



Practical Parenting

112

VIOLENCE PREVENTION: WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW

(Note: Viewers interested in this topic should also view the video
VIOLENCE: WHAT TEACHERS SHOULD KNOW)

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Unfortunately, violence is becoming a real problem in all educational settings. Even as early as the middle school years, serious student confrontations may occur.

The bulk of the responsibility for raising a child remains the home, and parents should help their child to recognize violence and if at all possible, to avoid causing it or becoming involved in it.

In this program certain steps are shown that can help a child learn to recognize dangerous situations, avoid them, sidestep them, or escape them. This requires a parent to hold serious and frequent discussions with their child about violence, recognizing violence, and dealing with potentially violent situations.

MAJOR MESSAGE

Parents need to talk with their children frequently to try to find out if anything or anyone is causing disturbances at school. Don't just talk with the child (who tends to "play down" school disturbances when talking to adults); talk also with the child's siblings, schoolmates, and teachers. Visit the school to get a feel for the school and classroom "climate."

As a child moves into upper grades parents must discuss with him or her several possible kinds of violence that might occur, and what the child might do in each situation to minimize the effects of violence. This should be followed by some "role playing" featuring violent possibilities: the parent should make up a little "script" in which the parent "pretends" something violent, and the child must "pretend" to make one or more possible responses. Then, discuss the possible consequences of the responses. This kind of active discussion helps make the child aware of violence, how to recognize it, and how to attempt to deal with it.

Knowledge about the key points made in this program (see KEY POINTS) should be shared **early** in the **discussion sessions** parents hold with a child on the subject of **violence**, and on ways to use "**conflict resolution**" if and when needed.

KEY POINTS

To minimize the effects of violence children must be cautioned to recognize potential violence by noting an antagonistic tone or posture, assessing the danger, and avoiding confrontation if possible. This needs a cool head and good choices. The best choice is often "backing off" or even "running away" - both very hard choices for young kids!! Another choice is to enter into negotiations (the key element in "conflict resolution").

The **steps** to conflict resolution are aimed at a peaceful solution to a problem, so they're entitled "**P-E-A-C-E-F-U-L**." If faced with some sort of violence, you should:

- (1) Put your mind to work. Be serious and don't make threats.
- (2) Empathize. Put yourself in the other's shoes.
- (3) Ask yourself the obvious. Is this kid **high**? **Armed**?
- (4) Consider options. **Talk** your way out? **Postpone**?
- (5) Explain your proposed **course of action**.
- (6) Follow through. **Don't waffle**.
- (7) Use self-praise (when you succeed).
- (8) Learn from the experience.



Note: Between #4 and #5 above, the best course might be "**ESCAPE!**" - of all solutions to danger, running away is sometimes best!

TURN OVER →

WHILE VIEWING

Many points about working out disagreements or handling angry challenges are offered in this program. Select the best suggestion for reacting to them, in your opinion. Why do you think it would work well?

REFLECTIONS

Alone or with a group, after pondering the information in this program, **write out** a "script" that features

- (1) a problem one student might have with another;
- (2) the statement that might be made to the other student; and
- (3) a solution. **Act out the script!**



In the program, ways to prevent a tense situation from expanding, using P-E-A-C-E-F-U-L is illustrated, when a girl gets two boys to think about settling differences through conflict resolution.

“Conflict resolution” can be practiced between **two people** who have a problem but work things out with each other through talking calmly, or by using “peer mediation,” which involves bringing in a **third person** to try to help the two people work out a solution to their problem.

STEPS in “**one-to-one conflict resolution**.”

- (1) Agree to **talk calmly** at a specific time.
- (2) Choose a quiet, private place.
- (3) Begin on a friendly note.
- (4) Use “I” messages (**not** “**you** make me angry!” but “**I feel** sad/bad when you...” “I” messages **reduce** direct confrontation).
- (5) Be sure each exchange of words is **understood** by each person.
- (6) Ask for **clarification** if necessary.
- (7) Share ideas that could resolve the problem.
- (8) State an agreement. Try it out.

STEPS in “**Peer Mediation**” with a third party:

- (1) Define the problem (who, what, why, when...).
- (2) Search for alternatives to find the best solution.
- (3) Discuss the solutions in terms of their probable effectiveness as well as their long-term consequences.
- (4) Choose a solution.
- (5) Set up a **plan** for checking on whether the solution is working.
- (6) Start activating the solution and plan.
- (7) Adjust the plan if needed.

Note: All the ideas in conflict resolution can work well when **family** problems need to be addressed! (Do **you** believe the ideas might work in a family?)

P-E-A-C-E-F-U-L

