

Violence

**The Facts**

- Violence is the use of physical force to injure somebody or damage something.
- Violence is a learned behavior. Most children learn about it through television and toys. Others experience it in their communities and homes through frustration, abuse or emotional neglect.
- According to the American Medical Association, the average American child has seen 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence on television.
- Children are more likely to use violence when they see or experience it as a way to solve problems.
- It is estimated that 1.2 million elementary-aged children now have access to guns when they are home alone.
- Violence can be unlearned with help from adults and parents.

Stopping The Violence

Adults have a great impact on the reduction and prevention of violence. Most of the factors that contribute to violence are controllable by adults and parents. The following are suggestions as to what adults can do to help children overcome violence.

Understand violence

Violence is often committed for one or more of the following reasons:

- Expression: to release feelings of anger or frustration.
- Manipulation: to control others or get something they want.
- Retaliation: to retaliate against those who have hurt them or someone they are close to.

Recognize the warning signs

The learned behavior of violence can be changed. In order to begin the process of solving the problem, one must recognize the warning signs.

- Loss of temper on a daily basis.
- Frequent physical fighting.
- Significant vandalism.
- Increase in use of drugs or alcohol.
- Detailed plans to commit acts of violence.

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- Announcing threats or plans to hurt others.
- Cruelty to pets or other animals.
- Carrying a weapon (any weapon) to school.
- Artwork or writing that depicts isolation or anger.
- Self-isolation from family and friends.

Get involved

- Listen and talk to the child on a regular basis.
- Help the child understand that conflicts can be resolved without use of violence.
- Monitor what it is that the child is watching on television.
- Help the child prepare for and avoid situations that may lead to violence.
- Take an active role in the child's school.
- Insist on knowing the child's friends, activities and where abouts.
- Keep aware of any gang influences in your community.

Get help

You don't have to deal with the problem alone. When concerned about the presence of warning signs in a child, it is appropriate to do something about those concerns. The following professionals can help diagnose the child's behavior and attitude:

- School counselor
- Doctor
- Trained mental health professional

**The most effective interventions have adults, parents, school and health professionals working together to provide monitoring and support.*

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How Kids Can Help

As children get older they too can help themselves stay safe and stop violence in their community. The following are suggestions as to how kids can help stop violence:

- Settle arguments with words rather than weapons.
- Trust your feelings. When you sense danger, get away fast. Familiarize yourself with safe routes for walking in your neighborhood.
- Know good places and people to seek help from.
- Report anything suspicious or any crimes to an authority (police, teacher, parent).
- Don't use drugs or alcohol. Stick with friends who are against violence and drugs.
- Get involved with your school to make it a safer and better place.

Produced by
PARTNERS IN PARENTING (PIP) (800) 457-2736
 Colorado Family Education, Resources & Training
 Colorado State University Cooperative Extension
 Funded by the Alcohol & Drug Abuse Division and CSAP

Information for this PIP TIP collected from a variety of research based resources.

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