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# Improving health...by promoting peace

# 1101

Chicago Department of Public Health-Office of Violence Prevention-333 S. State Street, Room 200, Chicago, IL 60604

## We All Can Help Keep Children Safe

Another summer is coming to an end and many children will soon begin a new school year. Parents and caregivers will be checking lists of what their child will need to get them off to the best academic start for 2011-2012. This is also a good time to renew our own vigilance as caring adults, in doing all we can to keep children safe— safe from accidents and injury, from seeing, hearing, and learning about family violence, and from being exposed to or in harm's way of street or community violence. According to a fact sheet provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), it is estimated that 1 in 5 U.S. children



experience some form of child maltreatment in their own homes. In these cases, most children are maltreated by their parent versus other relatives or caregivers.<sup>1</sup> Most perpetrators are typically less than 39 years of age. Approximately 15 million children are exposed to family violence each year. On the way to or from school, as well as within school halls and classrooms, children tell us there is regularly occurring bullying and not enough adult response. Children are counting on us to take steps to protect them.



### Did you know...

- In 2008, an estimated 1,740 children ages 0 to 17 died from abuse and neglect (rate of 2.3 per 100,000 children).<sup>1</sup>
- Approximately 15 million children are exposed to family violence each year.<sup>2</sup>
- About 72% of students in 8th and 9th grade report "dating." By the time they are in high school, 54% of students report dating violence among their peers.<sup>3</sup>
- 1 out of 4 teens are Bullied.<sup>4</sup>
- 9 out of 10 LGBT students experienced harassment at school and online.<sup>5</sup>
- As many as 160,000 students stay home on any given day because they're afraid of being bullied. <sup>6</sup>
- A comparison of delinquent and non-delinquent youth found that a history of family violence or abuse is the most significant difference between the two groups.<sup>7</sup>

*"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak.  
Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."*

Winston Churchill

For more information about the Office of Violence Prevention, call 312.745.0381  
Visit <http://www.cityofchicago.org/health> or [www.chicagosafestart.net](http://www.chicagosafestart.net)

# Strategies for Keeping Children Safe

**GOOD NEWS!**  
Every day practices can help keep children safe!



- **CHECK-IN** with your child regularly...not so much with: How was school today? (kids hate when we ask that!) but carve out specific one on one time— how's it going on line for you? Has anyone ever said anything mean to you on line? How are your friends? (*Who are your friends?*) Did you laugh with your friends today?
- **IDENTIFY** places in the community that could be 'safe spots' if they ever feel threatened — e . g . neighbors, stores, etc.
- **BE CONSISTENT:** Say what you mean, do what you say you'll do, be where you say you'll be, mean what you say.
- **ADHERE** to curfew.
- Keep your child involved in **AFTER SCHOOL** activities— make sure they have a place to be and safe people to be with.
- **DESIGNATE** your home as a violence free zone. Manage conflicts, control expressions of anger; remove children from disturbing events.

## Activities for Home and Community

- **ACCOMPANY** children to school. Let other children see that your child has a consistent adult connection.
- **SHOW UP** for programs and parent teacher conferences.
- Have an **END-OF-DAY** ritual— a story, a conversation, etc.
- **BUILD IN** enough time in the morning to prevent upset, frustration, chaos.
- **BECOME A "TAKE TEN" FAMILY—** where you talk it out, walk it out and wait it out!
- **TEACH** your child online etiquette, 'netiquette'— your expectations for how they will communicate on line, their rights and responsibilities for how they conduct themselves.
- **ASK** your child what they think or how they feel MUCH more than you tell them to be quiet.
- **BE ALERT** for changes in behavior— withdrawal, depression, aggression, sleeping or eating, hiding the computer screen when an adult walks in the room, etc.

### Sources for this Issue

- 1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families. *Child Maltreatment 2008* [Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2010] available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov>.
- 2 <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/CM-DataSheet-a.pdf>
- 3 [http://www.cdc.gov/chooserespect/understanding\\_dating\\_violence/dating\\_violence\\_facts.html](http://www.cdc.gov/chooserespect/understanding_dating_violence/dating_violence_facts.html)
- 4 <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/youthviolence/index.html>
- 5 <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/news/record/2624.html>
- 6 <http://www.0lweus.org>
- 7 Miller, G. "Violence By and Against America's Children," *Journal of Juvenile Justice Digest*, XVII(12) p.6.1989



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