

RAISING CHILDREN TO RESIST VIOLENCE: WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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- Research has consistently shown that violent and/or aggressive behaviors are often learned early in life
- However, parents, family members and others who care for children can help them learn to deal with emotions without using violence

Suggestions for Dealing with Children:

- Parents play a valuable role in reducing violence by raising children in safe and loving homes
 1. ***Give your children consistent love and attention:***
 - Every child needs a strong, loving, relationship with a parent or other adult to feel safe and secure and to develop a sense of trust
 - Without a steady bond to a caring adult, a child is at risk for becoming hostile, difficult and hard to manage
 - Behavior problems and delinquency are less likely to develop in children whose parents are involved in their lives, especially at an early age
 - Do your best to avoid responding to your children with hostile words or actions
 2. ***Make sure your children are supervised:***
 - Children depend on their parents and family members for encouragement, protection, and support as they learn to think for themselves
 - Without proper supervision, children do not receive the guidance they need
 - ✓ Insist on knowing where your children are at all times and who their friends are
 - ✓ When you are unable to watch your children, ask someone you trust to watch them for you

- ✓ Encourage your school-aged and older children to participate in supervised after school activities such as sport teams, tutoring programs or organized recreation
- ✓ Accompany your children to supervised play activities and watch how they get along with others
- ✓ Teach your children how to respond appropriately when others use insults or threats or deal with anger by hitting them
- ✓ Explain to your children that these are not appropriate behaviors, and encourage them to avoid children who behave this way

3. ***Show your children appropriate behaviors by the way you act:***

- Children often learn by example so the behaviors, values and attitudes of parent(s) have a strong influence on them
- Most children sometimes act aggressively and may hit another person, be firm with them about the possible dangers of this action
- Remember to praise them when they solve problems constructively without violence
- Children are more likely to repeat good behaviors when they are rewarded with attention and praise
- Sometimes parents encourage aggressive behaviors without knowing it by teaching boys to learn how to fight, etc.

4. ***Don't hit your children:***

- Hitting, slapping, or spanking children as punishment shows them that it's okay to hit others to solve problems and can train them to punish other in the same way
- Physical punishment stops unwanted behaviors for a short time only
- A positive approach to changing behaviors is to emphasize rewards for good behaviors instead of punishments for bad behaviors

5. ***Be consistent about rules and discipline:***

- When you make a rule, stick to it
- Children need structure with clear expectations for their behaviors
- Setting rules and then not enforcing them is confusing and set up children to “see what they can get away with”

6. ***Make sure your children do not have access to guns:***

- Guns and children can be a deadly combination
- Teach about the dangers of firearms or other weapons

7. ***Try to keep your children from seeing too much violence in the media:***

- Seeing lots of violence on TV, in the movies, and in video games can lead children to behave aggressively

Potential Warning Signs for Violence in Your Children:

Toddler and Preschool Child

- Has many temper tantrums in a single day lasting more than 15 minutes and cannot be calmed down by parents
- Has many aggressive outbursts often for no reason
- Extremely active, impulsive and fearless
- Doesn't follow directions and/or listen to adults
- Seem unattached to parents

School-Aged Child:

- Has trouble paying attention and concentrating
- Often disrupts classroom activities
- Does poorly in school
- Frequently gets into fights with other children in school
- Reacts to disappointment, criticism, or teasing with extreme and intense anger, blame or revenge
- Is cruel and violent towards pets and other animals
- Easily frustrated
- Is not sensitive to the feelings of others

Preteen or Teenaged Adolescent:

- Consistently does not listen to authority figures
- Pays no attention to the feelings or right of others
- Mistreats people and seems to rely on physical violence or threats of violence to solve problems
- Does poorly in school and often skips classes
- Misses school frequently for no identifiable reason
- Gets suspended from or drops out of school
- Joins gangs, gets involved in fighting, stealing or destroying property
- Drinks alcohol and/or uses drugs