- ✔ Never carry a knife, gun, or other weapon. It's against the law and a sure way to turn a simple argument into a fight where someone gets badly hurt or killed.
- ✔ Not use alcohol or other drugs. The effects they have on people's minds often encourage violence.
- ✔ Stay away from kids who think fighting and other forms of violence are "cool" and from places where fights often break out.
- ✔ Become a conflict solver for brothers and sisters, friends, and classmates by getting training in mediation skills to help others work out problems without violence.
- ✔ Tell a police officer or other trusted adult if they see a violent crime, and talk about it to you or another caring adult.

TAKE A STAND!

- ✔ Find out about conflict management and mediation training for adults and children. Work with schools and parent organizations to teach these skills in all grades.
- ✔ Help develop recreational and educational programs for all young people in the community, so they will have better things to do than fight and can benefit from adult supervision and mentoring.
- ✔ Make sure your schools are safe places to learn. Many children feel safer after school than when they are on school property or traveling back and forth to school. Work with educators, local government, law enforcement, and others in the community to solve problems involving crime, drugs, harassment, and bullying.
- ✔ Get youth, from grade schoolers to teens, involved in helping the community. Some ideas include cleaning up a playground, starting a garden, tutoring younger children, escorting elderly residents to stores, producing a newsletter. When young people have an important role in building up the community, they are far less likely to turn to violent actions that tear it down.

TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME

Crime Prevention Tips from
National Crime Prevention Council
1700 K Street, NW, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20006-3817
and

Missouri Crime Prevention Information Center
Department of Public Safety
301 W. High Street, Room 870
P.O. Box 749
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(573) 751-4905

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TALKING WITH CHILDREN ABOUT VIOLENCE

Violence — no one wants to see children victimized by it. No one wants to see kids hurt others.

Many things today — TV and movies, words and actions that adults learned when they were children, and the daily news — send the message that violent behavior or being a victim of violence is okay, even commonplace.

WHAT CAN PARENTS AND OTHER CONCERNED ADULTS DO?

Start early.

Talk about effective ways to handle frustration, anger, and arguments during a child's youngest years and continue through the teen years. Stress respect for self and others, describe how you have settled arguments and other conflicts without violence, and teach children not to use words that hurt. These valuable skills can last a lifetime.

For very young children, some physical acts such as hitting, kicking, and biting may be part of their development. But by age three, most can understand non-violent ways to deal with anger and frustration, even if they're not perfect at using these skills.

VIOLENCE

WHEN YOU TALK WITH CHILDREN AND TEENS ABOUT VIOLENCE

- ✔ Make clear that you do not approve of violence as a way to solve problems. Explain the difference between feeling angry and frustrated and acting out these feelings violently.
- ✔ Ask about the child's ideas on violence. Listen carefully and encourage him or her to talk about worries, questions, and fears.
- ✔ Try not to lecture. Instead, take advantage of "teachable moments." For example, when there's a violent scene on TV, talk about what happened and how the people could have prevented it. When something violent and frightening happens at school or in the neighborhood, talk about what other choices besides violence might have been available.
- ✔ Make sure other adults in the child's life — a grandparent, a cousin, a neighbor — know and respect your teachings about violence. It confuses children when adults they trust send contradictory messages about the ways people should act.
- ✔ Know who the child's friends are and how they feel about violence. Always know where your children and their friends are.
- ✔ Set a good example. Don't let yourself resort to violence to settle conflicts or let off steam. Even in tense or very annoying situations, calm down, walk away, talk it out.

SOME BASIC TIPS TO TEACH CHILDREN

Children need to learn to take care of themselves when they're at school, with friends, or just out and about. There are many ways young people can reduce their risk of being involved in violence.

Teach them to:

- ✔ Play, walk, bike, or skate with a friend rather than alone, and always let a responsible adult know where they are.
- ✔ Never go anywhere with someone they and you don't know and trust.
- ✔ Not let an argument grow into a fight — cool off, talk it out, even walk away if they have to. Settle the problem with words, not weapons or fists.