

# Book review

## Consent (For Kids!)

Boundaries, respect and being in charge of YOU

**Category:** Book Reviews / Children & Youth

**Author:** Rachel Brian

**Year:** 2020

**Publisher:** Little, Brown & Company, US

**ISBN:** 9780316457736

**Audience:** For Youth

**Summary:** Explaining the concept of consent to children, with practical strategies



“Consent: It’s like being the ruler of your own country. Population: YOU” states author Rachel Brian. Her book sets out to help children speak up and tell others when they don’t want to be hugged or tickled, or if they feel uncomfortable with another person.

Using fun comic-like artwork and a fair bit of silliness, Brian has created a clever and informative book that will appeal to kids of all ages, as well as parents and educators. Without making a mockery of the subject, the author wittily explains how consent is involved in many real-life situations; like telling people how you feel, listening to others, setting boundaries and growing healthy relationships.

Consent is the type of book that parents can read to very young children, giving them a chance to discuss a serious topic in a fun way together. Older children and teenagers would enjoy reading this book by themselves, enjoying the clever illustrations and funny scenarios but still getting the important message.

From the very first page, it is clear that this is an inclusive book as the illustrations represent people of different cultural backgrounds and those with a disability, and gender-neutral language is used. The author then gets straight into telling the reader what the book can do for them, namely helping them to understand consent, build strong friendships and find ways to get help when needed.

Brian explains how children can identify any past, present or future situations where they felt uncomfortable and were not sure what the problem was and how they could fix it. She then shows them how they could help a family member or friend who may be struggling with their relationship with another child or adult.

*Continues over page...*

This small book is packed full of information and explanations around the serious topic of consent. Through descriptive illustrations and the use of easy-to-understand language, readers should come away with a very good understanding of the topic and hopefully the confidence to speak up if necessary.

Consent is a useful resource and would be a great conversation starter for families. One small note is that the HELP phone numbers and email address at the end of the book are not relevant to New Zealand readers. A card insert or sticker in the back of the book would fix this problem.

**Reviewed by Deanne Douglas, Social Media & Library Officer for Auckland Down Syndrome Association (ADSA)**

The Mental Health Foundation's Resource and Information Service brings you book reviews fortnightly. To view more go to [www.mentalhealth.org.nz/books](http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/books)

