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Der Kinderschutzbund
Landesverband Bayern

VIOLENCE IS MORE THAN YOU THINK

Protect, strengthen and support children

Dear parents, guardians and families,

Raising children is a gift and a great responsibility.
Every child has the right to be protected and treated with respect.

But what does this mean in concrete terms?

Where does violence begin?

And how can you empower your child in everyday life so that they know:

“I am valuable.”

“I can say no.”

“I can get help.”

Protection from violence often begins where we least expect it,
in the tone of voice, in listening, in everyday situations.

It's not about fear, but about courage.

Not about power, but about trust.

*Your team from the Kinderschutzbund
Landesverband Bayern*



WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

Violence is not just about bruises. It can have many faces, including quiet, invisible, everyday ones. When children are put under pressure, ignored or coerced, it can hurt them emotionally, even if it is well-intentioned.



Forms of violence are:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, rough handling)
- Mental (e.g. verbal abuse, ignoring, threatening)
- Sexualized (e.g. inappropriate touching, talking to children about their own sexuality)
- Neglect (e.g. too little attention, care or protection)

It is not about being perfect, but about looking, understanding and learning.

It is also about reflecting on your own behavior.

BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Boundary violations happen faster than you think.

Examples: A child doesn't want to be hugged, but is hugged anyway.

It says: "I don't want that" but the adult says: "Oh, don't be like that."

They are forced to give someone a kiss or "be nice" even though it makes them feel uncomfortable.

What children could learn from this:

"I'm not allowed to say anything", "My feelings are wrong", "I have to do what others want".

What children should learn instead:

"I am taken seriously", "I can listen to my gut feeling", "I can protect myself."



CHILDREN HAVE RIGHTS

AND NEED ADULTS WHO TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY

Children are people with their own rights.

§Section 1631 Content and limits of personal care (BGB)

- (1) Personal care includes in particular the duty and the right to care for, educate and supervise the child and to determine its whereabouts.
- (2) The child has a right to care and upbringing without violence, physical punishment, psychological injury or other degrading measures.



The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees children:

- The right to protection from violence
- The right to co-determination
- The right to care, attention and respect for their dignity

Child-friendly wording:

- “Nobody is allowed to hurt you.”
- “You can say if you don’t like something.”
- “You are important and valuable.”

When children feel THAT, they learn: “I can say no. I can get help.”





KEY PREVENTION MESSAGES

These six messages are the key to preventing violence; they give children guidance, protection and courage. Such information helps children to trust themselves and talk about unpleasant experiences.

Prevention message	Meaning for children	Everyday example
"My body belongs to me"	I decide on closeness and touch.	A child can decide for itself whether it wants to be hugged.
„I can say no“	I don't have to do anything that makes me uncomfortable.	Ask if the child wants a kiss or to sit on your lap.
"I know good and bad touches / secrets"	I feel what feels good and am allowed to say bad things.	"You can tell me a secret that scares you."
"My feelings are right."	What I feel counts.	"Are you sad? That's okay. Would you like to tell me what happened?"
„I am not to blame“	If something happens to me, it's not my fault.	Clear statement: "It's never your fault if someone does something that scares you."
"Getting help is not snitching"	I am allowed to tell when someone does something that is not right.	Clear statement: "It's never your fault if someone does something that scares you."

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO IN CONCRETE TERMS:

Parents don't have to be perfect, but they do have to be present, attentive, loving and open to conversation.

This will strengthen your child:

- Name feelings and take them seriously: "Are you angry because you weren't allowed to play?"
- Practice self-determination: Ask: "Do you want to be pushed?" or "Do you want to dress yourself?"
- Name trusted people together: "Who is there for you if you need help?"
- Use child-friendly books or videos: e.g. on the topics of body knowledge, feelings, saying no.





If you are unsure or notice a change:

- Encourage instead of controlling: Build trust through open conversations and honest exchanges.
- Recognize change: Withdrawal, anxiety, sudden outbursts of anger, take signals seriously.
- Don't stay alone: If you have worries or questions, get support.

EVERYDAY TIPS: HOW CHILDREN LEARN SELF-PROTECTION:

Appreciative interaction as a basis

The most important protective factor is that children learn that they are self-determined, valuable and worthy of protection. This happens in everyday life through respect, attention and clear, fair rules. Children whose feelings and boundaries are taken seriously are more likely to say no and get help.

Talk openly about feelings, body and boundaries

Ask regularly: "How do you feel?" or "What does your gut say?"

Child-friendly and without shame: Use the correct names for body parts (e.g. penis, vagina). This creates clarity and prevents feelings of shame.

Talk about situations in which your child felt comfortable or uncomfortable: "Was that a good feeling or a strange one?"

For example: When changing after swimming: "If you don't want anyone to see you changing, that's completely fine."

Practise saying no with your child

Let your child decide for themselves in everyday life: "Would you like to hug grandma when you greet her or would you rather wave?"

Take restraint seriously and don't force your child to make physical contact if they don't want to.

Play no games together.

e.g. a doll always wants to cuddle, even though the doll child says no.

Ask: "What can she do to make the other doll stop?"

Practice with sentences like:

- "Stop! I don't want that!"
- "I say no. Stop it!"
- "I'm going to get help!"





Differentiate between "good" and "bad" secrets

Good secrets bring joy (e.g. a birthday present)

Bad secrets cause stomach ache, fear or insecurity and you can always tell them.

Playfully ask your child: "If someone tells you that you can't tell anyone about something and you don't feel good about it, what do you do?"

Strengthen trust

Show interest, even in small things. This signals: "You can tell me everything."

Avoid statements like: "Oh, that's not so bad."

Take worries seriously, even if they seem small to adults.

Tip: Say, for example, "I'm always there for you, even if you're scared or something strange has happened."



Don't react with shame or punishment, rather say:

- "Thank you for telling me that."
- "I believe you."
- "It's not your fault."

Parents make mistakes too. If you have behaved unfairly or loudly, show greatness:

"I'm sorry, I was impatient. You didn't deserve that."

Children need clear guidance and self-determination

Of course you can (and must) set boundaries, e.g. if a child runs into the street. But your own boundaries should also be visible:

- "I need a break now."
- "I don't want to be touched right now."

This teaches children that everyone, big or small, has boundaries.

We adults are role models

Children look at how we deal with our bodies, our feelings and other people.

What we live is often more effective than what we say.

Ask yourself the following questions regularly:

- How do I show my boundaries?
- How do I deal with a "no" from my child?
- How do I talk about sexuality, closeness and feelings?



SEX EDUCATION IS PROTECTION, NOT A RISK

Many parents find sex education a difficult subject.

However, if children learn child-friendly terms and content at an early age, they can protect themselves better.

- Children learn: “My body is valuable and belongs to me!”
- They develop an inner YES to themselves – this is the basis for a strong NO to others.
- And: they are given a language to talk about assaults.

Sex education is not a risk, it is a protective shield that makes children strong and safe.

STRENGTHENING STRATEGIES: HOW TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT YOUR CHILD

Talk about it regularly:

Use everyday situations to talk about boundaries. When brushing teeth, getting dressed or cuddling.

For example, ask: “Who is allowed to touch you and where is it allowed?” or “What if someone wants to touch you there even though you don’t want them to?”

Tip: Refer to books or stories, e.g. “My body belongs to me” or “I say no – I don’t want that!” (You will find good examples at the end of the parents’ post)

Naming confidants

Think together with your child: “Who do you particularly like? Who listens to you when you want to tell them something?”

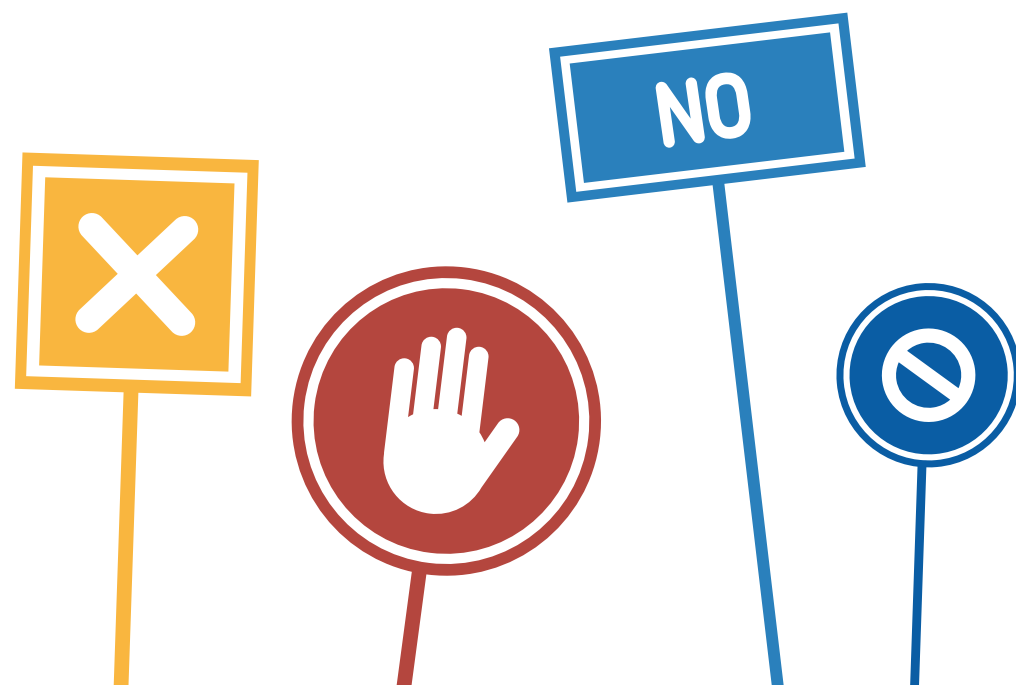
Make a small list of confidants together: Mom, Dad, teacher, grandparents, neighbor, etc.

Tip: Hang up a small picture of the confidants within easy reach (e.g. children’s bedroom cupboard).

Role play

Practise how your child can behave if they feel uncomfortable:

- Say no loudly
- Move away
- Tell someone about it





Children can learn that getting help is courageous
and not tattling!

The more often children practise such situations in a safe
environment, the easier it will be for them to set boundaries
and get help in real situations.



OFFERS OF HELP:

Book recommendation:

- Ich sage Nein – Das möchte ich nicht! Ein Mitmach-Kinderbuch zum Schutz vor Missbrauch: Grenzen setzen und Selbstbewusstsein stärken → [Franziska Fallbucher](#)
- Kalle will nicht knuddeln – Eine Geschichte zu Consent und Nein-Sagen ab 4 Jahren → [Jule Wellerdiek](#)
- Mein Körper gehört mir! → [Pro Familia](#)
- Lisa sagt Nein → [Janine Amos](#)

Internetlinks:

- Mutig fragen – besonnen handeln – Informationen für Mütter und Väter zur Thematik des sexuellen Missbrauches an Kindern und Jugendlichen | Bundesministerium für Bildung, Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend
→ <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/mutig-fragen-besonnen-handeln-95882>
- Familienhandbuch.de | Staatsinstitut für Frühpädagogik und Medienkompetenz
→ <https://www.familienhandbuch.de/>
- Frühe Hilfen – Tipps für Elternsein
Nationales Zentrum für frühe Hilfen
→ <https://www.elternsein.info/>
- Schutz vor Gewalt und Missbrauch | kinder.de
→ <https://www.kinder.de/ratgeber-1/gewalt-praevention/schutz-vor-gewalt-und-missbrauch/#:~:text=Den%20sichersten%20Schutz%2C%20den%20Sie%20ihrem%20Kind%20geben,Recht%20hat%2C%20C3%BCber%20seinen%20K%C3%B6rper%20selbst%20zu%20bestimmen%21>
- Warum "Nein-Sagen" als Präventionsmaßnahme zu kurz gedacht ist und wie wir stattdessen Kinder vor sexualisierter Gewalt schützen können – Gewaltinfo
→ <https://www.gewaltinfo.at/themen/gewalt-an-kindern/wie-wir-kinder-vor-sexualisierter-gewalt-schuetzen-koennen.html>



COURSES, CONTACTS AND ADVICE CENTERS:

- Nummer gegen Kummer Elterntelefon → [0800 111 0 550](tel:08001110550)
- Step-Beratungstelefon → [0211 81 97 10 81](tel:021181971081)
- Online-Familienberatung der Caritas
→ <https://www.caritas.de/hilfeundberatung/onlineberatung/eltern-familie/start>
- bke-Elternberatung (online)
→ <https://eltern.bke-beratung.de/views/home/index.html>
- Starke Eltern – Starke Kinder-Elternkurse
→ <https://sesk.de/kurs-suche/>
- Starke IMMA e.V. – Initiative für Münchner Mädchen
→ <https://imma.de>

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