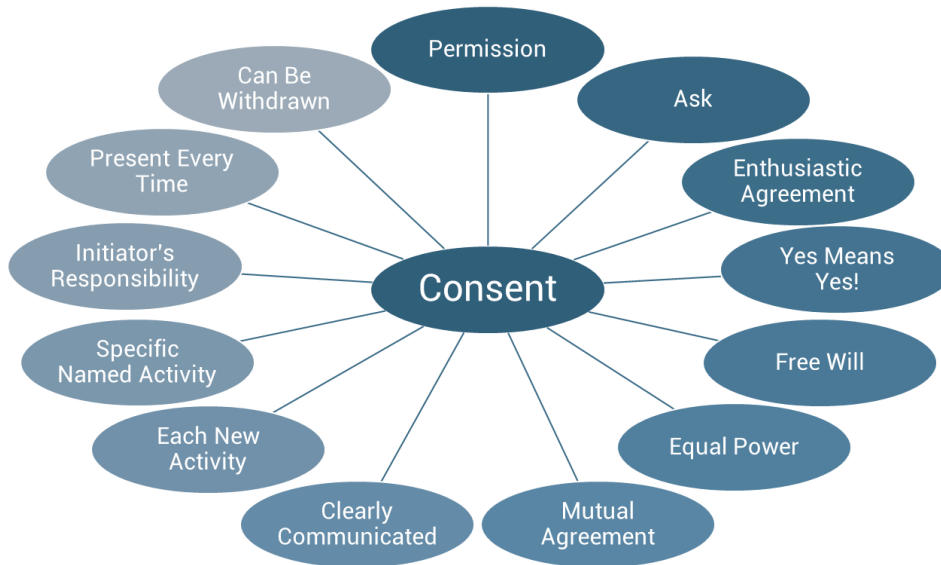
The goal is to empower children with knowledge while also involving educators and parents in abuse prevention efforts. While a version of Erin's Law was passed in 2015 it is still not a requirement for Colorado schools to teach personal body safety on schools and it rarely is. You can learn more about Erin's Law at www.erinslaw.org.

Let's work together to ensure our schools prioritize child safety education! Reach out to your school administrators, PTA, and school board to advocate for implementing personal body safety training. Our children's safety is not optional—it's essential.

Speak up today!



CONSENT

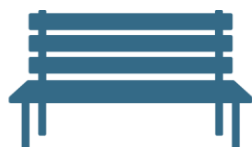


CONSENT IS NOT POSSIBLE WHEN:

- Force, pressure, and/or coercion is present
- A person is incapacitated by drugs and/or alcohol.
- A person is unconscious, asleep, or physically helpless and unable to communicate unwillingness to act.
- A person has an intellectual or developmental disability which renders them unable to judge the nature of the other person's conduct
- Outside ages of consent.

What is the age of consent in Colorado?

- Age of Consent is 17: no rules around how much older someone's sexual partner can be unless the older person is in a position of trust.
 - Sexual contact between a minor and a person in a position of trust is never legal.
- 13 & 14 years old: No more than 3 years older (13 & 16 is legal, 13 & 17 is not; 14 & 17 is legal, 14 & 18 is not)
- 15 & 16 years old: No more than 9 years older (15 & 24 is legal, 15 & 25 is not; 16 & 25 is legal, 16 & 26 is not)
 - It is always the responsibility of the older party to know if consent is possible.



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HOW TO BUILD A SAFETY TEAM

1. Identify Trusted Adults

Help your child identify 3–5 trusted adults they can turn to—both inside and outside the home. These should be people who listen, believe, and act in the child’s best interest. Involve a mix of people, a strong team includes people from different areas of their world.

2. Teach Body Safety Rules

Inform the team of their role and responsibility. Make sure all adults on the team understand and reinforce the child’s right to body autonomy, boundaries, respects their limits, and understands how to respond if they disclose abuse.

3. Encourage Open Communication

With your team members, create an environment where kids feel safe asking questions and talking about anything—especially things that make them uncomfortable.

4. Practice “What-If” Scenarios

Role-play situations so your child knows what to do if someone crosses a boundary or makes them feel unsafe. Reinforce that they can always go to someone on their safety team, and they should keep telling people until they are believed and supported.

Remember: Empower, Don’t Scare

Focus on building confidence and clarity, not fear. Let your child know that they are never alone and that they have a strong team ready to support them.

EMPOWERING EDUCATION

TALK ABOUT BODY SAFETY EARLY AND OFTEN

- Teach young children that they have control over their bodies.
- Have ongoing, age-appropriate conversations about body safety, consent, and boundaries.
- Emphasize that they don’t have to give hugs, kisses, or high-fives if they don’t want to.
- Reinforce that they have the right to say "no" to unwanted touch, even with family or authority figures.
- Model and encourage respectful language for setting boundaries.

TEACH AND MODEL CONSENT

- Show them examples in daily life
 - Asking for permission before borrowing items.
 - Asking permission before physical touch. For example: checking if someone wants a hug.



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- Use Real-World Scenarios to Teach Consent
 - Knock before entering: “Can I come in?”
 - Before posting photos: “Do you mind if I share this?”
 - Offer choices: “Would you like to go to the park or take a walk?”

TEACH BODY AUTONOMY

- Reinforce that their body belongs to them.
- Normalizes discussions about the body to reduce shame and mystery
- Use anatomical terms for genitals: penis, testicles, vagina, vulva, anus, etc.

DEFINE “OK” VS “NOT OK” TOUCH

- Use clear, simple language for concepts like “body,” “private,” “yes,” and “no.”
- Provide straightforward rules about what constitutes safe vs. unsafe touch.
- Explain that some touches, like hugs or pats on the back, are typically “OK.”
- Make it clear that touching private parts is not OK, except in specific situations

NO SECRETS ABOUT TOUCH

- Differentiate “Secrets” and “Surprises”. Reinforce that touch should never be kept a secret.
- Encourage children to tell a trusted adult immediately if someone asks them to keep a secret about touch.
- Reassure them that they will never get in trouble for speaking up.
- Regularly reinforce this message so children can recognize unsafe situations.
- Model this behavior—avoid asking children or others to keep secrets.

FRAMEWORK FOR ANSWERING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS

The Colorado Sexual Health Institute reminds us before you answer think about the questions behind the question.

Consider:

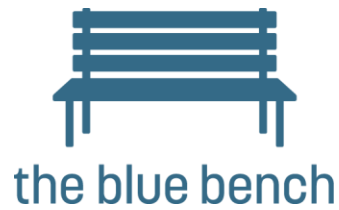
- What might be behind the question?
- What key themes are showing up?

Step 1. Affirm the Asker

Step 2. State the Facts

Step 3. Talk About the Range of Values (Some, Others, You)

Step 4. Affirm Again & Stay Open



FRAMING CONSENT IN SEXUAL RIGHTS

All people have the right to:

- ✓ Have their bodily integrity, privacy and personal autonomy respected
- ✓ Freely define their own sexuality, including sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
- ✓ Decide whether and when to be sexually active
- ✓ Choose their sexual partners
- ✓ Have safe and pleasurable sexual experiences
- ✓ Decide whether, when and whom to marry
- ✓ Decide whether, when and by what means to have a child or children, and how many children to have
- ✓ Have access over their lifetimes to the information, resources, services and support necessary to achieve all the above, free from discrimination, coercion, exploitation and violence

Learn more about sexual rights here: www.guttmacher.org/guttmacher-lancet-commission/accelerate-progress-executive-summary

3 THINGS TO SAY TO SOMEONE WHO DISCLOSES

If someone discloses to you that they have experienced sexual violence, say these three things:

1. **"I believe you"** so they know they are not doubted, their experience is valid, and they feel safe. It combats the guilt and shame that comes from a society that often blames and doubts victims of sexual violence.
2. Tell them **"It's not your fault"** to help them let go self-blame and remind them the responsibility is only on the perpetrator.
3. Ask **"How can I help"** to empower them, while maintaining their autonomy and reassuring them you will be there for them.