



Families Can Help Prevent Violence

All parents want their children to grow up healthy and well. Parents from all cultures and backgrounds share the common goal of raising their children in safe and supportive environments, so that these precious individuals can grow up to succeed, to fulfill their potential, and to realize their dreams. However, as we are only too aware, we live in challenging times. Violence of all kinds is at unprecedented levels in our society—in our homes, our schools and in our communities—and deeply embedded in our media and entertainment worlds. How can we change these destructive patterns? Is there a way we can work together to make our homes and communities a safer and healthier place for kids to be kids? The answer to these questions is an overwhelming yes. Working together as partners, parents, teachers, and others can, and are making a difference.

Parents play an essential role in preventing and breaking the cycle of violence. Parents are the primary providers for their children, their main source of food, health, and nurturing. Sadly, some parents can also be neglectful and abusive. Families are important; they are the primary social influence on children. How parents behave, how a family functions, has a direct and immediate impact on how children grow up. Our behaviors determine their behaviors. One of the most effective ways to prevent antisocial and criminal behavior is for parents to be actively involved in their children's health and education.

Strategies and action steps that help your children:

- Be a positive role model. Everything you do, they see and imitate
- Talk to the, and—most important—listen to what they have to say
- Spend valuable time with them that includes fun activities
- Get to know your children's friends to ensure they are a positive influence
- Find out where they play and/or hang out and make sure it is safe
- Let them know you disapprove of fighting
- Keep your children drug free

**MOST IMPORTANT—NEVER ACT VIOLENTLY TOWARD
YOUR CHILDREN—OR OTHERS!**

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services