

a guide for
parents

the silence
the violence

GET INVOLVED

Volunteer to spend some time on campus as a member of a parent patrol. As a volunteer, you could help patrol the school yard and blocks around the campus or greet and monitor visitors. Your presence could make a real difference in your child's life. Having parents on campus helps students develop strong adult role models, and it emphasizes the importance you place on education.

If we really want to

STOP VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS,

we have to get every member of the community involved.

We have to make our schools safe again.

No student can learn in an environment of fear.



Work with the school to develop effective anti-violence programs and security measures. Meet with the principal and administration and get to know your local school board members. Find out what your district can do to make campuses safer. Become a part of the school's violence prevention task force. Discuss your views on security measures like metal detectors, surveillance cameras and school uniforms. Help your children's school create structured anti-violence programs like peer mediation, a self-esteem curriculum and character education.

SCHOOLS NEED YOUR HELP

BRING the silence DOWN the violence



© 1998 SYNDISTAR, INC.
5801 River Road
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123

To reorder this publication call 800-841-9532 and ask for product #PBCP35
ISBN T-56230-687-1

Our Schools Have a Problem

School violence is a real problem in every school in America. If you've watched the news or read the papers, you know that it can happen anywhere at anytime. Violence is no longer just an urban problem. There are more than 10,000 attacks with weapons in our schools every year. In the last six years more than 200 students and teachers have died in American schools. Last year alone, more than one million students brought guns to school. They weren't just high school students. Students in junior high and even kindergarten are bringing guns to class.

HOW CAN YOU SPOT A Potentially Violent Student?

Although many of the school shootings publicized in the news seem like random acts of violence, psychologists have found that the students involved shared some common characteristics. In most of the cases, other students knew that their classmates had problems, but they didn't tell anyone. There are definite warning signs to violence. Violence is often the result of serious psychological problems and abuse. Talk with your children about other students at school. Ask them if they have noticed any of these warning signs in their classmates.

SEVERE DEPRESSION

Violent students have difficulty dealing with the problems of everyday life. Often there are changes in their sleeping or eating habits. They might stop hanging around their friends. This depression can lead to **thoughts of suicide**. If your children know any students who talk about suicide, they must get them help. They are a threat to themselves, and they could be a threat to people at school. Suicidal thoughts often lead to acts of violence against other people.

LOW SELF-ESTEEM

Students who become violent may feel like they don't fit in. Most of the students involved in school shootings felt picked on or inferior. After years of **teasing and abuse**, they finally snapped. They used violence to get back at other students and to get noticed. Let your children know that teasing and abuse can cause serious problems.

OBSESSION WITH VIOLENCE AND WEAPONS

If your children know any students who are obsessed with violence or weapons, there could be a big problem. People who view a lot of violence on TV or in the movies may find it more and more difficult to separate the violence they watch from real violence. These **students begin to lose touch**, and the consequences can be deadly.



Violence in schools won't just go away. You have to get Involved. Its time to take Control.



IRRESPONSIBILITY

Do your children know any students who **can't take responsibility for their own actions**? Violent people often try to blame others for things that are really their own fault. They find it difficult to function normally and hate rules.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Cruelty is **one of the biggest warning signs**. Ask your children to tell you about anyone who talks about committing cruel acts. If they know anyone who actually does cruel things, there's definitely a problem. Cruelty to animals can lead to violence toward people.

BEHAVIOR CHANGES

People who have extreme changes in behavior could become violent. **Mood swings are not normal**. Anyone who has a problem with self control may need help.

THREATS

Make sure your children take every threat of violence seriously. They should **never assume that a threat is just a joke** or meant to scare someone. Violent students often say that they're about to do something **BIG**, or that they're going to get everyone back. These threats need to be reported immediately.

Encourage Your Children to Speak Up.

If your children know students who show any of the warning signs of violence, they need to report them to someone at school. Talk with your children regularly about the things they see at school. Let them know that weapons and violence at school are unacceptable. Encourage them to have conversations with other adults. If your children feel comfortable talking with their school's teachers, counselors and principal, they are more likely to report any signs of violence they see.