

Pointers For Parents

Why Early Violence Prevention Is Important

(NAPSA)—There are many ways parents can help protect a child from getting involved with violence.

Early intervention is important, since violent behavior is often learned early in life.

But, just as children can learn to be violent, they can also learn to be kind-hearted. Children can learn constructive ways to solve problems, deal with disagreements and handle anger.

Children who learn these skills early in life actually are learning violence prevention.

With these skills, children are far less likely to grow up to be violent, or to be victims of violence.

Importantly, children need to feel safe at home. One sure way to start children on the right path in life is to provide consistent, reliable, loving care.

Children learn by watching the people around them. Your child learns by watching characters on television, in videos and movies—and, most of all, by watching you.

Everyone gets angry at times—it's part of being human—but anger can get out of control. Children should learn that while it's okay to be angry, there are "okay" ways and "not okay" ways to show anger.

Helping a child to control angry feelings begins when you respond to the child's anger in a calm, respectful way.

When children get angry, families can:

- Calm an infant by holding and comforting the infant as well as removing or changing what



Helping children learn to manage anger is an important part of violence prevention.

caused the fussing.

- Encourage toddlers to use words to tell what they feel.

- Help preschoolers begin to learn and practice a self-calming method—taking a few deep breaths, sitting down, counting to 10 or repeating a phrase.

- Encourage kindergarten and elementary school youngsters to explain what happened and how they feel. Help them think about and tell ways to change the situation that caused the anger.

Information on early violence prevention is found in the *Violence Prevention for Families of Young Children* booklet, published by the American Psychological Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, as part of the ACT Against Violence project. For more information, visit www.actagainstviolence.org.